Abstract

The origin of this thesis emerged from our observations in the sociolinguistic and political situation of the Kurdish language. As Kurdish has no recognized status and it is not taught in school settings, it is essentially acquired at home. However, there are about 22 million speakers in Turkey and at least 320.000 speakers in France (Fondation Institute Kurde de Paris, 2023). This situation has an impact on the oral use of the language, leading to observable linguistic modifications in interactions between its speakers.

 Our doctoral research is a case study in which we analyzed linguistic mixes from the point of view the productions of plurilingual speakers with Kurdish, as one of their languages of expression. Our aim is to assess the impact of the language of instruction (Turkish or French) on these speakers' language choices while interacting with interlocutors from the same socio-linguistic profile. Several hypotheses guide our study. Based on previous studies (Myers-Scotton, 2002), we assume that these speakers tend to choose their language of instruction as the matrix language in insertional type of code-switching. Moreover, with regard to alternation type of code-switching, we expect that Kurdish and the language of instruction co-exist in the productions of these speakers. Furthermore, we believe that all speakers employ verbal borrowings from Turkish in their Kurdish speech, due to the fact that these two languages are regularly in contact. Finally, we assume that other extra-linguistic factors also influence plurilingual speaking and language choice of our subjects. These include factors such as political positioning, attitude to languages spoken, age, context, degree of formality of the interaction, effect of the interlocutor and topic of conversation.

To this end, we set up a sociolinguistic questionnaire in three languages; French, Kurdish and Turkish, that we applied to 15 Kurmanji speakers and 6 of them who were corresponding to our criteria were selected for our study. Based on the results of the questionnaire, we formed two groups. The first group is made up of three speakers whose mother language is the Kurdish Kurmanji dialect and whose language of instruction is French. The second group, on the other hand, is also made up of three speakers whose mother language is the Kurdish Kurmanji dialect, but whose language of instruction this time is Turkish. Furthermore, all speakers have at least four languages in their repertoire: English, French, Kurdish and Turkish.

We conducted "language autobiography" interviews with all the selected speakers, which were, then, transcribed by us so that they could be analyzed both from the point of view of their autobiographical content and from the point of view linguistic mixes. The analysis of the language

autobiographies takes into account sociolinguistic model enabling the identification of different themes addressed by our speakers (Lüdi, 2005). The analysis of productions from the point of view linguistic mixes focus on the identification of borrowings and code-switching types such as insertions, alternations and congruent lexicalization, by using the model proposed by Muysken (2000).

Both types of analysis showed differences between speakers rather than between groups. Therefore, we proceeded to a detailed analysis of each speaker, relating the results of code-switching analysis to those of the socio-biographical analysis of the language autobiographies.

Our results show that although the language of instruction has an impact on speakers' language choice partly, their affective attitudes and political stances should not be overlooked, as they also have an impact on productions. Because, some speakers did not use their language of instruction as the matrix language. We observed a marked preference for French, whether among speakers who had this language as the language of instruction or not. For instance, we have observed insertions that both respect and violate the system morpheme principle of the MLF model proposed by Myers-Scotton (2006). The violation of this principle has been encountered in Kurdish and Turkish nominal insertions in French, where we observe the absence of the use of definite articles in French. Some Turkish adjectival insertions nested in Kurdish lead to changes in linguistic structure in Kurdish which caused by morphosyntactic differences between Kurdish and Turkish.

There is also emergence of Turkish transitive verbal borrowings systematically suffixed with the Kurdish support verb "kirin" (to do), which also leads to linguistic modification in Kurdish. We also observed the effect of extralinguistic factors such as interlocutor, political positioning, affective attitudes towards language and degree of formality of the interaction on their language choices.

Our study shows that speakers' language autobiographies can provide important elements for explaining the phenomena of linguistic mixes occurring among plurilingual speakers in context of migration.

Key words: code-switching, borrowing, Kurdish language, language autobiography, language contact phenomena, political linguistics.