



Social Coexistence and its Effect on Lexical Change: A Morpho-Semantic Analysis of Lexical Items in a Kurdish Variety in Garmian

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Abstract

The Kurdish variety, spoken in the town of Kifri, in the southern part of Kurdistan Region (Garmian), has undergone changes as a result of borrowing words from other languages such as Arabic, Persian, and Turkmen. This paper deals, in particular, with words taken from the Turkmani language, and this is due to the coexistence of Kurdish speakers with people speaking this language in the area. The influx of words from this language into this Kurdish variety has caused enormous changes in the lexical structure of the language. The aim of the work is to highlight the effect of this social coexistence on this variety. This is done by selecting a number of Turkmen loan words in the language, and conducting a morpho-semantic analysis of them with reference to some phonological changes they have undergone in the process of borrowing. The research hypothesizes that the Turkmen loan words are expected to have undergone *semantic*, *morphological*, and *phonological* changes due to their adaptation to the host language system. The study adopts a qualitative method to carry out the analysis of the samples in the light of the aspects mentioned. The conclusions show that the analyzed samples have exhibited changes in the sphere of *lexis* and this has had no effect on the core structural system of the host language. Besides, the research has unraveled proportional discrepancies among the loan words in relation to the changes they have encountered. The significance of the study can

be said to lie in its advantage for etymological studies that aim at investigating the origin of certain vocabularies in a given language. Similar studies can be suggested to quest for other linguistic aspects of borrowed words in given languages.

Keywords: Borrowing, Language Change, Social Coexistence, Boarding.

Phonemic Symbols and Notations:

| Phonemic Symbols | Phonetic Description | Examples |
|------------------|---|------------------------|
| Q | Voiceless, palatal, plosive | Qawrma /qæwərmə/ |
| † | dark / l / | Alchax /æltʃæx/ |
| <u>R</u> | Trill | Qurem sag /qʊrəmsæg/ |
| <u>G</u> | Voiced, velar, affricate | gwezqulagh /gwezqʊtæg/ |
| X | Voiceless, velar, affricate | Barmax /bʌrmæx/ |
| U | Similar to English / u / with the front of the tongue raised towards the palate | Guzgi /guzgi/ |
| ʔ | Voiceless, pharyngeal, affricate | Ayar /ʔʌjær/ |
| > | is changed into | |

1. Introduction: Language Changeability

The observation that all languages are in a state of constant change is unquestionable. Changeability is one of the determined universal facts about language and is emphasized by many linguists. Lyons (1981) maintains that language change is universal, continuous and, to a very considerable degree, regular. Aitcheson (2010) states that all languages are continually changing in the aspects of their sounds, syntax and meaning, and that this alteration is gradual and is unnoticed by the speakers of a language. Wardhaugh (1986) reveals two kinds of these changes: *internal* which refer to structural changes that occur over periods of time, and *external* which involve changes brought about via borrowing. Coates (1992) believes that linguistic change occurs in the context of linguistic heterogeneity. She explains that linguistic change can be said to have taken place when a new linguistic form, used by some sub-group within a speech community, is adopted by other members of that community and accepted as a norm.

The study of changes occurring within a given language is the domain of historical linguistics which, through a diachronic study, exhibits a survey of all the changes a language has so far undergone with the passage of time.

Although most linguists admit that the question 'why languages change?' has not, yet, been answered properly, some maintain that language *contact* or coexistence must be one of the principal factors behind language change. This contact between languages is of considerable importance because any given language can easily get affected by another when a sort of contact occurs between speakers of both. In such cases, the changes most frequently occur between mutually unintelligible languages. Such a contact is said to be of two main kinds: 'sudden contact' which may result from *invasion*, *immigration*, *trade* or other population shift; and 'continuous contact' between neighboring systems (Samuels, 1972, p. 93). The sort of contact referred to in this paper, between this variety of Kurdish and the Turkmen language spoken by the Turkmen minority in the area, is of the latter type since the speakers of both languages have regionally and socially been living together in that area for hundreds of years.

Relevant to the notion of borrowing, Marle (2003, p.142) maintains that sociolinguistic factors may also influence the lexical structure of a given language in case of borrowing;

and that the linguistic coexistence of two languages is taken to be the driving force behind the augmentation of the lexical stock of a given language. Under the notion of *borrowing*, he assumes that one of the most important sociocultural parameters of a language contact situation is whether the speakers of the host language constitute an *elite* group; in other words, one has to ask the question “who is borrowing?” which is, to him, as important as “what is being borrowed?”. According to these parameters, he distinguishes between two processes which are often subsumed under the label *borrowing*:

A. Borrowing proper:

In this process, the borrowing is said to be non-elite-governed, i.e. the borrowing affects the language of the whole community. It is a natural and unconscious borrowing in which words are borrowed because they are needed in everyday communication; it influences the most flexible part of the language (the lexicon), and is accompanied by phonological adaptation. It does not change the hard core of the host language.

B. Contact-induced elaboration (CIE):

This type is elite-governed, that is, the borrowing is limited to a cultured, literate subset of the speech community. It is an unnatural, artificial, and conscious phenomenon in which members of the elite want to elaborate their native language and remodel it on the basis of cultural prestige. That is, it is limited to the formal language, and does not directly affect spontaneous speech. It does not necessarily involve lexical categories; and if it does; the words will not be adapted phonologically. This process usually targets grammatical/syntactic constructions (ibid).

Accordingly, we can say that the borrowing that has taken place between the Kurdish variety in question and the Turkmen language can be considered of the first type, as it has affected the language of the public, and has subsumed only the lexical categories, not the core of the host language structure.

2. *Borrowing* as a Linguistic Phenomenon:

One language may possess words for which there are no equivalents in another language. There may be words for objects, or words for social, political, and cultural institutions and events; or words for abstract concepts which are not found in the culture of other languages. Loan translation or calque is a special type of borrowing raised by Yule

(2006) in which there is a direct translation of the elements of a word into the borrowing language, for example, the English word 'skyscraper' from the French 'gratte-ciel'. Thus, undoubtedly, all languages borrow words from one another, and are in a state of constant change. This change usually incorporates various linguistic aspects: phonological, morphological, semantic, and syntactic. Nevertheless, it is claimed that the most obvious transfers between languages are in the sphere of *lexis*; i.e. it is the stock of *vocabularies* that often undergo changes in their structure, and the process followed to this effect is known as *lexical borrowing*.

Lexical borrowing is the process via which words usually pass into a language. It is easily defined by Kuiper et al. (1996) as the process that involves a word being taken from the vocabulary of one language into that of another. It is claimed that this phenomenon has emerged for principally one or two reasons: either there is a vacant slot for the word in the host language not filled from the system itself, or the donor language is of a greater prestige. However, the researcher believes that the lexical changes tackled in this paper, that is, the entire process of borrowing investigated is not a matter of prestige, but the result of boarding and *coexisting* with the speakers of the donor language. This is generally maintained by Lyons (1981) who claims that cultural diffusion and convergence are crucial for the explanation of language change and borrowing. Fromkin et al. (2003) state that a language may borrow a word from another language either directly or indirectly. If the borrowed word is a native word in the donor language, the borrowing is called *direct*, but if the word is not native and is in turn borrowed from another language, it is called *indirect*. For example, the borrowing of the English word 'feast' from the native French 'feste' is direct; whereas the borrowing of 'Algebra' from Spanish is indirect, since it is originally borrowed from Arabic by the Spanish speakers.

Moreover, Aitcheson (1992, p.168) emphasizes that borrowing is to be expected particularly when similarities are found between adjacent languages. She maintains that languages which come into contact with one another usually take over some of the linguistic characteristics of their neighbors; the most common of them is the borrowing of vocabulary items. She believes that borrowing of constructions is more likely to occur if the languages are structurally similar. According to this perspective, the researcher believes that, most probably, one of the factors behind the infiltration of Turkmen linguistic forms

into the Kurdish variety under study is the existing structural similarities between the two languages.

It is obvious that word order is one of the linguistic devices used in typology to show similarities between languages. Aitcheson refers to the fact that there are a number of possible word orders for world languages and that each one of them is likely to possess certain predictable characteristics (ibid):

| | | |
|------|------|------|
| S VO | V SO | O VS |
| SO V | VO S | OS V |

The donor and the host languages studied in this paper are the Turkmen language and the investigated Kurdish variety respectively. The Turkmen Language belongs to the greater family of Turkic languages. The Turkic languages, together with the Mongolian and Manchu-Tungus languages, form the Altaic language group. Specifically, Turkmen is included in the sub-group of Southern Turkic languages, along with Turkish and Azeri. It is a member of the southwestern Turkic language family, more specifically the East Oghuz group (Garrett et al., 1996).

The question why, in this paper, the focus is on Turkmen loan words in particular, and not on any other, is due to the vast number of Turkmen vocabularies which entered this variety of Kurdish as a result of the long-standing coexistence, and the social gathering of the two nations (Kurds and Turkmen) in the area.

The two languages studied in this paper are of the type SOV structure and, hence, borrowing of certain language structures is liable to take place between the two, especially when interlocutors of both languages are in daily contact with each other. The following examples show the syntactic similarity in the structure of the two languages:

1. Mehemet elma-lar-e yea-de. (SOV)
2. Muhamad sew-akan-i xward. (SOV)

Both of these sentences have an SOV structure, and even the case markers or suffixes on the object nouns are ordered similarly. The suffixes (lar, akan) are plural morphemes, and (e, i) show that the objects are in the accusative case.

3. Language Contact (Coexistence)

Language contact or coexistence happens when speakers of two or more languages board with each other, and consequently influence each other's language. It is generally regarded as a social and linguistic phenomenon by which speakers of different languages interact with one another, leading to a transfer of linguistic features. "Contact with other languages is a source of alternative pronunciations, grammatical structures, and vocabulary." (Matras, 2020, 37), and, hence, prolonged language contact generally leads to bilingualism or multilingualism.

The boarding, mentioned above, may occur between languages which are genetically related or unrelated; users of these languages may have similar or different social backgrounds, and the whole process results in what is called *multilingualism*. Linguism and lectalism may vary by age, ethnicity, gender, social class, education level, or by one or more of a number of other factors (ibid). A further type of language contact involves exogamous communities where more than one language might be used within the community because its members come from different areas. The converse of such communities where exogamy leads to multilingualism is an endo-terogenous community which maintains its own language for the purpose of excluding outsiders (Bowern, 2013).

Thus, the boarding of two or more nations results in language coexistence; and this phenomenon causes changes in the *lexical*, *phonological*, and *syntactic* aspects of the language. Among these aspects, the borrowing of vocabulary items is a common process, and is also called lexical diffusion (Wang, 1969). The main focus of the next section is on the analysis of lexical items and the processes of change they undergo while transferring from one language to another.

4. Data Analysis:

The infiltration of Turkmen vocabularies into the Kurdish variety under study is said to be due to miscellaneous factors and causes. Among the most important is the co-existence of the two nations in the area which has led to making social interrelations and intermarriage; and the everyday contact between native inhabitants of the area resulted in the flow of tremendous words and expressions into the host language. What is worth noting is that some of the Turkmen loan words are borrowed without any changes,

whereas many others have undergone morphological, phonological, and semantic changes as a result of the phonological system of the host language. These changes are mentioned in endnotes at the end of the section.

What follows are sample examples investigated and gathered from everyday communication of Kurdish speakers in the area, with reference to their transcriptions, structures and current meanings:

| Turkmen Loan word | Morphological Structure | Meaning of the parts in the donor language | Current meaning in the host language |
|---|----------------------------|---|---|
| A. Words referring to food and drinks: | | | |
| /xætumədi / ⁱ | /xætun / + /bud ə/ | Lady + thigh | egg-shape food made from rice filled with minced meat |
| /qæwΛti / ⁱⁱ | /qæwæ / + /ætti/ | coffee + below | breakfast |
| /qΛndæx / ⁱⁱⁱ | /qæn/ + /dæx/ | blood + hot | hot drink |
| /diʃlΛmΛ/ | /diʃ/ + /lΛmΛ/ | bite + that which is related to | solid sugar taken with tea |
| /æʃ/ | /æʃ/ | meal | meal |
| /qæwərmə/ | /qæwər/ + /mə/ | fry + that which is to | fried meat |
| /dɔidərmə/ | /dɔidər / + /mə/ | freeze + that which is related to | ice cream |
| /giælənbΛrmægi / | /giælən/ + /bΛrmæg/ | bride + finger | finger cookies |
| /bΛrmæx/ | /bΛrmæx/ | finger | special type of slim cigarettes |

B. Words referring to instruments & objects:

| | | | |
|-----------------|---------------------|--------------------------------|--------------|
| /guzgi/ | /guz/ + /ugə/ | eye + front | mirror |
| /qæzmə / | /qæz/ + /mə/ | dig + that which is related to | scoop |
| /dΛrnæx kesæn/ | /dΛrnæx/ + /kesæn/ | nail + cutter | nail cutter |
| /dΛrnæx boiægi/ | /dΛrnæx / + /bojæg/ | nail + varnish | nail varnish |

| | | | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| /ʌlkidifi/ | /ʌrkæk / + /difi/ | masculine + feminine | two-part buttons | |
| | | | | pressed against each other |
| /kægʌz quʃi / ^{iv} | /kiægət/ + /quʃə/ | paper + sparrow | | paper kite |
| /sugmə/ ^v | /səx/ + /mə/ | squeeze + that which is related to | | breast holder |
| /guezlæg/ | /guz/ + /læg/ | eye + that which is related to | | eyeglasses |
| /sʌfʌrtæs/ | /sʌfʌr/ + /tæs/ | travel + pot | | pot for takeaway food |
| /qoʔtæs/ | /qol/ + /tæs/ | handle + pot | | handled pot |
| /suzgetʃ/ | /su/ + /getʃ/ | water + drain | a pot for draining water | |
| /beidæg/ ^{vi} | /beiræg/ | flag | | flag |
| /ætʃʌr/ | /ætʃ/ + /ʌr/ | open + that which is related to | | tin opener |

C. Words referring to location:

| | | | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| /jʌnguez / ^{vii} | /jʌnʌʃʌ / + /guez / | side + eye | | side room |
| /dʌnʌdʒæg/ | /dʌjʌnʌ/ + /dʒæg/ | lying + place | | a small structure |
| | | | | built to lie against |
| /tʌqætti / ^{viii} | /tæq/ + /æltə/ | arch + below | | arch tunnel |
| /qʌnʃʌr/ | /qʌnʃʌr / | front place | a place for keeping bed stuff | |
| /itʃʌri / ^{ix} | /itʃærə/ | inner place | | inner room |
| /qæpibægʃʌmʌ/ ^x | /qæpə/ + /bʌgʃʌmʌ/ | door + that which can be locked | | private house |

D. Nouns, Adjectives and Adverbs:

| | | | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| /ewlʌrgezæn/ | /ewlʌr/ + /gezæn/ | houses + rambler | aimless rambling | |
| /ʌglʌndʒə / ^{xi} | /ʌglʌn / + /gedʒə/ | enjoy + night | enjoying night before wedding | |
| /jæpʃə jæpʃə/ | /jæpʃ/ + /ə/ | stick + in the manner of | | slowly |
| /qæpəʃ qʌpæn/ ^{xii} | /qæpmiʃ/ + /qʌpæn/ | snatched + snatcher | chaotic way of | taking away things |

| | | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--|
| /ægəzdΛrmani / ^{xiii} | /ægəz/ + /dΛrmæn/ | mouth + medicine | herbal medicine used for mouth diseases |
| /ɔɪnbæz/ | /ɔɪn/ + /bæz/ | play + dealer | playful |
| /dilbæz/ | /dil/ + /bæz/ | tongue + dealer | extraordinary fluent |
| /sΛfΛr bΛlk / ^{xiv} | /sΛfΛ r/ + /birlik/ | travel + uniformity | general conscription |
| /tʃΛrtʃi / | /tʃærch/ + /e/ | cloth + dealer | peddler selling cloth |
| /bæʃdægirmæn/ | /bæʃ/ + /dægirmæn/ | head + miller | head miller |
| /gwequɫag / ^{xv} | /gwez/ + /qulæg/ | eye + ear | cautious |
| /guezʔjæri/ ^{xvi} | /guz/ + /ʔjær/ | eye + measurer | random measuring |
| /Λjæg/ | /Λjæg / | foot | (v) to isolate limp sheep from the cattle |

E. Swearwords:

| | | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|---|
| /qurəmsæg/ | /qurəm/ + /sæg/ | base + solid | dodger |
| /qΛpætmə/ | /qΛpæt/ + /mə/ | lock + that which | a woman having an affair with only one man |
| /qΛttæx/ ^{xvii} | /qΛt/ + /jætæx/ | stay + sleep | whore |
| /Λttjæx/ | /Λttjæx/ | low | immoral |
| /surtæk/ ^{xviii} | /surtæk/ | single | dishonest |

Endnotes:

ⁱ / n / is deleted + / budə / > / mədi /

ⁱⁱ / æ / is deleted + / ə / > / i /

ⁱⁱⁱ / æ / > / ʌ /

^{iv} / ə / > / ʌ , i / + deletion of / i /

^v / ə / > / u / + / x / > / g /

vi / r / > / d /

vii / jʌn ʌ ʃ ʌ / > / jʌn / + deletion of / ʌ ʃ ʌ /

viii / æ / > / ʌ / + / ə / > / i /

ix / æ / > / ʌ /

x / ə / > / i /

xi the deletion of / ge /

xii the deletion of / m /

xiii / ə / > / i /

xiv / birlik / > / bʌlək /

xv the deletion of / z /

xvi the addition of / i /

xvii The deletion of / jæ /

xviii The positive meanings of the words /surtək/ and /qurəm sag/ in the doner language have changed to negative ones in the host language.

The Results:

1. Morphologically, 43% of the loan words analysed are composed of two morphemes in the donor language, but turned into a single morpheme in the host language for ease of communication.
2. Phonologically, 28% of the tackled loan words have undergone phonemic changes; and 20% have undergone elision, for the sake of adapting to the phonological system of the host language.
3. Semantically, almost all the loan words investigated have kept their original meaning, but 4% of them have changed from positive meaning in the donor language to negative meaning in the host language.

4. 14% of the studied loan words are related to location names; 20% to food stuff; and 57% to instruments and daily activities.

Conclusion

The present work has tackled the phenomenon of social coexistence which has led to the infiltration of Turkmen words into the Kurdish variety in question, with a special focus on the morphological structure of those words, the meaning of their component parts in the donor/host languages, as well as the phonological changes some of those words have undergone to fit the phonological system of the host language. The conclusions the research has come out with can be summarized in the following points:

- Social co-existence does affect the languages used by interlocutors of the same community.
- Loan words are chiefly borrowed as a result of daily activities and daily needs for vocabularies expressing those activities.
- The effect of the donor language is often more prevailing in the sphere of *lexis*.
- The borrowing process investigated is regarded *non-elite*, since it has affected the language of the whole community, and is in the sphere of lexical items only.
- The borrowing process, as a whole, has taken place as a result of a *continuous*, not a *sudden*, contact between interlocutors of the two languages.
- Proportional discrepancies do exist among loan words in relation to the changes they encounter in any process of borrowing.

پێکهوه ژيانى کۆمه لایه تی و کاریگه ریه کانی له سه ر گۆرانکاری وشه یی: شیکاریه کی واتای- مۆرفیمی بۆ بژاردیه ک له وشه کانی نیو شیوه زاریکی کوردی گه رمیاند

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پوخته

ئه و زاراه کوردیه ی له باشوری کوردستان، و به تایبه تی له شاری (کفری)، به کاردیت، گۆرانکاریه کی زۆری به خۆیه وه بینیه به بۆنه ی وه رگرتی وشه له زمانه کانیه وه کو: عه ره بی و فارسی و تورکمانی. ئه م توێژینه وه یه تایبه ته به شیکردنه وه ی ئه و وشانه ی که ده زیان کردو ته ناو ئه م زاره کوردیه له زمانی تورکمانیه وه ئه ویش به هۆی پێکه وه ژيانی قسه که رانی ئه م دو زمانه له هه مان شاردا. هاته ناوه وه ی ئه م وشانه گۆرانکاریه کی به رچاوی هیناوه ته کایه وه له ژێرخانی پێکهاته ی وشه یی ئه م زاراه کوردیه. ئه م توێژینه وه یه هه ولێکه بۆ خستنه پوی کاریگه ری پێکه وه ژيان له سه ر زمانی قسه که رانی دو زمانی جیاوازا. بۆ ئه م مه به سته، هه لبژارده یه ک له وشه تورکمانیه کانی نیو ئه م زاراه کوردیه شیکراوه ته وه له پوی پێکهاته ی وشه کان و واتا کانیانه وه له گه ل ئاماژه به هه ندی گۆرانکاری فونۆلۆژی که وشه وه رگیراوه کان پێیدا تیپه ریون له ژێر کاریگه ری زمانه وه رگه که. گریمانه ی توێژینه وه که ئه وه یه که ئه م وشانه به هه ندی گۆرانکاری واتای، پێکهاته یی، و ده نگی تیپه ریون له ژێر کاریگه ری زمانی وه رگرا، و توێژینه وه که ش رێبازیکی شیکردنه وه ی جۆری گرتۆته به ر بۆ خستنه پوی ئه و گۆرانکاریانه. ئه نجامه کانی توێژینه وه که ئه وه ده رده برن که زۆریه ی گۆرانکاریه کان له بوا ری وشه دان و ئه م گۆرانکاریانه ش ه یچ کاریگه ریه کی نه رتینان دروسته کردو له سه ر پێکهاته ی وشه یی زمانه وه رگه که وه. هه روه ها، وشه وه رگیراوه کان جیاوازیه کی به رچاویان خستو ته پوی له پوی ئاستی ئه و گۆرانکاریانه ی پێیدا تیپه ریون.

کلیله وشه کان: گۆرانکاری زمان، پێکه وه ژيان، وه رگرتن، پێکه وه بونی کۆمه لایه تی.

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