



THE DENOMINATION OF MOTHER-TONGUE, CHARACTERS SUFFERING LANGUAGE PROBLEMS, AND BELONGING IN SELECTED ZAZAKI NOVELS*

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ABSTRACT

Zazaki is one of the languages spoken in Turkey. The first literary product in Zazaki is *Mevlid-un Nebiyy'il Kureyşiyi* (The Birth of the Prophet from Kureysh), written by Ehmedê Xasi in 1899. After the magazine *Tirej*, published in Turkey in 1979 and included Zazaki heavily, the Zaza literature gained momentum with the magazines published by the Zaza intellectuals who immigrated to Europe in the 1980s.

It must be said that novels are a milestone in the history of Zaza literature. More than twenty novels have been written after the first novel *Teresiye Çemçe* published in 1995. The novel, which is qualified as a synthesis of all literary genres, expresses the narrative possibilities of a language in detail, so it gives substantial knowledge about the life and culture of a community. The aim of this work, which bases on ten selected novels in Zazaki, is to discuss how the Zazas denominate their languages, what sort of problems they have when they speak Zazaki, and how the identity, and they belonging of the Zaza characters are handled.

The denominations used in the novels to describe Zazaki and the Zazas are essential as they show the identity and belonging of the Zazas. The study shows that the Zazas do not use a single term to denominate their language and identity and have multiple belongings. The problems they experience because they speak Zazaki and do not know the official language are among the novel's distinctive elements. With these themes reflected in the novels, the study aims to shed light on the approaches of the Zazas to their language and belonging, and the problems they experience due to speaking their mother tongue.

Keywords: Zazaki; Zazaki novels; mother tongue; language problems; belonging.

* Bu makale, yürütülmekte olan “Zazaca *Teresiye Çemçe*, *Kılama Pêpûgî*, *Her Çi Beno Sanke*, *Sileman*, *Kılama Şilane*, *Gula Çemê Pêrre*, *Moriber*, *Barkerdena Zerrî*, *Piltane* ve *Ti Tewrê Payîza Şîya* Romanları Örneğinde Ortak Bellek” adlı doktora tezinden türetilmiştir.

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Romanunê Vicnayeun ê Zazaki dı Nomekerdişê Zoni, Qarakteri kî Rıdê Zonê Xu Zorey Vineni u Xusınasi

Kılmvate

Zazaki, zoni kî Tırkiya dı qısey beni, inon ra yew o. Zazaki dı esero tor verin, *Mevlid-un Nebiyy'il Kureşiyi* (Mewlidê Nebiyê Qureşiji) yo u serra 1899 dı, hetê Ehmedê Xasi ra nusiyayo. Merdim eşkeno vaco kî edebiyatê Zazaki, pêserikê Tirêji- kî serra 1979 dı neşır biya u zaf ca dona Zazaki-ra dıma, hetê roşnvirunê Zazau kî bar kerdo Ewropa, serrunê 1980un dı, bî pêseriku lewuyayo ra.

Ma eşkeni vacı kî romani/neweli, tarixê edebiyatê Zazaki dı milad ê. Teresiye Çemçe kî serra 1995 dı nusiyaya, ina roman dıma vist ra zêd romani nusiyay. Roman, sey yew sentezê hemî tewirunê edebiyati wesif bena, mumkiniyê vacıryayışê yew zoni bî detayu ifade kena, coka derheqê cuyayış u zagonê yew milet malumatunê muhimu dona. Ina xebat kî des heb romanunê Zazaki esas gena, hedefê cı o yo kî romanun dı Zazay zonê xu seni nome keni, derheqê zonê xu qıseykerdişî dı çı tewır zorey vineni u xusınasiyê qarakterunê Zazau sero seni vindiyeno, inon eşkera kero.

Termi kî romanun dı qey Zazaki u Zazau şıxuliyeni, hetê motişê aidiyet u xusınasiyê Zazau ra muhim ê. Derheqê zon u xusınasi dı nêşıxuliyayışê tek yew term mocneno kî Zazaun dı aidiyet u xusınasiya eglebki esta. Qarakteri kî Zazaki qısey keni u zono resmi nêzoni u in rıd ra zorey vineni, romanun dı xılêk ca geni. Xebat, dakeray kî romanun dı vêreni, ceribnena kî pa inon dormaleyê Zazau bineyna roşnayı kero.

Çekuyi Muhimi: Zazaki; romani Zazaki; zon; problemi zoni; xusınasi.

Seçili Zazaca Romanlarda Ana Dilin Adlandırılması, Dil Sorunları Yaşayan Karakterler ve Aidiyet

Özet

Türkiye’de konuşulan dillerden biri de Zazacadır. İlk Zazaca eser, 1899 yılında Ahmed el-Hası tarafından yazılan *Mevlid-un Nebiyy'il Kureşiyi*’dir. Zaza edebiyatı, Zazaca ürünlerin yoğun biçimde yer aldığı ilk yayın olan ve 1979 yılında yayımlanmaya başlanan Tirêj dergisinden sonra, 1980’li yıllarda Avrupa’ya göç eden Zaza aydınlarının yayımladıkları dergilerle ivme kazanmıştır.

Zaza edebiyatının, romanlarla yeni bir aşamaya girdiği söylenebilir. 1995 yılında yazılan *Teresiye Çemçe*’den günümüze kadar yirminin üzerinde roman yazılmıştır. Tüm edebi türlerin sentezi olarak nitelendirilen roman, bir dilin anlatım olanaklarını ayrıntılı biçimde ifade ettiği için söz konusu dili konuşan kesimlerin yaşamına ve kültürlerine dair önemli bilgiler verir. Seçilmiş on ayrı Zazaca romanı konu edinen bu çalışmanın amacı, romanlarda Zazaların konuştuğu dili nasıl adlandırdıklarını, Zazaca konuştuğu için yaşadıkları sorunları ve Zaza karakterlerin aidiyetinin nasıl işlendiğini tartışmaktır.

Romanlarda Zazaca ve Zazalar için kullanılan isimlendirmeler, Zazaların dillerini ve aidiyetlerini göstermesi açısından önemlidir. Dil ve aidiyet için tek bir terimin yaygın olarak kullanılmıyor olması Zazaların çoklu aidiyetleri ve kimlikleri olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Zazaca konuşan ve resmi dili bilmeyen karakterlerin yaşadıkları sorunlar romanlarda dikkat çeken unsurlardandır. Çalışma, romanlara yansıyan bu temalarla, Zazaların dillerine ve aidiyetlerine yönelik yaklaşımlara ve ana dillerini konuşmaları nedeniyle yaşadıkları sorunlara ışık tutmayı amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Zazaca; Zazaca romanlar; ana dil; dil sorunları; kimlik.

Zazaki novels: A brief overview

The novel is described as *a meta-genre genre that does not belong to any species but benefits from all* (Parla, 2015:33). Many qualify it as *an art of details* (Özger, 2010:209). It has *almost unlimited freedom in form* (Kundera, 2012:85). Kundera characterizes the novel as *the imaginary paradise of the individual*. He says a novel is nothing more than an extended chase after a few vague definitions (Kundera, 2021:142). The novelist says that novels can involve poetry and philosophy and that Heidegger's tremendous existentialist themes are exposed in the European novel (Ibid, 2012:16-17). Karatani identifies the novel as a genre that deconstructs all the genres (Karatani, 2011:198). Lukács, the great critic, says that the novel will remain the dominant form as long as the same stars rule the world (Lukács, 2003:123).

It can be inferred that the novel is the final literary genre comprising all the literary genres. Because the novel is voluminous, all an ethnicity's cultural dimensions have widespread coverage in it. This is because the study gets its material from the novels. Except for two of them (*Kilama Pepugî and Suleman*), all of the books in Zazaki fictionalize the events that took place in the 1980s, and the main characters are Zazas. Although it may be claimed that literature is not reality, -as an art branch- it constructs reality with its own style. The novel reflects reality in its way. It is not only the reflection of the culture and memory of a community but also its creator. The material and tool of novel is language, and language itself is the womb of culture. So literature functions as the creator and continuator of culture.

Due to the reasons mentioned above, novels have their say on anything. In novels, one may find the mythology, beliefs, historical events, social relations, celebrations, festivals, religious rituals, and traditions of a speech community. There have been heated debates about the language, ethnicity, and belonging of the Zazas in recent years. Zazaki has been classified as an independent Iranian language, not a dialect of Kurdish, since the beginning of the twentieth century. The discussions about the position of Zazaki and the identity and belonging of the Zazas seem to remain on the agenda in the upcoming years.

By revealing the construction of the position of language (whether it is deemed as a dialect by her speakers or a language on its own) and identity (whether the characters perceive themselves as Kurds or a separate community as Zazas), the study aims to mirror identity. Another important subject is the denomination of the language in the books. The Zazas commonly use four denominations to name their language; *Zazaki*, *Dimilki*, *Kirmancki*, and *Kırdki*. The study traces these terms and tries to conclude: How do the characters (or the author) call the language spoken by the Zazas? How can we comment on this?

Apart from the denomination of language and belonging, another theme leaping to the eye in the novels is the problems the characters have when they speak Zazaki. Many characters in the Zaza literature (novels and short stories) have issues when they start school. Because they do not know Turkish and only speak Zazaki at home. Teachers in the works usually compel the students to talk to Turkish. The issues the characters face when they commune with Zazaki are also included in the study.

The Zaza writers who noticed their language and identity, especially in the European countries after the 1980s, started to write in their mother tongue. Zazaki's first literary texts (poems, short stories, translations and grammar) appeared in the magazine *Tirêj* published in İzmir in 1979.¹ The magazine has four issues in total, and while the fourth issue was being prepared, the 1980 military intervention was made, so the fourth issue was published in Stockholm. The magazine is considered a milestone in the history of Zaza literature.

It may be asserted that the military coup in 1980 has functioned as a starting point for the rebirth of Zaza literature and identity. The Zaza intellectuals, mostly leftist activists, immigrated to the European countries after the coup. These political refugees are leading figures in the magazine circles published in European countries. Some of these outstanding magazines are; *Ayre* (published in Sweden between 1985-

¹ In his article *Zaza Edebiyatında Tirêj Dergisinin Yeri*, Varol cites from Espar that although various pseudonyms like *Pankisar Zerteng*, *M. Brindar*, *Dewj*, *Roşan Bariçek*, *Mehmet Piran*, *M. Piran*, *Mehmet Malmisanlı* were used, all the material in Zazaki in the magazine was written by Malmisanij-Mehmet Tayfun (Varol, 2015:142).

1987); *Piya* (Sweden between 1988-1992); *Ware* (Germany between 1992-2003); *Vate* (Sweden, 1997).²

The first Zazaki novel to be identified is *Teresiye Çemçe* (The Villainy of the World), written in 1995 in the Netherlands by Gagan Çar.³ The second novel is Mehmet Gülmez's biographical novel *Dersim ra and Dare Estene Seyit Rıza* (Dersim and the Hanging of Seyit Rıza),⁴ published in 1996. It is a biographical novel published in April 1996 by Mehmet Gülmez, a poet from Dersim who lives in Germany. The novel is characterized by being written in realistic language.⁵

The third novel is *Kilama Pepûgî*, published in Ankara in 2000 by Deniz Gunduz,⁶ who is considered the leading Zaza novelist. In addition to this novel,

² The journal *Vate* is published in Turkey since 2003. For detailed information about the magazines in Zazaki, See Söylemez, İsmail (2011), "Geçmişten Günümüze Zazaca Dergiler: Kronoloji, Sorunlar ve Çözümler", I. Uluslararası Zaza Dili Sempozyumu(13-14 Mayıs 2011), Edt. Murat Varol, Bingöl Üniversitesi Yayınları, pp. 175-191.

³ Almost all publications on Zazaki novels state that the first Zazaki novel is *Kilama Pepûgî* (Akman, 2017:2615, Yıldız, 2020:74, Kan-Önen, 2022:118, Espar, 2000:68, Aldatmaz, 2011:16 ff.). The researchers seem unaware of Gagan Çar and his works. Gağan Çar, whose real name is Nazım Sayın, was born in 1959 in the Maden district of Elazığ. While studying at the Middle East Technical University, he left the university in his third year and settled in Europe. During his stay in the Netherlands, he continued his university education and became an electronics engineer. Çar, who was hardworking and productive due to his interest in his mother tongue, and his people, which he had been away from for years, started to print Zazaki and English books he wrote in the printing house he established in his own home. He made contacts with the magazine circles on Zazaki in European countries. Described as a multilingual person, Çar, interested in Zaza and Avestan, visited libraries in European cities and wanted to deepen his studies on Zazas and Zazaki. When he left this world in the Netherlands in 2016, he left behind thirteen works, two written in English and eleven in Zazaki. The author is the writer of the first Zazaki works in novels, theatre and poems. The issues mentioned in this paragraph about the author's biography were obtained from private interviews with the author's elder brother, Salih Sayın.

⁴ Anuk, N. & Aydoğdu, Y. (2022) discuss the first novel in Zazaki in their research article *First Novel in Zazakî: Dêrsim'ra ve Dare Estene Seyit Rıza*. The study qualifies the novel as the first Zazaki novel by stating that it includes novel features in terms of page number, plot, literary fiction, cast, space, time, perspective, narrator, language and style, and narration technique.

⁵ Researcher and politician Hüseyin Aygün qualifies the novel realistic in his interview with the author on a video sharing site. See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xXMmL3Sy-Kc&t=906s>. Accessed: 13. 10. 2022.

⁶ There is a substantial literature about *Kilama Pepûgî* both in Zazaki and Turkish. Akman (Akman, 2017e), analyzes the novel in terms of postmodern literary theory in *The Novel "Kilama Pepûgî (The Song of Cuckoo)" in the Context of the Folklore and Magic Realism That are Two Important Concepts of the Postmodern Age*. See Akman, 2017e. Yıldız (Yıldız, 2020), discourses the novel in terms of the elements of the novel in her study *Analysis of Kilama Pepûgî as a Debut Novel*. There are also review articles published in literary magazines about the novel. Espar's essay, *Romanêko Newe: Kilama Pepûgî* (A New Novel: Kilama Pepûgî) seems the first essay on a Zazaki novel. See Espar, 2000. Altun, discusses the construction of female characters in the novel in her essay *Romanê*

which was published in Ankara, the writer also has a sizable book, *Soro*,⁷ published in 2010 and the first science fiction work in Zazaki, *Kalaşnikof*,⁸ published in 2013.

Novels in Zazaki published up to the present are: *Her Çi Beno Sanike*⁹ (Everything Becomes a Fairy Tale), written by Sait Çiya in 2001. Yismaîl Mirza's *Silema*, published in 2004,¹⁰ was published under the name *Sileman* in 2020. Another writer among the novelists who has published three different novels is İlhamî Sertkaya. In addition to his book *Kılama Şilane* (Şilane's Ballad), published in June 2007¹¹ and included in this study, the author has published two other novels, *Sosine û Gûlîzare*, in 2013 and *Şewa Payîzî*, in 2020.

Munzur Çem,¹² who has considerable research in Turkish, Kurdish and Zazaki, published his only Zazaki novel, *Gula Çemê Pêrre* (The Rose of the River Pêrre) in 2007.¹³ The book was published for the second time in 2009. The book *Zifqêra Berî* (At the Threshold of the Door), which Jêhatî Zengelan published in 2009, is about a love story. The author's work, a translation of Kafka's famous work *The Metamorphosis*, was published under the name *Bedilîyayîş. Morber*, written by

Kirmanckî "Soro"yî de Awankerdişê Qerekerê Cinîyan. See Altun, 2011. Hüseyin Karakaş, wrote about Zazaki novels in a short essay titled *Kirmanckî de Romanî* (Novels in Zazaki). See Karakaş, 2009.

⁷ Akman thematizes the village guards and the tactics of the system in *Soro*, in his article titled *Soro De Kerdoxanê Neweyan Ser Ra Qoricitî u Taqtîqê Sistemî*. See Akman, 2020.

⁸ Akman discourses the *Tertele* of Dersim represented in *Kalaşnikof*, in the article *Romanê Kalaşnikof De Qirkerdişê Dêrsimî*. See Akman, 2018b.

⁹ See Akman, İlyas (2017c), *Kurgusal Yapı ve Tematik Açından Her Çi Beno Sanike (Her Şey Masal Olur) Romanı*, Mukaddime, 2017, 8(2), pp. 91-105.

¹⁰ See Akman, İlyas (2018a), *Silema-I Romanında Dil, Toplum ve Tarih*, Filolojide Akademik Araştırmalar, Gece Kitaplığı, Doç. Dr. Ruhi İNAN, April 2018, Ankara, pp.79-94.

¹¹ See Akman, İlyas (2017f), *Giredayeyê Edebîyatê Politikî De Romanê Kılama Şilane*, Nûbihar Akademi, Year: 4, Issue: 8.

¹² The author passed away while this article was being written (on 11, December 2022). The real name of Munzur Çem is Hüseyin Beysülen. He was born in the village of Kurze, Kiğı, Bingöl in 1945. He worked as an auditor in the Chamber of Accounts (Sayıştay) until 1980 in Turkey. He settled in Sweden in 1984. He also used the pseudonyms Hüseyin Toprak and Ahmet Taş in his writings. He left many books and articles in various topics and many studies about Zazaki.

¹³ See Akman, İlyas (2017d), *Giredayeyê Edebîyatê Barkerdişî De Romanê Gula Çemê Pêrre*, e-Şarkiyat İlmî Araştırmalar Dergisi, November 2017, Volume: 9, Issue: 2 (18). pp. 662-671.

Cengiz Aslan, asserted to describe Alevi Zaza culture most extensively in this study, was published in Istanbul in 2011.¹⁴

Weliyê Hediki (Peyeyê Şêx Seîdî) û Ez Qelbînij (Sheikh Said's soldier Weliyê Hediki and I, Qelbînij), written by Wedat Kaymak and published in 2012, consists of two parts and is a short work in novel format. The first part of the work, which contains two separate stories that seem to be independent of each other and whose gaps the reader has to fill only by putting the parts together, is about the life of a prisoner (*Weliyê Hediki*), who is a real character. It is said that Hediki caused the early outbreak of the Sheikh Said movement in 1925.

Barkerdena Zerrî (The Immigration of the Soul), written by Medet Can, was published in 2012.¹⁵ The novel *Deyndar*, by Hasan Dîlawer Dersîm, was published in 2014. *Pêt and Pelge ra* (Pêt and Pelge), which is about the events in the Dersim region at the beginning of the twentieth century, focuses on the love between a man named *Pêt* and a girl named *Pelge*, as stated in the title of the novel. As the author is an academic historian, the work also draws the panorama of world politics at that time and skilfully analyses the events that took place in Dersim.

Nadire Güntaş Aldatmaz, who seems to be the only female writer, wrote *Piltane* in 2016.¹⁶ Serwet Akkaş's *Heyf* (Revenge) was published in 2017. İrfan Akdağ's novel *Ti Tewrê Payîza Şîya* (You Have Gone With the Autumn) was published in 2020. The last two books, *Çê Qemerî Kejî* (Qemerê Kejî's Family) by Hüseyin Karakaş and *Remayîş* (Escape)¹⁷ by İrfan Akdağ were published in 2022.

There are also seven translations of novels by various writers in Zazaki. They are;

¹⁴ See Akman, İlyas (2017a), *Halk İnanışları, Halk Anlatıları ve Doğaüstü Olaylar Bağlamında Nikahlı (Moriber) Romanı*, Uluslararası Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi, Cilt: 10 Sayı: 51 Volume: 10 Issue: 51, August 2017. Doi Number: <http://dx.doi.org/10.17719/jisr.2017.1735>.

¹⁵ See Akman, İlyas (2017g), *Gecekondu Sorunu ve 12 Eylül 1980 Darbesi Ekseninde Gönül Yolculuğu (Barkerdena Zerrî) Romanı*, Turkish Studies, Volume 12/21, p.13-22. DOI Number: <http://dx.doi.org/10.7827/TurkishStudies.12318>.

¹⁶ The author has an essay titled *Romano Vêren Yê Kirmanckî* (The First Zazaki Novel) published in *Şewçila* (a literary magazine published in Zazaki) in 2011 (Aldatmaz, 2011).

¹⁷ Researcher and writer Seyîtxan Kurij interviews the author of the novel on a video sharing site. See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bUMFB-YXMmA>. Accessed: 17. 12. 2022.

Işık, Haydar (1994), *Memik Axa Wo Dêrsimij*, Translated from Turkish by Mihem Himbêlij, Apec-Tryck & Förlag, Sweden.

Hraçya Koçar (1999), *Hesrete (Garod)*, Translated by Sait Çiya & Xal Çelker, Tîj Yayınları, İstanbul.

Maksîm Gorkî (1999), *Karkerê Nonî*, Translated by Kemal Akay, Tîj Yayınları, İstanbul.

Daniel Defoe (2005), *Robinson Crusoe*, Translated from the Swedish by J. Îhsan Espar, Stockholm Kürt Kültürü Vakfı, İstanbul.

Victor Hugo (2005), *Notre Damea Parîsî*, Translated from the Swedish by J. Îhsan Espar, Stockholm Kürt Kültürü Vakfı, İstanbul.

Franz Kafka (2015), *Bedilîyayîş*, Translated from the German by Jêhatî Zengelan, Weşanxaneyê Vateyî, İstanbul.

Hesenê Metê (2018), *Dêrê Santa Ragnhild de*, Translated from Kurdish by J.Îhsan Espar, Weşanxaneyê Vateyî, İstanbul.

This study is based on ten novels written in Zazaki. They are; *Teresiye Çemçe*, *Kilama Pepûgî*, *Her Çi Beno Sanike*, *Sileman*, *Kilama Şilane*, *Gula Çemê Pêrre*, *Moriber*, *Barkerdena Zerrî*, *Piltane* and *Ti Tewrê Payîza Şiya*. The article, which emerged from the author's doctoral thesis, focuses on the collective memory of the Zazas represented in the literary sphere. It is thus essentially concerned with the cultural and communicative memory of the Zazas, irrespective of the literary value of the novels. The most important criterion in selecting the novels that are subject of the study is to focus on the events and characters that took place in areas with different socio-cultural characteristics, in order to examine memory in a broader framework.

Approaches to language in the novels

The language spoken in the novels under study is called *Zazaki*, *Kurmancki*, *Zonê Hardê Dewrêşi*, *Kirdkî* or *Dilmijkî* by the authors or characters. For the language of the community bordering, and often even living together with the Zazas and speaking the Kurmanji dialect of Kurdish, the expressions *Kirdasî*, *Kurmancki*, *zonê Qurru* are used.

In the preface of *Teresiye Çemçe*, the first Zazaki novel, the author states that it is not easy to write a novel in a language that has not yet found its way, that he

hopes this novel will inspire other writers to write and protect Zazaki and that this novel written in Zazaki tries to open a door for the future of the language (Çar, 1995:3). In some parts of the novel, it is said that Zazaki is a beautiful, cute and simple language (Çar, Ibid:27), but the world did not know the language of this people: "*The world was not aware of the language of this people, it was under pressure*" (Çar, Ibid:26).¹⁸

Teresiye Çemçe consists of sixteen parts, at the beginning of each chapter, there is a chapter number and a proverb, or words of the author. At the beginning of the second and third chapters, there are two words belonging to the author: "*Language is the soul, the soil, the identity and the breath of man*" (Çar, Ibid:26).¹⁹ "*Our language is neither the language of the Turks nor the language of the Kurds*" (Çar, Ibid:52).²⁰ Here, the Kurds are referred to as "*Qurr*". Where the omniscient author has his say, he explains that attempts are being made to uproot the language of this people, that games are being played against the language, that people are not being given the opportunity to learn their mother tongue (Çar, Ibid:54) and that the language is being eliminated (Çar, Ibid:55).

One of the main characters, *Qazo*, who is described as someone who reads a lot and learns about life, himself and society from these books, thinks that other nations despise the language of the Zazas, degrade it and trample it underfoot:²¹

"They were under the yoke, they were under the yoke of other peoples. The yoke of foreign peoples wanted to degrade, demean, end and abolish the language of this people. Qazo wondered why he had not read in his own language since childhood" (Çar, Ibid:58).²²

¹⁸ [Çemçe reze zune ni merdemu ne sılasna: o bîndestiye vı.]

¹⁹ [Zun roye, hardê, kamyê, helme merdemiyo!]

²⁰ [Zune ma ne zune Tırkiyo ne (ki) zune Qurriyo.]

²¹ The character of *Qazo*, who appears to represent the author in the novel and is seen as a high school student, who reads a lot, travels around his village and Maden district, observes the society he lives in, and he is concerned with the problems of his society. These representations show features that fit Anderson's description of "*a singular hero wandering through a barren social landscape*" (Anderson, 1995:45), a feature seen in many of the early anti-colonial novels.

²² [O bîndesti vı, i bin de nire şare teveri bı. Nireniya şare teveri waşt zone ni merdemu kızkek ke! cer ke! pay ke!; peyniye dey biaro, wedaro! ze lacekina, Qazo o hona vıre ne kerdo ke çıra o zun de xu de ne wuneno...]

In the novel *Barkerdena Zerri*, the language spoken by the Zazas is called Zazaki. The language of the Kurdish speakers is referred to as *Kirdasi*. While the terms *Zaza* and *Kirdasi* are used frequently in the novel, the terms *Dimili* or *Kurmanç* do not appear. It is noted that the Zaza people in the village speak *Kirdasi* very well. One of them is *Cemil*, the protagonist's father. The protagonist cannot communicate with his accompanying uncle, who does not speak Turkish, because Şiyar does not know *Kirdasî* (Can, 2012:152). In relation to Kahta, it is said that the passengers in the garage and the owners of the office converse among themselves in *Kirdasî* (Can, Ibid:42). The protagonist Şiyar, who emigrates to Istanbul with his father, even sees his dreams in Zazaki: "In his dream, he went to the countryside, ran in the hills, traveled through the mountains, played with walnuts, sat next to Zeynik, and the most beautiful thing was that all his dreams were in Zazaki" (Can, Ibid:47).²³

In the novel *Gula Çemê Pêrre*, the language spoken by the Zazas is called *Kirmancki* (Çem, 2007:9) When talking about the *Kirmanjs*, the term Zazas is also mentioned. In another chapter, *Perixane*, who is from Dicle district, refers to the language they speak as *Kirdkî* (Çem, Ibid:246). In this novel, *Kirmanckî* and *Kirdasî* are mentioned as dialects of Kurdish. When describing the ethnic and religious structure and social relations of the Kiği region, it says the following:

"Around Mount *Şeytan*, the Alevis, Sunnis, Kurmandjs and Kirmandjs – in other words, the Zaza – are intertwined. They are all brothers, uncles and cousins, friends, *kerwas* and in-laws. In this region, no one says anything to the other. Both sides know each other's dialects and respect each other's religions. As in the whole of Kiği, there is no religious struggle in this region. No one has ever seen or heard anything like this." (Çem, Ibid:9).²⁴

The language spoken in *Her Çi Beno Sanke* is called Zazaki. "Dervish's language of the earth" is even used for Zazaki; "Now we point our finger at those who speak our language, the language of the dervish of the earth" (Çiya,

²³ [Hewn di; şî welat, deyan ser ra vazda, koyan ra geyra, gozî tirîtî, Zeynik'a pêkişt'a ronîştî ew tewr weşê ci zî hewnî péro Zazakî bî.]

²⁴ [Dorüverê Koyê Şeytanî de elewî û sunnî, kurmanç û kirmancî bi çekuyêda bine zazayî têmeşyan der ê. Pêro waye û bira, ded û deza, nas û dost, kerwa* û xînamî yê. Kes no het ra kesî ra çiyê nêvano. Her di hetî lehçeya yewbînî zanenê, dînê yewbînî rê hurmet kenê. Sey pêroyîya Gêxî, na herême de kî lej û lujo dînî çin o. Kesî çiyêde wina ne dîyo ne kî hesno.]

2001:115).²⁵ In the novel, the character named *Fazlı*, who lives in the city centre, is a Turk. He is portrayed as a merchant and someone who speaks *Zazaki* (Çiya, Ibid:100). Another character, *Minas*, an Armenian, who is forcibly deported, addresses his villagers and neighbours in *Zazaki* as he leaves the village: "*Minas raised his hand and spoke in Zazaki: "Good luck, my neighbours! Our community is entrusted to you with our graves! We are leaving, but a part of us remains here"* (Çiya, Ibid:72).²⁶ Since there is no one among the villagers who knows Turkish, the militia translate what the commander says into *Zazaki* (Çiya, Ibid:96).

In the same novel, it is said that *Zazas* and *Armenians*, who have different faiths and languages, understand each other's language even if they speak little:

"If you take away a person's language, you also take away his spirit and soul. They understood each other's language, even if they were not very good at it. In the villages where the two tribes lived together, the elders knew both languages. At weddings and festivals, they sang folk songs in each other's language, came side by side, participated in *govends* and dances" (Çiya, Ibid:55).²⁷

In *Kılama Şilane*, *Zazaki* is referred to as *Kirmancki*, and *Kurmanji* as *Kurmancki*. The language spoken in *Mortber* is called *Kirmancki*. After the term *Kirmancki*, the term *Zazaki* is inserted in the parentheses (Aslan, 2011:22). It is said that *Sey Usên*, who comes to the villages from time to time and chants sayings accompanied by drums, chants both Turkish and *Zazaki* sayings and conveys to the villagers what his words mean (Aslan, Ibid:174). *Thüjirig*, one of the children in the novel, speaks some Turkish because he goes to school in *Hozat*. For this reason, he thinks he is better than his friends in the village because he knows both *Hozat* (the town) and Turkish (Aslan, Ibid:26). In the novel, an old female character named *Est* speaks Turkish unlike her peers;

When the soldiers came to the village, the other women except *Est* covered their faces and said 'these are Turks'. *Est* was the only one among the women. She was a woman who did not hide her face from the soldiers, someone who had learned

²⁵[Nika uyo ke zonê ma, Zonê Hardê Dewrêşi qesey keno, ey ebe bêçike musneme.]

²⁶ [Minasi destê xo kerd berz, Zazaki qesey kerd: -"Xatır be sîma, cîranenê! Kîlisê ma be mezêlunê mara babokê sîmaê! Ma sonime, hama parçê de ma naca de maneno..."]

²⁷ [To ke zonê isani destê isani ra guret, can u roê isani ki pia cêna. Honde jêde mebo ki, oncia ki şiyêne zonê jubini ser. Dewi ke dî qomi pia cuyiyêne, ni dewu de kokîmu dî zoni ki zonêne. Veyveu de, kêf u şênatiyu de zonê jubini de kîlam vatêne, kotêne têkaleke, govende guretêne, reqeşiyêne.]

Turkish and spoke with them, and she was a person who sat and smoked with them (Aslan, Ibid:47).²⁸

In the novel, it is said that the books that the protagonist *Ekber* reads are related to the Russian Revolution and that everyone except the character of *Sey Bali* is afraid of the books, and that *Sey Bali* blurts out a few Turkish words that he learned from Ekber: "*Maybe there will be a revolution, we have already been forgotten on this mountain.*" As he already speaks some Turkish words, he is called a communist, and people would say to him, "*For Allah's sake, do not mouth such words, you are a child of the Bamasurites, where did you learn such bad words from!*" Some would say, '*He is getting involved in something, if he does that, they will throw him in, I think he wants it.*' (Aslan, Ibid:55).²⁹

In *Piltane*, *Zazaki* is included as *Kirmanckî*. Kurmanji is referred to as *Kirdaski*. In the novel *Ti Tewrê Payîza Şîya* no language name is mentioned. However, it is said that when the gendarmerie search the tents due to a fight in the plateau they cannot find anything but Kurmanji cassettes (Akdağ, 2020:192). In *Sileman*, *Zazaki* is mentioned as *Zazaki* and Kurmanji as *Qurr* (Mirza, 2020:556). The commander who gathers the villagers instructs the protagonist *Sileman*, who had lived in Istanbul for many years, to translate his speech into *Zazaki* and pass it on to the villagers (Mirza, Ibid:427). The *Alu* tribe, which the soldiers collect and bring to the district, consists of 72 people. In the following pages, two children who are allowed to escape from the hands of the soldiers speak Turkish. The following dialogue takes place between the commander and the children:

"Where did you learn Turkish?"

They said:

"We learned it at school!"

"In which school?"

²⁸ [Nîzami kî amênî dewî, ğerca Esî cinikonê dewî 'ina Tırki' vatênî, pêrûnî rüyê xo cî ra munitênî. Esî wertê cinokonê dewî dî jü cinikî biye. Hem cinika kî nîzamo ra rüyê xo nêmunîtênî, hem Tırki musay bi, tey qeşî kerdênî, hemî kî nîstênî ro, tey cîğara sîmîtênî.]

²⁹ ["Ma, beki döwrîm rareyno, xora verê ni koy dî xo vira biymî" vatênî. Xora rüyê dî-hirê qeşî Tırki qeşikerdena iy ra namê xo komunistî'ya veciyay bî, nîka kî mîleti cî rê "to Heqî kenay, nî qeşiyonê nanêno meyrê fekê xo, to chêlikê Bamasuriay, nî senên qeşiyê, to musay, xırabo!" vatênî. Tainî 'Canê xo xurino, hini keno kî berê, bercê zerrî, pê qail bê.]

"We go to Harput school. At home we speak Turkish most of the time."

"Why? Are you Turks?"

At first, the children did not know how to answer this question. Yes, Turkish was not spoken in their villages. But their elders told them more about faith and the creed. Would it be good or bad if they told the commander now? Then the older of the children, *Ali*, assuming that the commander already knew, said:

"No! We are not Turks, we are Zaza, but our father tells us not to speak Zazaki but Turkish." "Why does he tell you that?" "He says that the Zaza language is the language of the *marabas*, Zazaki is the language of shepherds and cattlemen, the language of the peasants. They speak Turkish where there are aghas, beys, officers and commanders! That's why we speak Turkish!" The lieutenant knew what the fate of the aghas would be. He felt sorry for these two children" (Mirza, 2020:519-520).³⁰

In *Kilama Pepûgî*, Zazaki is referred to as *Dilmijki* and Kurdish as *Kurmanckî*. Zeynel, who is studying at the tribal school in Istanbul, starts speaking Turkish with his brother *Welî* and *Mem*, who come to him to tell him that his father had been killed, and is confronted with the reproach "*Or have you forgotten our language?*" Zeynel says, "There are some *Çewligians* in the school. When we get together, we speak our language. Otherwise, there is no one here but us" (Gündüz, 2000:62). After the meeting with Zeynel, the two go to the house of their *Kerwa*, *Kebo*, who has settled in Istanbul, and they speak in *Kurmanckî* (Kurdish) and Turkish to the Armenian Kebo and his family (Gündüz, Ibid:64).

In the novel, which depicts events at the foothills of Şerefdin and Bingol Mountains in the late 19th to 20th centuries, the narrator states that Armenians knew

³⁰ ["Sima Tırki koti mısay?"

Yinu vat vi:

"Mektev de mısayme!"

"Sene mektev o?"

"Ma mektevé Xarpéti de waneme. Çe de ki téwerte de jede Tırki qesey keme."

"Ça? Sima Tırki yé?"

Domonu virende nézona coavé na perşi çitury bídé. Heya, dewuné yinu de Tırki qesey nébiyené. Hama piluné yinu jede qalé yiman u yitiqati kerdené. Nika na femandari ra ke vazé haqa yinu de rınd a, ya ki xıravın a. Taé waxt béqerar mendi. Dima domonu ra, pilé xo, Ali, qan kerd ke femandar xora nae zoneno, vake:

"Né! Ma Tırk nime, Zazay me, hama piyé ma, ma ra vané Zazaki qesey mekeré, Tırki qesey bikeré."

"Sima ra ça hen vané?"

"Vané zone Zazau zoné morevaun o, Zazaki zoné şoanuné mal gaun o, zoné dewuzun o. Koti ke ağay, begy est é, koti ke mamuri est é, femandari est é, téde Tırki qesey kené! Ma ki cokao Tırki qesey keme."]

Teymeni zonené peyniya ağleru se bena. Guna xo na di domonu ré amené.]

Kurmanji as well as their own language, that Armenians and Zaza learned Kurdish from childhood but that Kurmanj men and women learned very little Armenian and Zazaki (Gündüz, Ibid:128). The novel states that after the Russians invaded Eastern Anatolia, some of the locals were forced to learn Russian (Gündüz, Ibid:514).

The characters suffering language problems

There are many references to the value of the mother tongue, the extinction of Zazaki, the characters having problems as they do not know Turkish and only speak Zazaki, and the aspiration to be able to talk to someone in Zazaki in the novels. There are many references to the problems the characters face when they speak Zazaki. In *Her Çi Beno Sanike*, in which the omniscient speaks and uses the technique of inner speech (monologue), the narrator lives in Germany. He wants to relieve the despair he experiences due to the bad news from the country. So he wants to communicate with his people who have the same culture and speak the same language. Because, as they say, "*Man's language is his home*" (Çiya, 2001:11).³¹ But "*Not long has passed, and these have come to naught either*" (Çiya, Ibid:11).³² If one wishes, s/he can come together with contacts with whom s/he speaks the same language, work on their own culture. Herewith, the narrator wants to find someone who speaks his native language to get out of his troubled situation, but he can not:

Not much time passed, and that did not work either. I was going to work, riding the tram, walking around among people, and coming across a thousand kinds of languages. Everyone spoke their own language. I was listening to people talking to see if anyone spoke our language, even if it was a single word in them. No! Ours had been cut off from the root. You would think that Noah's Flood broke and overturned, eliminated and took away these people. (*Her Çi Beno Sanike*, 11).³³

As in the other modern examples of Zazaki literature, one may encounter many references to language problems with school and teachers in the novels. In work mentioned above, the narrator character, who has just started primary school,

³¹ [Vanê, zonê mordemi welatê mordemiyo.]

³² [Jêde ra nêverdêne, no ki thal veciyêne.]

³³ [Jêde ra nêverdêne, no ki thal veciyêne. Şiyêne kar, niştêne tramvaye, wertê qomi de feteliyêne, hazar u ju turi zoni hesnêne. Her kesi zonê xo qesey kerdêne. Mı gos nêne qeseykerdena qomi ser, hele werte de qulê Heqî çekuyê ki bîbo zonê ma qesey nêkeno? Nê! Ê ma bînge ra bîriay bi. Tı vana thofanê Nuxi veciyo, no qomi kerdo têser tu têbin ra, werte ra dardo we, berdo.]

states that no one speaks much Turkish when they start school. After the first lesson, the teacher instructs the students to come early the following day. Some understand the word “erken” as “örken”.³⁴ The next day, several students enter the classroom with ropes around their necks. The teacher, who cannot understand why the students bring ropes to the class, finally understands what is happening only through translating the others. One of the students even tells his friends in Zazaki, "My father said, 'After tomorrow, I will need it. Let the teacher do his job quickly. Bring our rope quickly!'" (Çiya, 2001:26). The teacher describes this as backwardness and says that in a few years everyone will speak Turkish like a nightingale:

"You see how backward you are. The enlightenment of our state has not yet reached these places. God willing, I will teach all of you in two or three years, and you will speak Turkish like a birdie. You, too, will have your share of civilization. You will find your tongue, go to the cities, speak clean Turkish there, and no one will laugh at you...". (Çiya, 2001:26).

In *Barkerdena Zerrî*, the Zazaki letter sent by the protagonist Şîyar to his friend *Sekman*, a boarding school student, causes problems. The director of the dormitory frightens *Sekman* (Can, 2012:163). In the same work, it is stated that the children of the two villages were educated in combined classes in the single-teacher school in the village of the protagonist Şîyar. The character, whose real name is *Remzan* but nicknamed *Sîater* because he is black, is depicted as the teacher's pet. He denounces the Zazaki-speaking students in the village to the teacher.

"Sîater was the teacher's man. What child is at school, in the village, in the spring, asleep... If he spoke Zazaki, he would add some and immediately transmit it to the teacher. Compared to Sîater, the teacher was an angel; if it were up to him, he would speak Turkish with birds, roosters, air, and creepy-crawly" (Can, Ibid:12).³⁵

The protagonist of the same work, Şîyar, attends primary school when they immigrate to Istanbul. He stops speaking to Zazaki with family members and others at one point. (Can, Ibid: 66-72). Although his father wants to talk to him, Şîyar rebuffs him. He always speaks Turkish and does not speak Zazaki, even if it is a single word. That he does not talk a single word in Zazaki attracts the attention of

³⁴ “Erken” means “early” in Turkish, and “örken” is a thick rope made of animal hair used to bind the animals.

³⁵ [Sîater, merdimê mehlîmi bi. Kancî qeçekî, wendexane di, dew di, îni di, hewn di... Zazakî'ya qisey kerdê se, ey hewina nayê pa u resnayê mehlîmî. Mehlîm ey het di meleke bi; ê ey'a biyayê se, mirîçikan do, dîkan do, vay do, dar u berrî do zî Tirkîya qisey bikerdê...]

other acquaintances too. His father and friends discuss the issue among themselves, but they cannot understand this attitude. There is no direct mention in the novel of why Şîyar does so. Şîyar goes to the cooperative, receives the leaflets from the leftists, and starts speaking to Zazaki again. This attitude represents one of the gaps in the novel.

Although there is no direct expression of this attitude of the protagonist, the fact that the letter he wrote to his best friend and the poems he wrote to the girl he loved were in Zazaki make the reader feel that Şîyar must have encountered some problems with his language. After a while, other members of Şîyar's family also came to Istanbul. Since her sister *Zelal's* Turkish is not good, the teacher says she will fail the class (Can, Ibid:98). But with gratitude, they both pass the course. Şîyar's father, *Cemal*, his mother, *Xezal*, his teachers, and the leftist characters see Zazaki as the cause of school failure.

"The sinner was found. The reason for this was Zazaki. Because of Zazaki, his lessons were bad. They didn't stop; they immediately issued an edict: At home, in the street, on the road, while standing, sitting, eating... They were not going to speak Zazaki to the children..."

"The persecution was reflected in the little children. The poor people had brought only Zazaki from their homeland. She was also being taken away. Their mother tongue remained only in the city where they spent their childhood, so they lost themselves, their dreams, and their imagination..." (Can, Ibid:102).³⁶

In *Gula Çemê Pêrre*, the nephew of the protagonist Gulcane, who has migrated to Istanbul, cannot get along with Gulcane's brothers because she does not speak Zazaki (Çem, 2007:177). Her sister *Dilane* cannot play with the children outside because she does not speak Turkish (Gula Çemê Pêrre, 85-86). To her daughter-in-law, who says that the language of Istanbul is Turkish, the grandmother says, "What if it is Turkish? What would happen if children spoke both Turkish and our language? Does one have to give up one's language when one learns another language? Is that what the Turks do?" (Gula Çemê Pêrre, 86).³⁷ *Bakil*, the

³⁶ [Gunakar vîneya bi. Sebebê înan Zazakî bî. Ridê Zazakî ra dersê înan gidî bî. Nêvinderdî, hima ferman vet: Qeçan do; keye di, kûçe di, ray ra, pay ra, ronîştîş di, werîştîş di... Zazakî qîsey nêkerdê.] [... Zilim qeçanê werdiyan ant. Feqîran, welat ra xo de jew Zazakî ard bî. A zî dest ra gêriyê bî. Ziwanê maya, ser şaristanê qeçkîn bi, coka înan; qay xo zî, hewnê xo zî, xeyalê xo zî kerdî vinî...]

³⁷ ["Qey ma se bîyo tirkî yo? Domanî ke hem tirkî bander bî hem kî ziwanê ma çiyê beno çik o? Merdim ke ziwanêde pêşe musa şerto ke ê xo caverdo? Tirkî winî kêne?"]

grandfather character, thinks that the regional boarding school and television have killed the Zazaki. *Bakil* scolds his grandchildren, who speak Turkish among themselves, and says that they should speak Zazaki;

"If they speak Turkish compulsorily in schools, they should speak it, but there is no obligation in the village. They should speak their language in the village so that the language is not lost. Where will it end if I don't speak, if you don't speak, if the other doesn't talk? The tongue will disappear. For God's sake, won't it?" (Çem, Ibid:17-18).³⁸

As is seen in other works, when the soldier comes to the village, someone speaks Turkish and interprets the dialogue. *Perîxane*, the colleague of the main character, *Gulcane*, advises her friend that she should not speak Kurdish as much as she can and that this will harm her (Çem, Ibid:247). In *Kilama Pepûgî*, it is stated that *Sekamil* spoke Turkish with the soldiers who came to the village and that the other villagers did not understand anything from the conversations (Gunduz, 2000:323-324).

In *Moriber*, in which it is stated that winter lasts six months, and the only means of being aware of the world in the village is the radio. *Saycan*, who listens to the news on the radio, listens to the presenter's words, "*The cold and snowfall coming from the Balkans will affect the Eastern Anatolia region*," and he admires the fluent Turkish of the female presenter. He says, "*The dog's daughter speaks Turkish as if she is lining up a rosary*" (Moriber, 143). In the same work, the village children who fight with the children of the neighboring village make their Turkish-speaking friends swear in Turkish to be the winning side in the swearing fight. *Dügirt*, who tries to swear in Turkish by being thrown out before *Thüjirig*, who knows Turkish, curses himself because he speaks poor Turkish (Can, Ibid:24).

In *Kilama Şilane*, the teacher's reaction to the students who speak Zazaki among friends takes a harsher form. Someone who the students do not know notes the Zazaki speakers and gives the list to the teacher every day (Sertkaya, 2007:23). Four students, one of them a boy and three girls whose names appear on the list, are waiting on their hands and knees in front of the teacher's desk;

³⁸ ["Mekteban de mecbur ê tirkî qesey kenê va bikerê, hama dewe de mecburiyet çin o. Dewe de gani ziwane xo qesey bikerê ke vîndî mebo. Ma eke to qesey nêkerd, mi nêkerd, êyê bînî nêkerd; peynîye şona kotî? Ziwane beno vîndî şono, winî nîyo Heq kena?"]

-Reach out your hand...!

Xezale extends her trembling hand

-Whoosh...

The other hand...!

-Whoosh. (Sertkaya, Ibid:24).³⁹

In *Kılama Şilane*, where school, class, and teacher attitude are extensively studied (Sertkaya, Ibid:22-38), the teacher tells the protagonist *Şilane* to sing a song in music class. When *Şilane* tells the teacher that she only knows songs in her language, the teacher loudly calls *Şilane*'s name and waits. She wants *Şilane* to be afraid, but *Şilane* is at ease. The students are surprised by her attitude:

"The students were surprised by this eye battle between Şilane and the teacher. All eyes, minds, the wise, everything, and everyone were under the influence of the teacher and Şilane. Şilane was talking about our language and was standing headfirst in front of the teacher as if she were challenging him (Sertkaya, Ibid:38).⁴⁰

The teacher retakes the floor and says, "What did you say?"⁴¹ When she asks again, Şilane does not change her stance. The teacher asks, "Learn Turkish folk songs, okay?"⁴² Şilane is again unresponsive. The teacher says, "There! Sit down!"

Another novel that includes references to children's school life is *Piltane*. Brothers Hesên and Wişên, who return home, do not respond to their mother's words. When their sister asks them, they don't answer her either. They giggle. Mother and sister think it's a game. Then, when the sister tells them that she will

³⁹ [-Destê xo derg bıke.. !

Xezale, destê xo bı lertzın derg kerde.

-Vıngg...

Desto bin...!

-Vıngg...]

⁴⁰ [Telebi, no herbê çıman ke mabenê Şilane u malımı de dest da bi pıro, şaşıye de mendi bi. Pêro çımı, sari, aqlı, baqlı, her çı u her kes, bınê bandora malımı u Şilane de bi. Şilane hem qalê zonê ma kerde bi, hem ki nıka verba malımı de heni bê ters, se ke êy ra meydan wazena heni sare berz vınetın biye.]

⁴¹ [-To va çı va çıı...!]

⁴² [Tırki kılaman bımsê tamam...?]

give them candy, *Wişên* replies to his sister. His brother *Hesen* says, "I will tell you to the teacher tomorrow" (Aldatmaz, 2016:27). *Zerîfa*, the mother, says:

"Are you crazy? How do you complain about each other? How can he force you to speak Turkish at home? Who knows Turkish so that you can talk to him? Get up and eat your food. Just speak your Turkish at school" (Aldatmaz, Ibid:27).⁴³

The next day, the brothers do not inform each other, but a student named *Welî* says, "Sir, Xece spoke Kurdish to her mother!".⁴⁴ The teacher lifts Xece to the blackboard and slaps him under his ear. Xece's cheek turns red, his eyes fill up, and he says, "My teacher, my mother does not know Turkish."⁴⁵ The teacher says, you should always speak Turkish with your mother, and if she doesn't know it, she will learn slowly." The author goes as follows: "From that day on, everyone in the village spoke Zazaki among themselves, no one complained about anyone" (Piltane, 28).⁴⁶

In *Teresiye Çemçe*, *Keremu*, a character who has been coming and going to court for years, can only defend himself through an interpreter each time (Çar, 1995:98-129).

He didn't know court's language; he would always take an interpreter with him. Because the court was of the ruling class, they were subjugating these people... Zaza was also against them; he had fought against them. He had seized these lands in three months, and they had fallen into his hands. They had hanged the elders of the innovators (Çar, Ibid:129).⁴⁷

Approaches to belonging and identity

Since the novelists whose works are examined have a different view of the languages and belongings of the Zazas, in some novels the Zazas are seen as a part of the Kurds and the fiction is made accordingly, while in some novels they are seen as a separate people from the Kurds, while in some novels it is seen that the identity

⁴³ [O senê qise yo, şîma bom ê çik ê, gerreyê yewbînî kenê. Keye de tirkî qîseykerdene çik a? Ma kam tirkî zaneno ke şîma tey qîsey bikerê. Rawurzê nanê xo biwerê. Tirkîyê xo kî mekteb de qîsey bikerê, bes o.]

⁴⁴ [Örtmenim, Xece anasiyla Kürçe qonuştî]

⁴⁵ [Örtmenim anam Türçe bilmîyor]

⁴⁶ [A roje ra tepîya dewe de her kesî mîyanê xo de kirmanckî qîsey kerd, kesî gerreyê kesî nêkerd.]

⁴⁷ [Ey zune makemi ne zuna: ey tim çarnakar tey berd: çike no makeme sarenîyıcı vî; i sare dey bindestiye vî... Zaza ke o verva ine bi vî; o verva (vera) inu gura bi. Ni hardu hire asmi deste ine ra giroti vî (bi): i kote bi (vî) inu destu. Pile newdari dar kerde we; darda.]

of *Dersimian* comes to the forefront. Since it is understood that the perceptions and presuppositions of the authors on this issue are fixed, these two points of view are not compared on any occasion and different perceptions are not discussed in the novels. In this sense, it is not seen that the characters of the novel experience any identity turmoil or crisis of identity and belonging.⁴⁸ Again, there are no direct references to belonging or identity in most of the novels.

However, it is possible to obtain information about the identities or belongings of the novel characters from the way the authors handle the subjects, naming the languages of the Zaza and neighboring peoples. In *Kılama Silane*, Zaza are referred to as *Kirmanc* and Kurmanj as *Kurmanc*. In the novel, the main character, *Şilane*, asks her friend *Fatma* the meaning of the text "*We are Kurmanc, we want to be educated in our own language*" on a poster used at a demonstration in Izmir.

In *Gula Çemê Pêrre*, which stands out as the only work in which Zazaki and Kurdish are called "dialects", Zazas are referred to as *Kirmanc*, *Kird* and *Zaza*. The

⁴⁸ Although it is not included in the novels, it must be said that there is significant confusion about belonging and identity in Zazaki-speaking communities. In her research article titled, *Kurds, Turks, or a People in Their Own Right*, Krisztina Kehl-Bodrogi touches on the issues that are not mentioned much in other publishing. She asserts that Shafiism is generally perceived as Kurdness in the geography where the Zazas live and that although the Zazas do not speak Kurmanji, they are traditionally considered Kurdish because they worship like Shafis (Kehl-Bodrogi, 1999:441-442). She states that, although they speak a common language, the Sunni and Alevi Zazas have historically not considered themselves a unique ethnic group (ibid., 443). The Kurds and Turks have denied their ethnolinguistic position as if they were a Kurdish or Turkish nation, even though both define the nation as a people with a common language, culture, and historical origin (ibid., 444). The author adds that until recently [1999], studies that accepted Zazaki as a language were accused of discrimination (ibid., 445). An essential point of the author is that the idea of a separate Zaza people emerged not only in Europe but also in exiled organizations and that almost all those who now say that the Zazas are an independent people were previously on the left wing or in pro-Kurdish political organizations (ibid., 448). Stating that the language policies in the circles that migrated from Turkey to Europe enabled the Zaza to discover their otherness, the author expresses that problems occurred after the demands of mother tongue education. His quotations from Bruinessen contain the following striking statements: "This situation caused the Zazaki speakers to have a troublesome dilemma: Should they demand that their children studying in German schools receive Kurmanji education as a mother tongue instead of Turkish? Some chose this path, as previous generations had always learned the lingua franca Kurmanji in their region, but there was discomfort. This was an issue on which the interests of Zazaki speakers and Kurmanji speakers were not identical" (cited. Bruinessen, Kehl-Bodrogi, 1999:448). Zeynep Arslan states that the only ethnicity in which Alevi are not in the minority is the Zazas (Arslan, 2016:27). She points out that Zazaness, like Alevism, has only been rediscovered by some people in the more democratic conditions of Europe and has been researched and developed within the limits of possibilities (Arslan, 2016:26).

author also refers to them as "Zazayi" (Zazas). In work, rather than the terms *Kirmanc* and *Kurmanc*, the terms *Kurd*, *Kurdî*, *Kurdan*, and *Kurdîstan* are used more widely. The Zazaki and Kurmanji-speaking communities are thus referred to in the novel by the umbrella term "*Kurd*."

In *Piltane*, the concept of "Kurd" is a common term when referring to other characters. From this, it is understood that the phrase "Kurd" is used as an umbrella term for the Zaza and Kurmanc peoples, although not in a strong form in the novel.

In *Kilama Pepûgî*, the terms *Dilmij* and *Dilmijkî* are used for the Zazaki-speaking people and their language. The term *Dilmij* is also used for the Zazas living in *Xani*, *Lîce*, and *Çewlîg*. In *Kilama Pepûgî*, *Kurmanciyê* is a name given to Kurdish/Kurmanji-speaking communities/people. In the novel, Zaza and Kurmandjs are referred to as "Kurd" as a common term. For example, while describing the times of the Russian invasion of Eastern Anatolia, it is said, "*Whichever army has passed through Kurdistan so far has not dared to head towards Dersim. Dersim is the stronghold of the Kurds. The Russian does not know this. That is why they came as far as Pülümür.*" (Gündüz, Ibid:523)⁴⁹

In the novel, the main character *Zeynel*, whose father was killed, enters into many conflicts with the Hamidiye Regiment, which consists of the members of the *Jibran* tribe, the murderer of the father, and the Ottoman soldier, and kills many people. After the murder of his pregnant wife by his brother, *Zeynel* goes and seeks refuge in the *Jibran* tribe, and he seeks forgiveness (Gündüz, Ibid:297). On the advice of his friend *Hemed* from school, he will meet with the tribal chief, *Ibrahim Milij*, but *Hemed* advises him to visit his son-in-law first. He will help you, he says. *Zeynel* goes to *Ibrayim's* house and meets with compliments there because he takes refuge in them, even if he has enemies.

He stays in this house with his brother for more than a month. At the end of a month, the wife of the tribal lord's son-in-law asks *Zeynel* for help, saying that an Arab gang attacked a village of the *Jibrans*, killing fifteen or twenty people and plundering the village. "*Serhat's tiger! The Arabs are killing the Kurds in front of*

⁴⁹ ["Hetanî ewroy Kurdîstanî ser ra kamcî ordî vêrdo ra, nitawro ver Dêrsîmî ra kero. Dêrsîm kela Kurdan a. Uriz naye nizano. Coka hetanî Pêlemurîye jû amo.]"

your eyes. How can you sit here? You are our guest" (Gündüz, Ibid:303)⁵⁰, she says. She encourages Zeynel and his brother to fight on their behalf. When Zeynel and his friend fighting the Arab tribe fend off the gang, a letter is written in Kurdish declaring their forgiveness and is handed over to them (Gündüz, Ibid:303-304).

This attitude of the main character, Zeynel, taking refuge in the tribe that he is at war with and demanding amnesty and fighting on behalf of this tribe shows that the Shafii Kurdish tribe was chosen as the reference group. When Zeynel first hears about his father's murder while he is studying at a tribal school in Istanbul, he receives the help of his friend Hemed, a member of the Jibran tribe, who is the murderer of his father. While he is surprised by the support of Hemed, an enemy tribal member who helps him, he learns that Hemed's case is not a tribal case but a Kurdistan case. Therefore, it can be inferred that Zeynel was sympathetic to Hemed that day.

Also, at the beginning of the novel, Zeynel's murdered father, *Îbrayê mê Talî*, says they hoped they would be given rights when the Hamidiye Regiments were established but that the state deceived them (Gündüz, Ibid:32). In another place (Gündüz, Ibid:94) it is reported that the notables of the Hormeks tried very hard to obtain the right to make a regiment, but this was not possible because the Alevi policy of the state had not changed.

Therefore, although they wanted to join the Hamidiye Regiments before, because they were Alevis, the *Zaza Hormek* tribe was not accepted to form a regiment. Zeynel is under the influence of Hemed, pursuing the Kurdistan cause. While they are studying in the tribal school in Istanbul, and after fighting with the Hamidiye Regiments consisting of the Shafii Kurdish *Jibran* tribe and the Ottoman soldiers for a few years, he decides to ask for forgiveness as a result of the death of his wife. He is pardoned by fighting the Arab gang on the side of the Jibran tribe. For this reason, it is understood that the main character—and therefore the Alevi *Zaza* representing the essential character—has sided with the Shafii Kurdish *Jibran* tribe. The *Jibrans* have the most significant political and military power in the

⁵⁰ ["-Pilingê Serxatî to çima ver Erebi, Kurda kişenê. Ti sê ana ra xo îta nîşena ro. Ti mêymanê ma wa."]

region, and the *Hormeks* lack the dynamics to act independently. This attitude of the protagonist is interpreted as seeing the tribe in question as a reference group.

It seems complicated to draw an inference about identity and belonging from the novels *Ti Tewrê Payîza Şîya* and *Barkerdena Zerrî*. In *Barkerdena Zerrî*, there is no mention of ethnic or national affiliation, except that Zazaki is referred to as *Zazaki* and Kurdish (Kurmanji dialect) as *Kirdaski*. Apart from the Zazas, the most critical group mentioned in *Her Çi Beno Sanike* is the Armenians living in Dersim. The Armenians and Zazas are compared. There is no mention of the Kurmanji-speaking Dersim people in the novel. The emphasis on the people here as *Dersimizi* (*Dersimians*) or *sarrê Dersimi* (*Dersim people*) shows that identity and belonging in this work are expressed in *Dersimian* – being Alevi in other words.⁵¹

In *Moriber*, in which Zaza is referred to as *Kirmanc*, the use of the expressions *Dêsimin* and *Dêsimic* (*Moriber*, 8-35) in one or two places can be read as an emphasis on *Dersimian*.⁵²

In *Sileman*, the Zazas are referred to as *Zazay*, the land they live on as *harrdé Zazau*, “the land of the Zazas,” the Kurds as “*Qurr*”, and the regions inhabited by Kurds as “*harrdé Qurru*.” In another chapter, the narrator author, referring to a report written by the state, says, “*Dersim is not what you know. Yes, they are Zazas, but they are unaware of their Zazaness. They don't chase after Zaza. They did not support Sheikh Said; they did not help him from the Karakose side. They did not give credit to their men*” (*Mirza*, XXXX:341)⁵³. In another part of the novel, the children who answer the commander's question, “*Are you a Turk,*” say, “*No, we are not*

⁵¹ For the emphasis on being a *Dersimij* (*Dersimer*) in the novel, see Çiya, 2001:42, 54, 59, 60, 64, 81etc.

⁵² In her article *Language, Religion, and Emplacement of Zazaki Speakers*, Sevda Arslan states that the field research she conducted in Germany and Austria in western Turkey between 2016 and 2018, with 25 Zazaki-speaking people (11 of whom were women; 14 of whom were men; between the ages of 20 and 58), some of the interviewees answered Kurdish and the other part Zaza as a separate ethnic identity, and that a few people answered Turkish or Alevi to questions about their ethnic affiliation. (Arslan, Zeynep, 2019:12). In older work, *Search of Zazaki Speaking Individuals For Identity*, Çetkin searches an answer to why the identity-building process is more common in young generations. The search conducted with young interviewees between the ages of 20-30 (Çetkin, 2016:48) asserts that a single identity imposed after the proclamation of the Republic in Türkiye is questioned by the young generations, the imposition of a single Kurdish identity as well.

⁵³ “*Dersim jê zonaena sîma niyo. Heya Zazay yê hama haurê Zazaeni niyê. Zazaeni dima nefetelinê. Phoşt nêdê Şix Sayiti, hetê Qerakösey rê wordim nêkerd. Tivarê mordemunê yinu nêkerd.*”

Turks, we are Zazas" (Sileman, 519).⁵⁴ From these descriptions, it is understood that Zazaness is depicted as belonging and identity in the novel.

In *Teresiye Çemçe*, the first novel written in Zazaki, there is a saying, proverb, or author's word at the beginning of each chapter. In the third part of the work, there is a word from the author. It says, "Our language is neither the language of the Turks nor the language of the Kurds" (Çar, Ibid:52). Thus, it is stated that Zazas are not Kurds. Kurds are referred to as *Qurr* and *Kirdas*. It is indicated that Elazığ, Siverek, Çermik, Ergani, and Çapakçur were captured, but when Diyarbakır was besieged, the Kurds did not support the Zaza and did not fight with the Zazas. These descriptions by the author show that Zazaness is seen as an independent identity throughout the novel.

Outcome

The language spoken by the Zazas is usually accepted and referred to as *Zazaki* both in academia and foreign publishing. Still it is also denominated as *Kurmancki*, *Zonê Harrdê Dewrêşi*, *Kirdki*, and *Dilmijki* as well, in the studied novels. The studies done in the fieldwork by linguists and social workers give the same results, more or less. The denotations of *Kirdasi*, *Kurmancki* and *zonê Qurru* represent the language of the Kurmanj Kurds in the novels studied. The terms *Dilmijkî* (used for Zazaki) and *zonê Qurru* (used for Kurmanji Kurdish) are scarcely used in daily life. The term *Dilmijkî* looks like a construction of the writer, but it seems that the author invented it from the metathesis of *Dimili* (a denomination primarily used in the southern parts of the Zazaki-speaking area). The denomination of *zonê Qurru* (The language of *Qurrs*) is used in two novels. This denomination has been asserted to mean an abbreviation of *Kurmanj* or a term to have pejorative connotations.

The Zaza characters fictionalized in the novels can also speak Kurmanji, while the Kurmanjs do not speak Zazaki. That the Zazas also speak Kurmanji shows that Kurmanji Kurdish has been the *lingua franca*, in some respects, in the Zazaki-speaking area. Some Turkish and Armenian characters can express themselves in Zazaki. In wedding ceremonies, the Zazas sing in other languages too. An attention-

⁵⁴ ["Né! Ma Tirk nime, Zazay me..."]

grabbing theme is the problems with languages the characters face. Many characters in other Zaza literature products and the novels studied in this article get into trouble when they start school. While the teachers force them to use Turkish, they forbid speaking Zazaki and appoint some students to report the students, the ones speaking Zazaki at home or outside the school.

Many characters communicate with others with a translator's help when they deal with only Turkish-speaking people. The endangerment of a native language makes some characters think they are distressed. Most of the novels do not highlight ethnic or national belonging and identity. Like the approach to their language, the belonging and identity construction differentiates. While some stories rarely refer to belonging, some refer to Zazaness and some Kurdness. Another term that may be interpreted as belonging or identity is *Dêsimic/Dersimiz* (being a Dersimer/Dersimian). None of the characters in the novels have problems related to their belonging and identity; they are biding their time.

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