Teresa O'Neill
Columbia & CUNY Graduate Center
to2286@columbia.edu

Samantha Mia Mateo
Columbia
smm2272@columbia.edu

Contact-Induced Change in Zazaki

This paper presents a case study of Zazaki, a language in crisis, drawing on both text-based and elicitation-based fieldwork. Zazaki is an Iranian language spoken primarily in Eastern Turkey. The conflicts encroaching on the Zaza homeland, compounded by tension between Turkish authorities and indigenous minorities, have disrupted the transmission of Zazaki. Our fieldwork represents a collaboration between linguists and speakers in New York City, serving the dual goals of advancing grammatical description and promoting language conservation. Here, we examine two domains of contact-induced change in Zazaki.

First, we discuss lexico-phonological phenomena of change. An analysis of the Zazaki lexicon indicates profound Turkish influence. Turkish loanwords abound not only in number (approximately 25%), but also in token frequency in the domains of employment, government, and education. Recent Turkish loanwords show less phonological adaptation than older loans. Declining adaptation of loanwords has engendered separate sub-lexicons (Itô & Mester 1999), reflecting a shifting diglossic situation: Turkish is overtaking Zazaki, even in oral domains. About 40% of loanwords show partial or no phonological adaptation, e.g., absence of the earlier [a]>[e], [k]>[q], and [y]>[i] changes. This attrition of the Zazaki lexicon is reflected in our texts, where speakers—often reluctantly—codeswitch to Turkish for lexical items and discourse markers across a variety of genres, suggesting cognitive pressure to use the superstrate language (Matras 1998).

Secondly, we describe instability in the case and agreement system, where native structures are being replaced by Turkish structures. Zazaki traditionally uses a "crossed" case and agreement system, a rare form of split ergativity. Present tense clauses are accusative, with subjects in *direct* case and controlling agreement, while objects take *oblique*; in past transitives, however, subjects and objects "trade" marking (1).

(1) a. <u>ez</u>   ayê   an-<u>anê</u>
      1SG.DIR 3SG.F.OBL bring.PRES-<u>1SG</u>
      'I bring her'

   b. mın   <u>a</u>   ard-<u>a</u>
      1SG.OBL <u>3SG.F.DIR</u> bring.PST-<u>3SG.F</u>
      'I brought her'

In our data, speakers exhibit a highly variable system. In addition to the crossed system, they use double oblique, a marked double-oblique, and accusative alignment. Haig's (2008) study of related languages argues that double oblique occurs during an unstable period of transition between split-ergative and accusative alignment. These innovations are absent from descriptive grammars (e.g., Todd 1985; Paul 1998), and thus, suggest rapid change. The synchronic presence of all four systems is symptomatic of instability in the intergenerational transmission of the language.

By examining language contact phenomena in both lexical and morphosyntactic domains, this paper develops a portrait of Zazaki in crisis.