



# A CASE STUDY RELATED TO THE FIRST LANGUAGE ATTRITION AMONG KURDISH-TURKISH BILINGUAL STUDENTS IN TURKEY

(Türkiye’de Kürt-Türk Çift Dilli Öğrencilerde  
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## **Abstract**

In this study we analyze the Kurmanji Kurdish narratives produced by 5 Kurdish-Turkish bilinguals to show the extension of the language attrition, thus discussing how susceptible their first language-Kurdish to the effects of the more dominant language-Turkish. These students were asked to tell a pictorial story known as “Hare and Tortoise” which is consisted of 14 pictures. thereby seeing the impact of Turkish, which is an official language in the country and also through which all students are taught all subjects at school, on Kurdish, which is first language of the students who participated to the study. The study demonstrates that all the students have used the lexical borrowing from Turkish language because of the need to name the kurdish items they have already forgotten and also the attrition has manifested itself in students by forgetting words, fluency problems and nearly all students had to resort to shrinking vocabulary knowledge, and also they had a lot of pauses while speaking kurdish and the study showed that code-switching took place during all the speeches.

**Key Words** :Language attrition, Kurdish, Turkish, code-mixing

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## Özet

Bu çalışmada, baskın dil olan Türkçe'nin Kürtçe üzerindeki etkisini göstermek için beş Kürt-Türk çift dilli öğrenci tarafından Kürtçe aktarılan bir anlatı analiz edildi. Bu çalışma için seçilen öğrencilerden "Tavşan ve Kaplumbağa (Hare and Tortoise)" olarak bilinen ve 14 resimli sayfadan oluşan yazısız hikayeyi anlatmaları istendi ve anlatımları kaydedilerek analiz edildi. Analizler bütün katılımcıların unuttukları Kürtçe kelime ve yapılar yerine Türkçeden ödünç yapı ve kelimeler aldığını göstermiştir. Çalışma dil bozumunun kendini akıcı konuşamama, sınırlı kelime kullanımı ve duraksamalı konuşma problemleri ile gösterdiğini ortaya koymuştur. Ayrıca katılımcıların tamamının anlatımları boyunca çok sayıda düzenek değiştirme kullandığı görülmüştür.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Ana dil bozumu, Kürtçe, Türkçe, düzenek değiştirme.

## Introduction

Language attrition can be defined as the (total or partial) forgetting of a language by a healthy speaker (Schmid, 2011). Language attrition, which can be observed in young and old generation alike, is a general phenomenon every corner of the earth ; nevertheless, it is a recent topic for both scholars and nations to be examine and deal with. Language attrition can be related to various disciplines such as linguistics, pshycolinguistics and sociolinguistics. And accordingly, as it is stated by Hansen in her book called Second Language Attrition in Japanese Contexts (1999), several terms have been used by researchers to refer to language disappear such as language attrition, language regression, language loss, language shift, code-switching or code mixing and language death. Accordingly, Language attrition has been studied by various fields such as linguists, sociolinguistics, neurolinguistics, and psycholinguistics and all of them try to understand this phenomenon from different perspectives. Bilingualism is one of significant context in which language loss has been discussed. The people having two languages are generally under the influence of the more dominant language and that domineering language cause the delicate one to be forgotten for lasting period or short period. According to Yukawa language attrition may manifest itself with permanent or temporary regression in a participant's previous linguistic performance or competence at any linguistic level (phonology, morphology, syntax, and pragmatics) in exerting any linguistic skill (speaking, listening, reading, writing and metalinguistic judgement).(1997), and the participants of our study were observed to have experienced changes in their lexical abilities since these bilingual students immersed in an environment where their second language is by far more dominant than their L1, which causes lexical changes, or attrition, in their first language.

In this study L1 attrition has been identified in terms of erosion of vocabulary, erosion of semantic variations, and the reduced ability in the performance of using the first language. The loss of language may occur in places where that language is seldom used by the natives of the language, which can be seen in minorities such as Kurdish and Zaza communities in Turkey or among immigrants living in a predominant second language environment. There are several factors that affect L1 skills among the communities which can not use their first language on a regular base and the members of the these communities are frequently in contact with the dominant second language; particularly, they have to use the second language as the inescapable means of communication at work, education, shopping and so forth. There are some cases of immigrants which have been studied by researchers in the field of bilingualism and they have found out that because of the domineering language of the host country, the immigrants encounter language shift through the generations. A common phenomenon reported in minority–majority language contact situations is that of language shift. This is a pattern of language use in which the relative prominence or use of the two languages changes across time and generations (Gutiérrez, 1990 ) In this context language attrition has been observed in many immigrant communities in the world such as the case Turkish immigrants in The Netherlands (Boeschoten, 1992) and we can see the same case in Russia for Turkic languages, Bashkir, which has been in contact with Russian since the 16th century, has been under its heavy influence for over a century. (Yagmur, K., de Bot, K. & Korzilius, H, 1999).

Therefore, owing to these reasons the minorities have started to adopt the culture and the language of the dominant country, thus becoming more efficient in their second language and in turn, they started to forget their native language. According to a study, high level of skills in second language may lead to loss performance in second language, such as high level of reading skill in L2 can cause low level reading skill in L1 (Segalowitz, 1991).

### **Hypotheses related to L1 Attrition**

We can summarize some the hypotheses related to L1 attrition which have been outlined by Sheimid (2002). One of those is the regression hypothesis which put forward that the language learnt first tends to last longer while the one learnt later is liable to attrition. It is also known as *first in, last out*. The regression hypothesis holds that the path of attrition is the mirror image of the path of acquisition. Our study contradicts with this theory in terms of the first-language being lost while second-language becoming dominant. Though the people of Kurdish community learn Kurdish as their first language, they can not keep it and they experience attrition because of far more usage of their

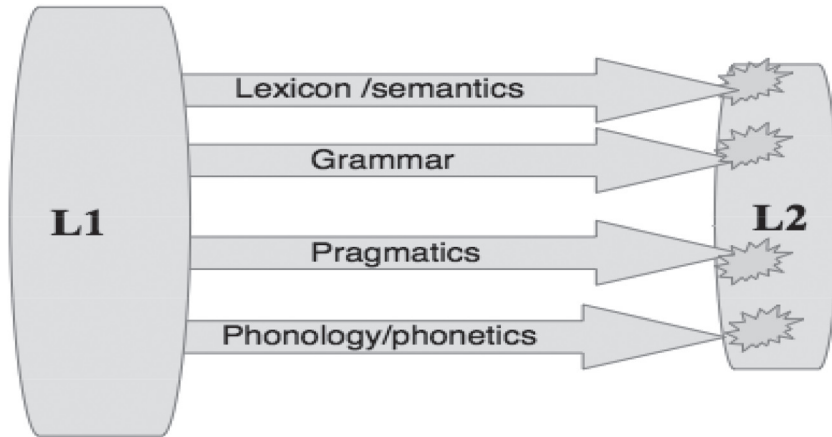
second-language. Therefore, our study can be backed up the hypothesis which comes up with the fact that what is least vulnerable to language loss is not what is learned first but what is learned best, an important notion being frequency of reinforcement (Berko-Gleason, 1982)

The last in the first out hypothesis can also support our study, for the the Kurdish community learn Turkish Language as their second language. Recency and frequency of use is one of important factors that can influence the permanence of a language (Paradis, 2004) the students of kurdish community are frequently in contact with the dominant second language Turkish and they have to use the second language nearly everywhere in their lives such as for education, shopping and free time activities. For instance, when they go to cinema they watch Turkish movies or foreign movies dubbed into Turkish, through which they are exposed to Turkish. Activation Threshold Hypothesis includes some elements that affect the language loss which are language disuse, the most frequent elements of L2 will replace their (less used) L1, the affect of motivation on the rate of attrition (Paradis, 1985)

Attitude of the second language learners towards of the first language is also an important factor in attrition. The attitude factor could have a significant or limited impact on L1 attrition according to three components, the “cognitive” (individual’s belief system, knowledge and perceptions), “affective” (emotional reactions and feelings) and “cognitive” (behavioural intentions and interest) (Lambert, 2010) The dominant culture and language can overwhelming affect on small communities, which can cause the people of that community to avoid to use their language and they can be more motivated to communicate with the language of the domineering nation. In terms of attitudinal factors, a speaker’s attitude towards language learning and his/her desire to integrate into the host community are among the strongest predictors of language loss (Schmid, 2004). According to my own observation, some of the students in my school deliberately avoid using their first language, which also affects their frequency of using their first language. This sociolinguistic(or psycholinguistic) situation can be explained by their discouragement of using their first language because they do not feel having the necessary language competence to lead a conversation. The attitudes towards one’s first language and culture are considered to be tightly related to frequency of language choice and use, and, therefore, strongly influence the development of L1 attrition. According to a study related to the rate of L1 attrition in migrant Jews, there is an important correlation between attitude and L1 attrition. (Schmid, 2002). The positive or negative attitude of individuals can have an impact on language learning and one of our research papers has suggested that there is a close relation between the students’ failure and their tendency of learning English through Kurdish rather than Turkish. (Kasap, 2015).

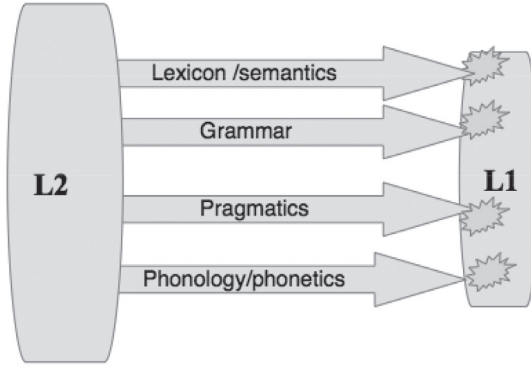
While learning a second-language, it is quite natural that the learners transfer the features of their first language into second language acquisition. They probably apply some of their first language grammatical and phonological rules to the new language, which is known as cross linguistic affect. Simply put, they will use their own language schema during the learning process. For instance, before learning how to greet people in a second language properly, a Turkish learner may tend to say “*day bright*” in order to mean “*good morning*” because of the influence Turkish greeting expression “*Gunaydin*”. Since learners are unfamiliar with the second language grammar schemata, they are prone to use their own language schemata.

Many (but probably not all) of these phenomena are the outcome of the fact that the first or native language (L1) exerts some degree of influence on the L2 (Schmid, 2011)



**Figure 1.** L1 Influence on L2 in second language acquisition (Schmid and Kopke, 2007)

The same case can also be witnessed as the influence of L2 on L1, and if the affect and power of L2 is stronger, in such cases as immigration or not being an official language of a country, then we can witness language attrition as well as accelerated lexical traffic from second language to the first language. In this process, the first language can be influenced by borrowing, restructuring, convergence and shift. (Pavlenko, 2004)



**Figure 2.** L2 influence on L1 in L1 attrition  
(Schmid and Kopke, 2007)

## Methodology

The material for the study has been collected from five - three males and two females. speakers of Kurdish-Turkish Bilinguals Students residing in Van City-Turkey, The participants live in a region where Kurdish is widely spoken and they are aged between 14 and 15 years old. The material has been collected through elicitation of words and stories, as well as from surveys. The method used for collecting data focus on measuring attrition at the level of performance rather than the competence level of the speakers<sup>2</sup>. The data have been collected and analyzed by the authors and Kurdish Language experts Sehmuz KURT from Mardin Artuklu Kurdish Language Department (Yasayan Diller Bolumu) and Haci YILMAZ Van Yuzuncuyil Kurdish Language Department (Yasayan Diller Bolumu).

## Participants

Two girls and three boys (referred to with student 1, student 2, student 3, student 4, student 5) agreed to participate in this study. They were born in Kurdish speaking Cities -Van, Hakkari and Sirnak. They seemed to understand and speak Kurdish to some degree, as their parents used both Kurdish and Turkish at home. All of the participants had no formal schooling in Kurdish; currently, they use Kurdish primarily to communicate with their non-Turkish-speaking relatives (mainly, grandparents). According to the surveys we applied, while communicating at home with their Turkish-speaking relatives, most participants admit to responding in Turkish even when sometimes addressed in Kurdish . They are fully fluent in Turkish, which is now their dominant language. Since the students are quite good at Turkish and the level of their turkish is nearly excellent according to the test called Transition from Primary to Secondary Education (TEOG) that was applied by Ministry of National Education in 2013.

**Table 1 . The results of the students in TEOG examination-Turkish Section**

Students	Total Questions	CORRECT	FALSE
Student 1	20	20	0
Student 2	20	18	2
Student 3	20	19	1
Student 4	20	18	2
Student 5	20	20	0

Table 1 demonstrates that the all the students can understand, read, write and speak turkish without any problem at all; however, they are not efficient at kurdish whatsoever, particularly, when it comes to writing and reading most of them are lack of the necessary skills. Since Turkey has Turkish language for instruction of education the Kurdish communities do not have many opportunities to learn reading and writing Kurdish; namely, there is a lack of any institutional support which makes the difference between success and failure in maintaining a minority group language. (Holmes, 1992), nevertheless, inefficient though it is, they are able to speak and understand it to some extend.

**Table 3. Language proficiency in Turkish and Kurdish**

Language Skills	YES	A LITTLE	NO
I can understand a conversation in Kurdish .	3	2	
I can engage in a conversation in Kurdish.	3	2	
I can read a Kurdish text	1	1	3
I can write Kurdish.	-	1	3
I can understand a conversation in Turkish .	5	-	-
I can engage in a conversation in Turkish.	5	-	-
I can read a Turkish text	5	-	-
I can write Turkish	5	-	

First language attrition may manifest itself in various ways, one of which is the lack of using the skills at speaking, writing, reading and understanding. Table 3 shows that The students, for example, have only a passive knowledge of their native language. They are able to reach a point in which they can understand the home Kurdish and they speak in a very basic way but cannot speak as well as they understand and though they may speak their heritage language, they are unable to read and write it.

**Table 4. Language Background in Kurdish**

<b>Language Skills</b>	<b>KURDISH</b>	<b>TURKISH</b>
What is your mother's first language?	5	-
What is your father's first language?	5	-
I generally speak to my friends via	-	5
I generally speak to my siblings via	2	3
I generally speak to my parents via	3	2
I generally speak to my grandparents	5	-
At home, I generally think in	2	3
Outside of home, I generally think in	4	1
I feel better when I speak	2	3

According to the figures from Table 4, most students report that although they choose to use their first language at home while speaking to their parents and grandparents, they choose to speak their second language while conversing with their siblings. Two students, who speak Kurdish frequently at home with their parents, grandparents and siblings, were far better at Kurdish comparing to the other three students preferring speaking Turkish with their relatives at home. According to a study (Hinton, 1999) those families whose children did succeed in maintaining fluent bilingualism throughout the period of the study differed from the others in two key ways: (1) the parents were consistent about the approach and most importantly did not let the children respond to them in the inappropriate language; (2) the children had people besides their parents to talk to in the heritage language. 3 out of the 5 students feel better while speaking their second language, which may show that they internalized the second language as their main communication means.

## **Data Analysis**

### **1. Lexical Loss**

The lexical borrowing from the L2 to the L1 is another apparent situation that has been experienced by Kurdish students in their attempts to tell the story. Borrowing is the usual term for the process whereby a language takes new linguistic material from another language these borrowed items are mostly words, but it is important to note that other units such as morphemes or phonemes, or even syntactic features, may also be borrowed. (Böhmerová, 2010) All the students participated in the study borrowed an important number of Turkish lexical items while speaking Kurdish.



As this study shows us that the students' lexical capacity of L1 is especially vulnerable to the attrition and because of the reduction in their vocabulary knowledge, they could not find the appropriate word to use to tell the story. They had no choice but replace Turkish words instead of Kurdish words that they have forgotten. As Schmid & Köpke state, L1 attrition is a process which is governed by two factors: the presence and development of the L2 system on the one hand, and the diminished exposure to and use of the L1 on the other. The current consensus is that attrition manifests itself first and most noticeably in the vocabulary knowledge of speakers (2007).

When we analyzed the students attempts to tell the story in kurdish, we witnessed a lot of code switching at the word level while one the students who believes he can speak good level of kurdish was telling the story. In many pages of the story he was observed to experience an important level of lexical loss. The forgotten or unknown kurdish lexical items were replaced with turkish words by the students to keep on the story. Demonstrative pronouns in Kurdish "ew" 'ewa' were replaced by the turkish pronouns 'bu'. The kurdish expression 'Ew kêroşk gelek lezgîn bu'. (this rabbit was very fast) was stated as 'Bu Tavsan gelek hizli bu.' by one the students participated in the study. The student even could not use the demonstrative pronouns in Kurdish.

While telling the story, the students' lexical loss or limited access to their L1 was apparent. Due to vocabulary loss in their first-language, the students have shifted to their second-language, for example ; nearly all students who couldn't find the word 'kevrosk' in Kurdish immediately used the word Tavsan' in stead of it. On account of the domineering second language, students have started to kurdishize some verbs of Turkish to be able express themselves. We can see the same situation for the affect of by far dominant language english on on other languages and thus, there are debates on the possible linguistic consequences of the process of globalization concentrate on the complementary issues of Englishization and language loss. (Dor, 2004) When they could not to access to the necessary verbs in kurdish they used the morpheme '-kir' to make a Turkish verb into Kurdish such as instead of 'cun or mesiyân' which means 'to go' they used 'gîtmek' verb in turkish by changing it into 'gîtmis-kir'

**Table 5. The Turkish verbs changed into Kurdish verbs by using the suffixes such as -kir and -bit**

The forgotten or unknown Kurdish verb	Turkish verb	Kurdish Morpheme	Kurdishized Turkish verb
<b>Cun- mesiyân (to go)</b>	gitmek	-kir	gitmiskir
<b>Dîtin (to see)</b>	gormek	-kir	gormuskir
<b>Pesbazin (to race)</b>	yarismak	-kir	yarismiskir
<b>Fehmkirin (to understand)</b>	anlamak	-kir	anlamiskir
<b>bi ser ketin (to see)</b>	kazanmak	-kir-bu	kazanckirbu
<b>Amedekirin (to arrange)</b>	duzenlemek	-kirin	duzenlemiskirin
<b>Debazkrin (to pass)</b>	gecmek	-kirin	gecmiskirin
<b>xemgîn bûn (to be upset)</b>	uzulmek	-dibit	uzulmusdibit
<b>xewtin, razan, (to sleep)</b>	Uyumak	-dibit	uyumusdibit
<b>meth kirin (to praise)</b>	Ovmek	-diket	ovmusdiket
<b>bezîn, bazdan (to run)</b>	Kosmak	-dibin	kosmusdibin
<b>ketin</b>	Dalmak	-bu	Dalmisbu

In this case, students have tried to speak Kurdish by re-modifying Turkish verbs to be able to use it as they were unable to get the Kurdish words out. The extend of the lexicon reduction in L1, influenced by the dominant (or interfering) language L2 in that the rules of L2 gradually replace the rules of L1 via the process of transfer, can be seen clearly in table 3.

**Table 5. Code-mixing at word level**

The forgotten or unknown Kurdish Noun (Attritted )	English Meaning	The replacing Turkish word
<b>kîroşk,</b>	Hare	Tavsan
<b>kûsî, kûsel</b>	Turtle	Kaplumbaga
<b>pêşbazî,</b>	Race	Yaris
<b>Bas nav</b>	Surname	Soy isim
<b>Gelek</b>	Very	Gayet
<b>rihetî</b>	Comfortable	Rahat
<b>xêz</b>	line	Cizgi
<b>pirtûk</b>	book	Kitap
<b>yekem</b>	first	Birinci
<b>duyem, duyemîn</b>	Second	İkinci
<b>.jîr, jîrek, zîr</b>	clever	Zeki
<b>lezgîn</b>	fast	Hizli
<b>tebitî, aram, hêmin</b>	Calm	Sakin
<b>gog</b>	Ball	Top

<b>Her weki din</b>	And so on	Falan filan
<b>çîrvanok, çîrçîrok</b>	Story	Masal
<b>biçûk dîtîn</b>	Belittle	Kucumsemek
<b>zû zû, zûzûka</b>	Faster and faster	Hizli hizli

## 2.The attrition of the indefinite article

In Kurmanji Kurdish language grammar, the sign of the indefinite singular (‘a, any, some’) is an unstressed enclitic **-ek** (**-yek** for words ending in vowels) added to the end of the absolute singular noun. (2006, Thackston)

**-Masal** *bijme we?* The student used Turkish word ‘**masal**’ instead of ‘**ci-rok**’ **moreover she did not use the indefinite article such as ‘masalek’**. In Kurdish, by using **-ek or -yek** we can get the indefinite article. For example;

**mîrov > miróvek. = man > a man**

**miróvek hat. = A man came.**

**Ezi ji wera masal-ek-î b jim.** When the noun is used as the object of the sentence the object

must be used with with **-î** morpheme however the students are unable to use it

The first student code-switches occasionally and makes some mistakes, and his speech, too, contains some pauses, filled pauses and repetitions. And the overall impressions that she uses Kurdish inarticulately and throughout her speech she was hardly confident about what she can tell.

## 3.Phonological Attrition

Kurdish is a phonetic language, that is, it is written as it is pronounced. Its orthography is based on Arabic script; diacritic marks and dots are used to represent consonants and vowels not found in Arabic. All phonemes are represented by full letters, except for /i/, which is not represented at all (Mc Carus, 1992). The consonants, vowels, stress and intonation of the Kurdish and Turkish languages are different ; however, according to the Kurdish experts - Hacı Yılmaz at Kurdish Language Department of Yuzuncuyil University and Sehmuz Kurt at Kurdish language Department of Mardin Artuklu University -The accent that most students participated in the study have definitely not one of the accents being used in Turkey so they added that their accents are under clear influence of Turkish Language. According to Kurdish Language experts, they couldn’t pronounce **î, ê, û** vowels which are not in the sound systems of Turkish, instead, they tended to pronounce them as Turkish vowels **ı, e, u**.

The Kurdish alphabet is based on the Turkish adaptation of the Latin alphabet, and for the most part words are written as they are pronounced, although

there are several important features that are not indicated in the writing system. These are noted below. International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) equivalents are given in square brackets.

**î** is like the ‘ee’ in ‘beet,’ IPA [i], as in *n v* [niv] ‘half.’

**ê** is like the ‘ai’ in ‘bait,’ IPA [e], without the *y*-offglide of English, as in *h z* [hez] ‘power.’

**û** is like the ‘oo’ in ‘boot,’ IPA [u], as in *b n* [bun] ‘to be.’ (2006, Thackston)

Generally **î**, **ê**, **û** vowels are pronounced correctly all student

*Ronahi: Êz ħ z mekt b d k m*

*Burhan : Mêhtexé dikê*

*Jiyan : Êz televiztonuji gelekhez dikem.*

The students also could not articulate the consonants kurdisch **p, t, k, ç** and instead of these consonants they you used turkish **p, t, k,** and **ç** consonants. However, **t, p, t, k,** and **ç** are aspirated stops, as in English ‘pie,’ ‘tie,’ ‘key,’ and ‘chew’ **p, t, k,** and **ç** are unaspirated stops, as in English ‘spy,’ ‘sty,’ and ‘ski,’ and ‘eschew,’ and are accompanied by slight pharyngealization. They are not indicated in the writing system, and they are not universally observed by all speakers, but where they occur they contrast on the phonemic level. They are indicated in the this book by an underscore: cf. *p lav* [pHelAv] ‘wave’ and *p lav* [pelAv] ‘shoes,’ *kal* [kHAL] ‘unripe’ and *kal* [kAl] ‘old man,’ *t n* [tHin] ‘thirst and *t n* [tin] ‘heat,’ *çal* [tSHAl] ‘speckled’ and *çal* [tSAl] ‘pit, well’ (ibid)

The kurdisch **k** in *Gelek* was pronounced as turkish **k** by the participant called Omer.

The students also had problems with the sounds **x** and **h**. **H** is pronounced like the ‘ch’ in German ‘Bach’ and the Arabic **ح**, a voiceless uvular fricative [x] **x** is a voiced uvular fricative [ʁ], the ghayn (غ) of Arabic; it is the voiced counterpart to **x**. **h** is pronounced, in areas in which it occurs, like the **ح** of Arabic (a voiceless pharyngeal fricative, [ħ]); in areas where it is not so pronounced, it is not differentiated from **h** (ibid). As it can be seen from the example the student could not articulate voiceless pharyngeal fricative [ħ]. Therefore, The student changed the sound Kurdisch [**ħ**] into Turkish [h] sound, which can be attributed to the influence of Turkish phonology. We can see the some examples of attrited pronunciation of the students.

The Correct Pronunciation		The attired Pronunciation of the student
<b>Ronahi:</b> Ez hêz mekt bî d k m	→	Ez <i>hez</i> mektebi d k m
<b>Burhan:</b> Mehtexé dike	→	Mehtexé dike
<b>Jiyan:</b> Ez televiztonuji gelek hêz dîkem.	→	Ez televiztonuji gelek <i>hez</i> dîkem

### Code Switching (CS ) Analysis

To measure Code Switching (CS ) analysis we used three different scales. First, the mean length of utterance (MLU) of each student was measured to get an idea about their Kurdish proficiency. **Mean Length of Utterance** (or **MLU**) is a measure of linguistic productivity in children. It is traditionally calculated by collecting utterances spoken by a child or student and dividing the number of morphemes by the number of utterances. A higher MLU is taken to indicate a higher level of language proficiency. Although there was general CS, the recordings of two are heavily Kurdish dominant. Thus, MLU can be used as an estimate tool for students' Kurdish proficiency.

The second measure, CS frequency, represented the number of Kurdish words used in students' speeches. The number of Turkish words was divided by the total number of words uttered by the participants in each session (No. of Turkish words / No. of total words). Thus, CS frequency will increase as CS increases, and eventually, CS density is measured. This measure aims at measuring the average number of Turkish words used by students in recounting the story.

**Table 6. Mean Length of Utterance of the participants.**

Students	MLU	CS Frequency	CS Density
Student 1	2.27	28/52 (0,52%)	28
Student 2	0,61	59/77 (0,76%)	59
Student 3	2,38	40/71 (0,57%)	40
Student 4	4,71	37/249 (0,14%)	37
Student 5	6,43	18/192 (0,09%)	18

Extended exposure to Turkish for the Kurdish students have resulted in lexical transfer. For example, while the student 3 was telling the story, the student used only several Kurdish words, which are very basic and easy words

such as *ez (I)*, *dîşime (can)*, *te (you)*, *gelek (very)*, *raza (sleep)*, *zu (fast)*, *çû (go)*. The student can use very restricted vocabulary, and he has also used some derivational morphemes and inflectional suffix such as *-gir* . *-bu* . *-ye* ; however, he has virtually forgotten all words in Kurdish thereby demonstrating an extreme level of language attrition. He neither stayed within the grammatical parameters of his L1 nor could use his L1 lexical items. The students used 56 words and only 10 words out of 56 words are Kurdish, from which we can easily understand the extend of attrition.

### Conclusion

The paper has provided a preliminary study of some lexical and phonological changes in Kurdish language based on the data collected from 5 Kurdish speakers. As expected, the findings point to a code-mixing due to reduction of vocabulary and changes in the phonological system in Kurdish. The Turkish words (particularly verbs) were treated as Kurdish words phonologically, syntactically and morphologically . The first three students (Student 1, Student 2 and Student 3) consistently showing the manifests of language attrition can be considered L1 attriters, while the other two students (Student 4, Student 5) perform better kurdish and could speak longer despite their certain types of attrition and they can be regarded as attriters to some extend.

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