



PREPARATIONS FOR PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION
INCLUSIVE OF CHILDREN'S ORAL LITERATURE

VOICE OF BAKUR

Feridun BİRGÜL

English Translation: Justyna SZEWZYK

VOICE OF BAKUR
PREPARATIONS FOR PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION
INCLUSIVE OF CHILDREN'S ORAL LITERATURE

Feridun BİRGÜL

English Translation
Justyna Szewczyk

DISA PUBLICATIONS

DIYARBAKIR INSTITUTE FOR POLITICAL AND SOCIAL RESEARCH
(DISA)

**VOICE OF BAKUR
PREPARATIONS FOR PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION INCLUSIVE OF CHILDREN'S
ORAL LITERATURE**

DISA PUBLICATIONS

Author: Feridun Birgöl

Project Management: Atalay Göçer

Contributors to the Field Research: Aysel Emine Arslan, Ethem Çalim, Hakan Şahin, Miraz Murad, Sümeyye Gezici, Uğur Özdemir

Consultants of the Research Report: Netice Altun Demir, Ramazan Pertev

English Translation: Justyna Szewczyk

Publication Identity Design: Bang Medya

Cover Design: Şendoğan Yazıcı

Page Layout: Şendoğan Yazıcı

Cover picture: Rounak Rasoulpour

Printing: MATSİS MATBAA SİSTEMLERİ - Tevfikbey Mah. Dr. Ali Demir Cad. No: 51 Sefaköy / İSTANBUL Tel: 0212 624 21 11

First Edition: September 2015

ISBN:

Copyright © September 2015

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced without the permission of Diyarbakır Institute for Political and Social Research (DISA).



**DİYARBAKIR SİYASAL VE SOSYAL
ARAŞTIRMALAR ENSTİTÜSÜ**

**ENSTİTUYA DİYARBEKİRÊ BO
LÊKOLÎNÊN SİYASÎ Û CİVAKÎ**

**DİYARBAKIR INSTITUTE FOR POLITICAL
AND SOCIAL RESEARCH**

Mimar Sinan Cad. Aslan Apt. B Blok No: 12
21100 YENİŞEHİR/ DİYARBAKIR

Tel: 0412 228 1442

Faks: 0412 224 1442

www.disa.org.tr

disa@disa.org.tr

Feridun BİRGÜL, born in 1986 in Diyadin town of Ağrı province. After completing his Kurdish education at Istanbul Kurdish Institute (2008-2010) he began to work in the field of Kurdish linguistics. In 2010 he graduated from Department of Pre-School Teacher Education at Marmara University, Istanbul. Currently works as an instructor at Amed Kurdî Der and pursues his interest in the Kurdish language.

Published works: Moristan: Pre-school Educational Kit for Kurdish (TZP Kurdî publishing).

Voice of Bakur / Preparations for Pre-school Education Inclusive of Children's Oral Literature report was prepared as a part of the Mother Tongue First: Mother Tongue and Multilingualism in Education Project of the Diyarbakır Institute for Political and Social Research (DISA), supported by Open Society Foundation, TZP Kurdî, Heinrich Böll Stiftung Association (HBSD) and The Swiss Embassy in Turkey. The views expressed in this report do not necessarily represent the views of DISA or Open Society Foundation or TZP Kurdî or the Heinrich Böll Stiftung Association or the Swiss Embassy.

To download the report please visit: <http://www.disa.org.tr/voiceofbakur.pdf> or contact us from the correspondence information above.

with the contributions of



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Embassy of Switzerland in Turkey
İsviçre Büyükelçiliği Türkiye

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study was made possible thanks to many people. I would like to thank Necdet İpekyüz, Netice Altun Demir and Ramazan Pertev for their support and kindness they showed me during the research. I extend my gratitude for language corrections and all advice to Luqman Guldive and Miradî Gundikî. I am greatly indebted to Amara Şık, Çimen Şeveşoğlu, Fırat Timur, Kenan Colemergî, Lokman Varlı, Nesrin Navdar and Yasir Orak for their help with selection and organization of the material recorded during fieldwork. My sincere thanks also goes to Penose Enver, Rezan Erdoğan from Cizre branch of Kurdî-Der; to staff of Silopi branch of Kurdî-Der; to my mentors Aydın Hoca, Evdilaye Koçer, Kurdê Anne (Dayika Kurdê) and İdris Torlak; to the staff and mentors from Hakkari branch of Kurdî-Der: Kemal Şimşek, Hamdi and Taner; to my friend Suphi in Çukurca and Tahsin Kara; to Aydın Hoca and Rahime Anne in the village of Çığlı; to friends in Uludere: Zeliha and Özgür; in Yüksekova to Şoreş Hoca; to the staff and mentors from Şemdinli branch of Kurdî-Der and to Ufuk Hoca'ya; to a friend in Erciş, Cevdet, to the staff and mentors from Erciş branch of Kurdî-Der and to Erciş Municipality co-chair Abdurrahman Çağan; to Kalê Şinoyi in Gürpınar and Gürpınar Municipality; to mentors and students from Başkale branch of Kurdî-Der to Rıdvan Güner Hoca; to Muradiye Bahattin in Bingöl; in Diyadin to Özal Birgül, Mehmet Yıldız, Sebih Demir; in Doğubayazıt to Mehmet İrvan; in Iğdır to Azat Eksik, Sürmeli Kum, Ömer Çeçen; in Tuzluca to Fahrettin Yiğit, Adem Dilbirin; in Pazarçık to Xece Anne; in Kesrik to Nurullah Demir Hoca and Raife Bêçare; in Muş to Şabedine Heyder; in Varto to staff of Mordem Art and Culture Center and Maşallah Hoca and dengbej Selahattin Gültekin; in Bulanık to Sıraç; in Adilcevaz to İsa Akkuş, Faruk Köstekçi; in Bitlis to Halis; in Hizan to Sait; in Pervari to Emrullah, Mirali and Şiyar; in Bingöl to Ömer Barasi and Fatih Boztimur; in Tunceli to Seval and Yusuf; in Ergani to Rıza Bingöl; in Silvan to Hacı Şerif; in Nusaybin to Perihan Anne and Barin Alto; in Midyat to Kavme Dik. I also owe my gratitude to dozens of people I have no space to name here. I extend my thanks to workers of Eğitim-Sen, Mem û Zîn Cultural Center, Mordem Cultural Center, Laleş Cultural Cntr, regional municipalities, workers of Democratic Regions Party (DBP) and People's Democratic Party (HDP).

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	7
A. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND SCOPE	11
B. LANGUAGE USED IN THE INTERVIEWS.....	12
C. DIFFICULTIES	14
She went on and she could not hold back herself and started crying	16
D. FRAMEWORK OF THE REPORT	18
E. REPRESENTATIVENESS OF THE REPORT	19
CHAPTER 1.....	20
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE REGION	20
A. Kurdistan: terminology	20
1. Serhed Region	22
2. Behdinan Region	24
3. Botan Region	26
4. Diyarbakır Region.....	27
5. Dersim Region.....	27
B. Notes from the fieldwork	29
I. Change of the village names	29
II. Cultural transmission	31
III. Destroying History	33
IV. Situation of Kurdish language	36
V. A folk song, a mother and mother's tears	38
VI. A folk song, a girl and girl's tears.....	40
CHAPTER 2	42
A. ORAL LITERATURE OF KURDISTAN.....	42
B. GENRES OF ORAL LITERATURE IN KURDISTAN	44
1. Tales (chirok).....	45
2. Proverbs.....	57
3. Idioms	58
4. Chants.....	59
5. Riddles.....	61
6. Epigrams	64
7. Payizok – Pirepayizok* Autumn Songs	65
8. Epos	67
9. Curses.....	69

10. Other oral literary genres	72
11) Women's oral literature: lullabies	76
C. CHILDREN'S ORAL LITERATURE OF KURDISTAN	79
D. THE FOX: HERO OF KURDISH TALES	83
E. GENDER IN ORAL LITERATURE	84
a) Women in oral literature	84
b) Women's influence on oral literature	86
F. CULTURAL INTERACTIONS AND ASSIMILATION IN ORAL LITERATURE	89
a) Aesop fables and Children's Literature of Kurdistan	89
b) Grandma's Keloğlu and Keloğlan	91
c) The reality of assimilation and cultural genocide under the name of change	92
G) SLANG IN ORAL LITERATURE	95
CHAPTER 3	100
TOWARDS PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION WITH ORAL LITERATURE	100
The use of oral literature in pre-school education	101
1. Nursery rhymes	101
2. Riddle	101
3. Poetry	102
 INSTEAD OF A CONCLUSION	 104
BIBLIOGRAPHY	107

INTRODUCTION

A society, which can freely use language and culture of its land in education, raises conscious individuals who are at peace with themselves. However, the same society, if under pressure and oppression of the hegemon does not refer to its own values, but values of the oppressor, becomes alienated from its own land, history, culture and language and raises individuals lacking self-confidence. Kurds, who possess rich language, culture, history and land, have been constantly prevented from growth by oppressive and colonialist states. Therefore, language and cultural values of Kurdish nation could be passed on new generations in written form only in a limited scope. Kurds managed to protect and preserve to this day their values in oral form through efforts of *dengbêjs*, storytellers and singers and that is how they created considerable repertoire of oral culture.

Apart from many researchers and writers, there are many studies of Kurdish folklore done by Kurds themselves.¹ After the November War,² Yerevan, the capital of Armenia, became the center of Kurdish studies. In 1931 a committee at Yerevan University was formed to investigate and archive Kurdish folklore. Under leadership of Karo Zakaryan, such Kurdish researchers as “Cerdoê Gêncô,” “Heciyê Cindî” and “Kasimê Celîl” participated in the research. The committee published in 1936 invaluable work containing Kurdish folkloric products such as songs, stories, proverbs.

Prominent orientalist, Vladimir Minorsky, said about Kurdish oral culture: “Kurds are a wealthy nation. They have literature, tens of tales, stories, eposes and songs.” Vilchevsky claimed “super-abundance” of Kurdish literature and said “Kurdish oral literature is highly developed, but non-existent in written form.”³ According to Christian Allison⁴ Yezidi Kurds are example of original Kurdish folklore. One of the reasons is the fact that social and religious life is performed in Kurdish language. The existence of Yezidis is important in terms of Kurdish national identity acquisition. In Amed Gökçen’s view, while Yezidis were almost entirely within Ottoman Empire, nowadays due to migration they live in Iraq, Syria, Russia, Georgia and Germany. Since 1877 Yezidis were exposed to Ottoman Empire’s and different states’ policies and their political

1 Aras, 2000, Özgür Bakış Gazatesi, p. 12.

2 1920, during Turkish-Armenian War [Translator’s note].

3 Nikitin, 2013, p. 432.

4 Kreyenbroek & Allison, 2008, p.63.

and military situation was prescribed according to those policies. Until the beginning of the 20th century most of the Yezidis were nomads. Oral literature from the pre-settlement period talks about heroes, war and love. Moreover, Yezidi community represents Kurdish prehistoric system of beliefs.

According to a common narrative about the Yezidis, they are critical for the policies geared towards Kurdish freedom. In this case Yezidis' settlement and roots in the region are important factors.⁵ Therefore studies of Yezidi oral culture play important role from the perspective of bringing into light richness of Kurdish folklore.

Basil Nikitin⁶ claims that "instruction in Kurdish taking place in schools in Kurdistan since 1914 is rather aimed at popularizing and spreading knowledge about Islam in madrasahs. These madrasah teach in Arabic. However, when Arabic is not understood, education is carried out in Kurdish. Subjects taught there are very different from Kurdish culture and history. Based on that education in Arabic is seen in Kurdish society as a necessity and at the same time knowledge of Arabic is presented to the society as an indicator of scholarly achievement." Here we can see that in the past assimilation was carried out by dominant powers through imposition of a religion. Nowadays, however, assimilation is carried out more under the banners of capitalism by means of Turkish, Farsi and Arabic.

Colonialist powers throughout history accomplished cultural and literary genocide in consequence of assimilation. Particularly in Northern Kurdistan this kind of state policy has not changed since the Ottoman Empire. Music and literature of Kurdistan filtered through colonialist lenses was used as a weapon against Kurdish society.⁷

Measures taken by the state in Northern Kurdistan in terms of media and education are insufficient in the view of Kurdish society. Kurdish language instruction in Northern Kurdistan takes place in private schools or as a selective course.⁸ Kurdish children are educated in Turkish and only in the 5th grade they are exposed to instruction in Kurdish. This state of affairs in the eyes of Kurdish community and with respect to meeting the requirements for

5 Gökçen, 2014.

6 Nikitin, 2013: p. 433.

7 Yücel, *Türk Sinemasında Kürtler*, 2008.

8 Officially, based on "Living Languages and Dialects" two lesson hours a week are devoted to language instruction in 5th grade.

the right to education is meaningless. Kurdish classes offered in state schools are limited to teaching the language in addition to the fact that curriculum is prescribed by the state. As a result, Kurdish children are deprived of an opportunity to become familiar with their own culture and history. Approximately *15 million* Kurds live in Turkey.⁹ Therefore, use of Kurdish language in education from pre-school stage till university is a necessity for the Kurdish community. However, selective two lessons of Kurdish a week provided by the state do not satisfy natural rights of the community.

As far as media are concerned in Turkey, there are TV channels broadcasting in Kurdish.¹⁰ Language of the broadcast is the only aspect that differentiates them from other Turkish channels. TRT 6 which is a public TV channel, is no different from others in terms of broadcast and content. By means of this channel and similar ones, official manipulative narrative is reinforced. It is particularly visible in case of children's programs. Kurdish children are under influence of cartoon characters, heroes and protagonists of programs shown on these channels. Children identify with these characters and use them in their daily lives, social relations and play time. In this case official ideology replaces Kurdish values. As a result Kurds who have internalized another culture and departed from their own history and culture are created and those are the ones accepted by the official ideology.¹¹

A child starts to learn how to speak and listen in the family. Child's language develops naturally in its environment at its own pace.¹² According to Jean Piaget's language development stages a child possess strong language structure prior to education. Until age of 3-4 a child generates chattering. After this age due to schooling a child meets more people and socializes developing lexis and fluency. A child until school age spends time at home and speaks its mother tongue. Pre-school education is important for the development of the mother tongue. During this period of education oral materials are primary tool used for the development of the language.¹³

Jacqueline Rose in her book "The Case of Peter Pan" states about children's literature the following: "Children's literature is impossible. Because this kind

9 According to CIA nearly 15 million Kurds live in Turkey but the numbers might be higher. See: Washington, 2013.

10 Both private and state-funded.

11 Those who fall far from existing social order of Kurdishness are assimilated Kurds.

12 Ass. Prof. Dr. Ali GÖÇER, 2010.

13 Demir,2011, p.39-48.

of literature is created by adults for children and is artificial.” In this context, literature created by adults for children is called children’s literature.¹⁴ Some claim that “there is no separate literature for children because one may find adults who read with pleasure children’s literature.” İnci Enginün believes that “(...) there is no need to create separate literature for children because if a child is presented with a literary text suitable for its mental capacity, it will enjoy that text.”¹⁵

Discussions pertaining to the question whether children’s literature exists continue. On the other hand, there are materials prepared for the children and a child is capable of comprehending and sensing them with its own mind. Capability of understanding these materials and tools depends on the manner they are presented to the child. Flow, vocabulary, dialogue, picture and length of the subject are among criteria to be considered when preparing and presenting materials to the children. Thus, book pictures, folk songs, tales, anecdotes, stories, eposes, theatre plays, novels, poetry, lullabies, riddles,¹⁶ nursery rhymes, proverbs, idioms, chants, epigrams, autumn songs and other forms must be prepared and designed according to children’s age developmental stage.¹⁷

This study is based on fieldwork. In the course of the research five regions of Northern Kurdistan¹⁸ were visited in seventy eight days. 854 people were interviewed in fourteen counties and thirty two districts, two towns and seventy six villages.

Although a body of folklore research concerning Northern Kurdistan exists, this study differs in scope and aim. This study, conducted between late June and mid-September 2014, also aimed at recording and archiving Kurdish folklore in Northern Kurdistan. The overall objective of this broad research is to adopt collected folkloric products for the use in pre-school education.

We aimed to revise and present every story preserving features peculiar to

14 Adults, based on their own experience, produce literary forms for children.

15 Seyit Battal Uğurlu, 2010.

16 In some regions for riddle (*bilmecce*) term *tıştonek* is also used.

17 Ayvacı & Devecioğlu, 2013.

18 Serhat; Kars, Kağızman, Pazarcık, Dığor, Iğdır, Tuzluca, Ağrı, Doğubayazıt, Diyadin, Patnos, Van, Muradiye, Çaldıran, Erciş, Muş, Varto, Bulanık, Bitlis, Adilcevaz, Ahlat, Hizan, Tatvan, Botan; Nusaybin, Mardin, Midyat, Cizre, Silopi, Şırnak, Siirt, Pervari, Herekol, Behdınan; Hakkari, Beytüşşebab, Uludere, Çukurca, Yüksekova, Şemdinli, Başkale, Gürpınar, Faraşın, Dersim-Bingöl; Bingöl, Solhan, Tunceli, Ovacık, Diyarbakır-Batman; Batman, Gercüş, Dargeçit, Siirt, Ergani.

its place of origin. Along with the stories, riddles, epigrams, nursery rhymes, games and other literary products are to be parts of the same educational set. Once materials for pre-school education are ready it will be time to develop program for older children.¹⁹ Furthermore, an anthology comprising of all the collected works is to be prepared. By doing so, works will be preserved in two forms: in the dialect of the recording and in written form in Zaza and Kurmanji Kurdish. At the later stage such publication will be presented to educational institutions and children.

A. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND SCOPE

This study has been conducted in five regions of the Northern Kurdistan.²⁰ Vast territorial scope of the research was dictated by the purpose and peculiarity of the study. Our goal was to reach nearly all examples of Kurdish folklore in Northern Kurdistan. To achieve this goal we have embarked on a more than 1700 km long journey across dozens of counties and villages. As a result we have documented oral literature in every region of Northern Kurdistan. We have basically identified variations of different forms of oral literature since the same tales, nursery rhymes and lullabies are told differently in various regions.

For a long time folklore artifacts have been archived and analyzed in careful studies carried out in my language. This study, however, has been conducted in a shorter period of time than any archiving study. Taking into consideration our program and preparations fieldwork was going to be completed within three months. We had completed our fieldwork as planned and returned to ponder over collected materials and to transform them into written form. Although our study was short it was highly productive. According to initial projections and assumptions of the study, oral literature collected during fieldwork and results of the field research are reassuring. At the beginning of the study we planned to collect around sixty or seventy tales in the course of the field research. However, as a result of the field study we managed to record over two hundred tales in addition to hundreds more other works.

In the Introduction we have provided brief insight into wealth of Kurdish culture. Our study is anchored in this body of knowledge yet still we have documented hundreds of literary products that represent genres different from one another. At the same time these results obtained in such short period of

¹⁹ Aged 7-11.

²⁰ Serhed, Dersim-Bingöl, Behdinan, Botan and Diyarbakır.

time demonstrate richness of Kurdish oral literature. As a matter of fact, from now on this study will lay a burden on institutions, organizations, institutes, academia and universities working in the field of language and culture. In our view collection and classification studies is a years-long endeavor and a responsibility of scientific bodies (that carry out the study). From this perspective our study is a step forward with regard to children's oral literature in Northern Kurdistan.

The study was conducted in the summer of 2014. For the purpose of this study Northern Kurdistan was divided into regions according to climate conditions. Our study started in Serhed and continued in Behdinan region. Later we moved respectively to Botan, Dersim-Bingöl and concluded our study in Diyarbakır. Serhed region encompassed the greatest territory. In terms of the length of the study, it was the most time consuming in Serhed. Also this region yielded majority of works. Because of that it is also the region rich in *dengbêj* (minstrel) tradition. Dersim-Bingöl is the region where we recorded the least oral literary products. The main reason behind such state of affairs is the effect of assimilation and forgetting of the oral literature in mother tongue.

The study was documented by means of audio and video recordings as well as occasionally written records. Most of the interviews were carried out with elderly women and men. Depending on the specific features of the region and its richness also children²¹ were interviewed along with young women and men as well as Syriacs and Yazidis. Majority of Syriacs have forgotten oral literary products. Due to past migrations Yazidi people were left with nobody to pass on the oral tradition.

Along provincial cities the study was carried out mostly in remote villages due to genuine character of the works and the effect of the urbanization and spoken language. In order to reach *Chirokbej* (minstrels) many methods were employed. Prior to the interviews, contact was established with individuals in the area of our fieldwork who knew addresses of the *Chirokbejs*. In terms of time and finding the right addresses these contacts turned out invaluable and made our work effective. In many places where we could not establish such contacts our work was difficult.

²¹ 7-15 year olds.

B. LANGUAGE USED IN THE INTERVIEWS

Interviews are recorded in the languages, dialects and accents used in the region. Most of the recordings are in Kurmanji and Zaza dialects while in the areas inhabited by Syrians in the Syriac language. Nobody was found to record the audio materials of the Armenians.

In some regions Turkish was the common language during the interviews. This most frequently happened in areas Zaza dialect is spoken. In other regions Turkish was also predominant as Kurdish was forgotten. There, interviews were carried out in Turkish. In some regions even if we initiated the interview in Kurdish, interviewees at the beginning and at the end of the conversations would switch to Turkish. Kurdish population departed from its language because of prohibition of the Kurdish language and obligatory usage of Turkish language²². Kurdish community could not find the opportunity to speak in Kurdish in social and family life. As a result Kurdish people began to disuse Kurdish despite awareness about the importance of the language. This situation reached a point when Kurdish people would be ashamed to talk in their mother tongue in the presence of strangers.²³ In some cases despite knowledge of Kurdish some choose to communicate in Turkish. Someone would get his reply in Turkish even if he asked his question in Kurdish. In the course of the research we have come to realize that this is widespread phenomenon in Kurdish community.

Oral literature was not our only subject of our interviews. Although listening and documenting oral literary products were the main aims of our fieldwork,

22 Prohibition of other languages than Turkish, which particularly targeted Kurdish language, was imposed in the aftermath of the 12th September 1980 military coup d'état. There are many articles of the 1982 Constitution that express the ban: "No language prohibited by law may be used in the expression and dissemination of thought. Any written or printed documents, phonograph records, magnetic or video tapes, and other means of expression used in contravention of this provision shall be seized by a duly issued decision of judge or, in cases where delay is deemed prejudicial, by the competent authority designated by law. (Art. 26, Par. 3-4)" "Publication may not be made in any language prohibited by law. (Art.28, Par.2)" "No language other than Turkish may be taught as mother tongue to Turkish citizens at any institutions of training or education. (Art.42, Par.9)" National Security Council passed Law No. 2932 titled "The Law Concerning Publications and Broadcasts in Languages Other Than Turkish" in November 1983 which deemed Kurdish a banned language. It declared that "The mother tongue of all Turkish citizens is Turkish" and forbade the use of "any language other than Turkish" as a mother tongue in expression of thoughts or in publications. See: Çağlayan 2014.

23 In presence of Kurdish speaking people who come from different region/city/town and Turkish speaking people who come from another region/city/town.

oftentimes we were forced to adjust to the circumstances in the field. The fact that city of Diyarbakır is considered to be the capital or the center place for the Kurds was enough to steer us off the main topic. As linguistic researchers from Diyarbakır with clearly explained goals of the study, we could not discard political issues and get to our agenda easily.

We went through three stages during the interviews in order to listen and record oral literary works. At first we had to introduce ourselves well. We would make clear who we are, where we came from and why came there. Secondly, we would inform the interviewees about works we want to record. Oral literary works have not retold by the people for years and in consequence tales, lullabies and other literary products have become to be forgotten. During the interview it was necessary to remind oral literary products to the person who was to be the source themselves. In each place of the fieldwork oral literary works were named differently. However, we had done a lot of preparations prior to going to the field, which helped us a lot in our work. The third stage was the recording of the literary products. We had to convince the source (person) and the people around us to be silent. Even if we had warned the people around the storyteller (source person), the telephone rings and the conversation of the other villagers were interrupting the recordings.

C. DIFFICULTIES

Fieldwork is a very painstaking process. In this study we were faced with difficulties peculiar to field research in Kurdistan. Rather than discourage us, these difficulties helped us face some facts. What particularly got our attention were the doubts about us during the interviews. We felt the suspicion against us quite often. This included even people who were helping us in the fieldwork. It became apparent that the state is responsible for this state of affairs.

We can say that in all the regions during our people presented certain kind of attitude. People whom we tried to interview did not trust us, but besides that they would sometimes show no interest, even shut the doors in our faces, or they would just leave us without a word. There were also times that they would question us, which made us uncomfortable.

We could understand the reasons underlying this distance so we did not find it odd. We experienced these kind of situations mostly in mountainous villages which were exposed to a lot of cruelty at the hands of special forces and

Turkey sponsored counter-guerrilla forces in the gos. Thousands of people were subjected to oppression or lost their lives when villages were burnt down, their sons and daughters kidnapped and killed. Special forces and MIT²⁴ members used to drive in civilian cars. There were some Kurdish speaking officers among them as well.²⁵ They would gather information about properties, houses and addresses of the villagers. The vehicle that we were driving was unfamiliar, we were strangers and we were going to the places not many people usually visit. As a result of all these, villagers were suspicious about us.

We recorded 3-4 hours of footage in the region of Serhed, near Doğubeyazit, in a village²⁶ near Ararat and when it was the time to leave I told the house owner:

- *Uncle, you still don't trust us, do you?*
- *The owner of house nodded and told me:*
- *No, dear. Good luck!*

We encountered many frustrating incidents like this one. We realized we had to first earn the trust of the people and only then we should have encouraged them to tell their stories.

During our research process we encountered another phenomenon: "Women Under Oath." Women known as dengbêj (folk poet/voice teller), chirokbêj (tale teller) and qewlerkbêj (epigram teller) as a result of some past events made an oath not to sing songs and poems or tell stories. Determined to stand by their decisions they did not say a single word of folkloric value. Yes, we met these women, and we tried to hear voices of their bitter lives. Some of them in order not to disappoint us would briefly tell what they had been through, but they did not dare to repeat what they had said. Some lost their daughters and sons, some lost their sisters and brothers, and some lost their husbands. Those who lost their siblings and children were the most sorrowful ones. Those women who used to be were *dengbej*, expressed their pain by singing requiems all the time. We met many heartbroken mothers in Digor, Dagpınar and Diyadin of Serhed region; in Şemdinli, Uludere, Çukurca of Behdınan region; in Dersim region. They shared with us their heart breaking requiems and tandoori bread.

24 National Intelligence Organization [Translator's note].

25 Or Kurdish people

26 It is called "Glidax-Giridax (Mt. Ağrı)" in the region of Ağrı-Iğdır.

There was a woman called Xace in Pazarcık²⁷ who wanted to be addressed as “Mother Xace.” According to the word of mouth in the region, she used to be a famous *dengbej*. After the death of her brother she took the pledge not to sing anymore and only lament for her deceased brother. At the same time Mother Xace was a mother of guerilla fighter. She was praying for the guerillas during our interview. She begged the God to give the fighters power and strength. After the interview Mother Xace gave us fresh tandoori bread and cheese.

“I liked you a lot, I will tell a few things, you are like my children,” she said.

Then she said with her thin voice:

*“Oh my brother, oh my brother
Oh my brother, my dear
I wish your hands
had made me blind.
Oh, poor me, what should I do?
I am left dumbstruck without my brother....”*

She went on and she could not hold back herself and started crying.

Daily life in Northern Kurdistan is shaped by political events. Developments in four parts of Kurdistan are closely followed by the Kurdish people and are constitutive elements of every sphere of their lives.

While we were getting ready to start our research in Uludere county of Şırnak province, we got the news about ISIS attack on Mahmur Camp.²⁸ Many people were forced to leave the camp and fights continued until noon. Upon hearing this news people of Uludere and neighboring villages got together to condemn ISIS. Had we wanted, we would not have found anybody to interview. No one wanted to meet us. That day we could not do our work.

While we were in Dersim region, events in Rojava²⁹ were on the agenda. Many people, in particular mothers in Dersim, were critical of the situation in Rojava. Complaints of a mother from Dersim were as follows:

- *Our children fight day and night for our motherland!*
- *Why do you leave them on their own?!*

²⁷ A town in the province of Kars, located between Kars city center and Digor.

²⁸ Refugee camp in Northern Iraq [Translator’s note].

²⁹ Western Kurdistan within territory of Syria.

– *Why didn't you go to fight those who tyrannize your brothers?!*

– *Our daughters and sons! Our youth, our hopes, our martyrs!*

..... (The woman is crying)

No matter how much her words saddened us, we had to continue our research.

Efforts of the Turkish state to eradicate Kurdish culture have been severely traumatic for the Kurdish people. The trauma is particularly visible in the first two generations. The first generation³⁰ was exposed to deadly oppression and humiliation. This generation sees itself as between memories of the past and current events. Members of this generation upon our request to talk to us about oral literature would say:

What you gonna do with these? They are worthless and good for nothing, now there's TV. Once we got used to TV we forgot those kinds of things. Anyways nobody listens. We used to say those things a lot, but now we don't remember well.³¹

The second generation³² was educated solely in the Turkish language and instead of their own culture and history, is more familiar with those of Turkish Republic.³³ Members of this generation are likely to be more aware of their culture and to demand it since they are in a relatively better position. We had an opportunity to meet many individuals from this generation, however, they could be of no help to us with regard to oral literature due to lack of knowledge.

Our observations from the field with regard to the use of Kurdish have been thoroughly investigated by Handan Çağlayan in her study "Same Home, Different Languages" published in 2014 by DISA. In her book she examines language change in three-generational families living together.³⁴

We have already said that we conducted fieldwork mostly in remote villages of rather mountainous regions.³⁵ It was a challenge to reach or leave a village and at times we were in danger of a car accident. Since it was the summer in

30 Aged 50-70.

31 Mehmet Kaya, village of Perkan, Digor. Similar reaction was encountered throughout the study in other places.

32 Aged 20-30.

33 Ekim Gençliği Dergisi, 2013.

34 For more see: Çağlayan, 2014, p. 64-63.

35 Serhed, Behdinan, Botan and Dersim-Bingöl.

many places people left for highlands and so we also were forced to follow them to reach storytellers. There were also moments that we could not continue our journey by car. Then, in order to carry on our research, we had to walk or ride horses or donkeys to reach our interviewees. Time of our stay at a given location depended on whether we found any examples of oral literature. To document oral literary products sometimes we would stay for two or three days in the highlands, villages or remote households. In some places we had problems with access to electricity thus experienced technical problems due to low batteries of our recording equipment. In such situations we took notes or went to the city to solve technical problems.

Some of the people who were our sources of oral literature were bothered by the recording devices or did not allow us to turn them on or were overexcited during the recording: they were unable to utter a word or could not repeat their words. It happened usually in front of the camera. We did not record anything unless we were given permission by the interviewee or we turned on the camera at the very end. We usually got negative answer to our request for video recording but oftentimes we were not allowed to record audio. From the religion's point of view audio recording is a sin and therefore we were not permitted to do so. Unfortunately, in such places it was impossible to record oral literary products.

In some regions we could not reach women storytellers. Since women are the most knowledgeable about lamentations we needed to find some women to record this oral literary form. Sometimes men would tell us that "women don't know" or "they won't tell" etc. and make the decision for the women or they would not allow us to meet women and spoke on their behalf. Regardless of women friends' participation in the process of interviewing and recording, we did encounter such negative attitudes.

D. FRAMEWORK OF THE REPORT

This report consists of three main parts. Each region possesses peculiar features which are further discussed in Chapter 1 with special focus on the areas where this study was conducted. In addition to that, my own observations from the field research are also included in Chapter 1. Chapter 2 focuses on the oral literature and children's oral literature in Northern Kurdistan and presents their examples and analysis. Instead of conclusion Chapter 3 puts forward recommendations with regard to pre-school education and genres of oral literature in Kurdistan.

Until now in the world children's literature exists in a written (by adults) form. In this report we focus on oral children's literature. It is a known fact that Kurdish folklore, culture and oral literature are very rich. Children living in Kurdish regions will benefit from richness of oral culture and oral literature will be for them. In the following chapters different genres of oral literature are analyzed from social and psychoanalytical perspectives. In addition, cultural assimilation in disguise of a change is also exemplified and explained in the following chapters.

E. REPRESENTATIVENESS OF THE REPORT

This report is the first broad study carried out by civil society organizations³⁶ to represent peculiarity of Northern Kurdistan. Taking into account population, Northern Kurdistan is divided due to a number of reasons. As a result we were faced with five regions in which this study was carried out although not in every town and city. To collect examples of oral literature from every region the research was not conducted in each region but the field work was carried out according to a general plan and places we had pre-selected. As a result of this study the situation of the oral literature and use will be brought together.

Hundreds of oral literary genres have been recorded and transcribed as a result of this study. This creates rich written resources for all inhabitants of Kurdistan. Moreover, children and Kurdish families will benefit from classification of oral literary genres. In written and visual terms it will also become material for education in Kurdish language at the same time material protecting character of the regions.

³⁶ In cooperation with Diyarbakır Institute for Political and Social Research (DİSA) and Diyarbakır Kurdish Institute.

CHAPTER 1

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE REGION

A. Kurdistan: terminology

Kurdistan is neither a name of a state with clearly defined borders nor it is a name of an independent state.³⁷ As the map below demonstrates, Kurdistan is a region divided into four parts belonging to Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria. A writer and sociologist, İsmail Beşikçi, writes extensively about division of Kurdish lands.³⁸ When Kurdish lands had been divided Kurds remained scattered within borders of these four states. For those who live in the vicinity of the border Kurds would use such terms as “over the border” or “under the border.”³⁹ The border line sometimes divides a city, or a farm or a pasture. It also cuts across family ties and communities that live on both sides. People maintain relations either via phone or illegally crossing the border. In Silopi, Cizre, Nusaybin, Şemdinli, Uludere and many other villages visited within the scope of this study we have observed such practices.

The term “Kurdistan” is used by Kurds and among the people as if it was a name of a state. As a result Northern Kurdistan falls within borders of Turkey, Southern Kurdistan within borders of Iraq, Western of Syria and Eastern of Iran. The map below shows Kurdistan and countries it is divided among.

37 Nikitin, 2013, p.56.

38 Without a doubt imperialist division of Kurdistan is the work of colonial states. Sykes-Picot agreement signed in 1915 by Great Britain, France and Russia aimed at division of Kurdistan. Already in that period there existed plans to divide Kurdistan. See: Beşikçi 1991.

39 Both terms are in use in the regions where we have conducted our field research. The term “over the border” refers to Kurds from the region of Nusaybin and Cizre of Northern Kurdistan while the term “under the border” is used in reference to Kurds from Western Kurdistan. Border line referred to in both terms is the one between Turkey and Syria. Both terms take their names from the rail route that runs between the two countries and marks their borders.



Photo 1: Map of Kurdistan⁴⁰

There are some ceremonial regions in Northern Kurdistan that to this day go under those ceremonial names. Each region is named according to its social, historical and geographical features. History, social events, borders, high and non-penetrable mountains play also a role in the naming and division into regions. In fact limits of these regions run across borders and encompass vast areas.⁴¹ Borders established by different states in the region of Kurdistan make no sense for the society from the perspective of their ideas and awareness. Moreover, existence of the borders forms a great division and obstacle for Kurds inhabiting these lands. In case Kurds want to visit one another they have to resort to official procedures or otherwise they are at risk of being killed (when crossing state borders without official permission).

Cultural transmission between regions maintains vitality along with preservation of settled lifestyle. Inter-regional relations depend on geographical and climatic factors. Social relations between Serhed and Behdinan, Behdinan

⁴⁰ See: Kurdish Institute of Paris, 1993.

⁴¹ Behdinan region includes not only Hakkari, but also many cities in Southern Kurdistan while Botan region includes many cities in Western Kurdistan.

and Dersim, Serhed and Diyarbakır, Behdinan and Diyarbakır have developed under the influence of climate and geographical features. Each region possesses peculiar characteristics. Primary factor shaping character of a region is climate and secondly geographical features related to it. Differences between regions are not significant. The easiest way to differentiate people from different regions is their accent and dialect. In the course of a conversation one can determine origin of the interlocutor by these features of speech. Each region has its own dialect. A person who knows Kurdish (Kurmanji, Zazaki, Sorani) can understand all dialects of Kurdistan and communicate in every region.

1.Serhed Region

In comparison with other regions, Serhed region encompasses the largest territory. Among the people it is known to be home to borders, mountains, snow, highlands and *dengbêjs*.⁴² Serhed region starts in the city of Bingöl and stretches until Kars covering many cities and sub-regions.⁴³ Our research was not carried out in all the cities of the region. Cities visited during the study include: Kars, Kağızman, Pazarcık, Digor, Iğdır, Tuzluca, Ağrı, Doğubayazıt, Diyadin, Patnos, Van, Muradiye, Çaldıran, Erciş, Muş, Varto, Bulanık, Bitlis, Adilcevaz, Ahlat, Hizan and Tatvan. Comparing with the other regions, most of the recorded oral literary genres originate from Serhed region. By all means, in every city's and village's neighborhood and fireplace we encountered a *dengbêj*. Climate features and social events directly influence oral literature. Impact of social and political events on songs and tales is very strong.⁴⁴ Generally speaking comprehension in mother tongue in this region is rather very limited and compared to other regions effects of assimilation are significant. There is little awareness as to the protection of the language, culture and history. Folkloric richness of the region is preserved, however this richness is endangered by subsequent waves of assimilation.

On the walls of many cities in the Serhed region we have seen pictures of Shahmaran.⁴⁵ Even though Shahmaran is known and loved in other regions of Kurdistan, it is very well known by women in the Serhed region. Pillow embroider-

42 Gültekin 2013.

43 It also encompasses territories going beyond borders of Turkey.

44 Ulugana 2012.

45 Shahmaran is a mythological legend told in oral literature of Kurdistan. Shahmaran is half-woman and half-snake. She occupies prominent place among women of the Serhed region. Since the legend talks about high regions, plateaus and cold springs it is believed to have originated in the Serhed region.

ies, clothes covering chests and other things are decorated by women with the image of Shahmaran. Women in Serhed use Shahmaran in their lives and arts. Realism of Shahmaran is accepted as an integral part of womanhood and as folkloric element is given place in women's lives. See Photo 2 taken during this study for the board depicting Shahmaran found in a village in Serhed.

In comparison with other regions, Serhed is a poorer region. According to information provided by the people and our own observations and investigation, the region was exposed to assimilationist policies under state's control in the aftermath of "Ararat Rebellion⁴⁶" and "Zilan Massacre."⁴⁷ In the course of this research impact of assimilationist policy on the rebelling areas in particular and others in the vicinity, came to light. It is evident that the state did a lot of harm to Kurdish people.

An example of Shahmaran's depiction can be seen below.



Photo 2: a picture representing Shahmaran in one of the houses in the village of Hallaç, Doğubayazıt Ağrı, Serhed (July 2014).

2. Behdinan Region

Behdinan, or Hakkari, region consists of Hakkari, Betüşşebap, Uludere, Çukur-

⁴⁶ The rebellion started in 1926 and ended in 1930. For more see: : Karaca 2013, "İhsan Nuri Paşa'nın Anıları", 1984.

⁴⁷ July 13th 1930 more than 15 thousand Kurds were massacred in Erciş. See: Ulugana, 2012.

ca, Yüksekova, Şemdinli, Başkale, Gürpınar and Faraşin. Moreover, many regions in the South, West and East Kurdistan fall within boundaries of that region where the most commonly spoken dialect is Sorani.⁴⁸ From geographical perspective Behdinan is a remote region hardly reachable by people or any external forces. Oral literature, with its vivid language, is present in daily life. In terms of rich variety of forms of oral literature, this region falls only short of Serhed.

Both in history and recently Behdinan witnessed numerous fights and attacks. *Mir Bedirhanlar* and other eposes recorded in the region, bear witness to historical, political and social events. Regardless of the impact of the past events on the oral literature, contemporary events (especially clashes between the PKK and Turkish state) continue to shape it and come to the fore. In Çukurca county, Hakkari we encountered trace of contemporary events in the following chant:

*Go you foal, gosh, you're a fool,
Frail foal, gosh, you're a fool,
Badgering yourself for crumbs,
Don't you know this world?*

*Go you foal, gosh, you're a fool,
Frail foal, gosh, you're a fool,
Crawling after rebellion,
One more step and your head'll fall.*

*Dinner time for the folk,
The valley was dark,
Foals and soldiers goin' down
Shooting down the guerrillas.
Look at your food of corpses and carcasses,
From dark sky Sikorsky⁴⁹ came down,
Dropping corpses and carcasses down.⁵⁰*

These lines are repeated fast and taken as a chant serve the public for critical purposes. This particular chant criticizes village guards.⁵¹ Basis for criticism

⁴⁸ Joyce Blau, Philip Kreyenbroek, christine Allison, 2003.

⁴⁹ Military aircraft [Translator's note].

⁵⁰ Heard from İsmail Durdu in Çukurca county.

⁵¹ Turkish state in order to establish general security and for its protection created

of the temporary village guards and the war between guerrillas and soldiers are described in detail in this chant. Especially in the recent past this region witnessed fierce fights between the PKK militants and Armed Forces of Turkey. As a result of the warfare thousands of villages in Northern Kurdistan were demolished, torched and forcefully evicted by the Turkish state.⁵² In the course of our study we came across dozens of demolished villages. In Behdinan region, Çukurca county in Hakkari province not a single village was spared. Between Çukurca and Hakkari there were only three villages. Since all the villages in Çukurca were demolished villagers migrated to cities or other regions.

On account of region's remote and non-penetrable location, impact of assimilation, modernity and cultural transmission is less visible. Therefore Kurdish community preserved its natural and peculiar features against attacks and external forces of assimilation. In terms of social life of the region women are active and empowered. Women's activism is clearly visible both in political sphere as well as private culture of Behdinan. Through participation at all levels in the Party's work women have empowered themselves and brought their activism to the forefront. In cultural sphere women's development and management of art and crafts also achieved prominence. Just like with eating, drinking or other forms of activity, men and women are also equal in their ability to tell stories. In Şemdinli, Uludere, Yüksekova and other cities of Behdinan region, men and women occupy the same space in diners and share meals. There is no difference between them. In such places as Serhed, Diyarbakır, Batman, especially in diners, one can find "family section"⁵³ where no males are allowed to enter except family members. In this region such attitude is non-existent. Here we can see the extent to which religion plays a role. Such situation emerges in other regions from differences in general viewpoint and information about and justification of religious practices.⁵⁴ This is the basic rule in the religious context where men and women must not

paramilitary organizations by arming civilians. These formations exist to this day. In the Ottoman Empire this kind of formations were called the Hamidiye corps and consisted mainly of Kurdish clans. They were armed against Armenians and other enemies of the Ottoman Empire. During the Republican period paramilitary organization consisting of Kurdish villagers known as "Temporary Village Guards" was set up in response to PKK insurgency.

52 See: Hüsni Öndül, IHD, 2010.

53 In Turkish: "Aile yeri".

54 In Batman region a man or a group of men must not sit or eat in the section reserved for families. In this region we encountered the greatest differences.

occupy the same space and shall stay away from each other in order not to sin. Despite adoption of the same religion in Behdinan region, one does not see the same differences.

From social perspective role of the Kurdish Liberation Movement's ideology is crucial for women's activism since it holds women to be important part of political as well as other spheres of life. This fact has been accepted by the society. A woman who leads her life freely demonstrates strength in every area.

3. Botan Region

Botan region is the oldest and the richest one in Northern Kurdistan. It does not consist of only North Kurdistan's lands since it has been divided by borderlines of colonial states. There are many cities in Botan region including Nusaybin, Midyat, Cizre, İdil, Silopi, Şırnak, Siirt, Pervari, Herekol and Derik, Kamışlı in Western Kurdistan, Zaho in Southern Kurdistan. The city of Cizira Botan (Cizre) is seen as the region's capital.⁵⁵ In comparison with other cities this one is more developed in historical, political and cultural sense. After Behdinan, Botan is the region where mother tongue is most commonly spoken in daily life. While there are observable varieties of accents in different parts, Botan accent is the most widespread. Mother tongue has been preserved as a language of social life and therefore oral literature has been preserved.

In Cizira Botan women's preference for black clothes took our attention. Although sheikhs and mullahs are known to have authority to influence women's garments, in this case historical influence is clearly visible. According to the public in Cizira Botan *Mam and Zin*⁵⁶ is the reason why women prefer black. The people of the region are in mourning for Mam and Zin's unfulfilled wishes so they dress in black and cover their heads with white cloth. *Mam and Zin* phenomenon greatly influenced the region.⁵⁷ Black was at first worn for Mam and Zin and in time this state of mourning created a way of dressing among women in Cizira Botan. In this region women play a significant role in social life and are visible in every place and in every role.

4. Diyarbakır Region

In Diyarbakır region a number of main cities were selected and the study

⁵⁵ See: Reş 2013.

⁵⁶ A Kurdish classic love story written in the 17th century. Mam and Zim symbolize Kurds who like lovers in the story are separated [Translator's note].

⁵⁷ See: Ehmedê Xanî 2000.

was conducted there i.e. in Diyarbakır, Batman, Gercüş, Dargeçit, Silvan and Ergani. In this region use of Kurdish is rather limited. In city centers mostly elderly men and women speak Kurdish in their daily lives. In younger age groups use of Kurdish is less common. In villages, however, comparing to cities, Kurdish is more widespread.

With regard to politics, in comparison with other regions, Diyarbakır exhibits relatively greater development. In Northern Kurdistan Diyarbakır is seen and also used as the center for Kurdish Political Movement.⁵⁸ It is not only political center, but also a cultural one. During our field research often we would often hear from villagers and other cities' dwellers the same statement upon our arrival: "You're coming from our capital." Diyarbakır is seen as the capital of Western, Eastern and Southern Kurdistan.

5. Dersim Region

In Dersim mother tongue is least frequently spoken comparing to other regions. We have observed that historical events play a role in development and shape of oral literature of the region. "Dersim Massacre"⁵⁹ directly influenced and shaped oral literature of Dersim. Most of oral literature recorded in Dersim bears visible traces of the past events.

Use of Kurdish language in Dersim declines proportionally to age i.e. the younger generation the less Kurdish it speaks. As a result with the decrease of the elderly population so does the interest in oral literature wither. Children on the streets of Dersim and in the villages speak among themselves Turkish and are oblivious of Kurdish language, culture or history. Many adults in daily life communicate with children in Turkish⁶⁰ and those aged 60-70 speak

58 See: Çakır 2014.

59 After demolishing the battlefield in Kurdistan military operations were carried out and special governors and inspectors were sent to Dersim. Young girls were taken from families and either married off or forced to work as servants. Those girls were brought up as Turks. Population of Tunceli (Dersim- Translator's note) decreased from 130 thousand to 50 thousand. Between 50 and 60 thousand of people were murdered. There is a need to carry further research on the effect of the "Tunceli Law" on the Kurdish people. The main goal of the law was to eradicate Kurdish and Kurdistan identity. This policy was implemented after the genocide to raise people of Dersim as Kemalists. For more see: Beşikçi 1990.

60 In a research carried out in Diyarbakır a need to learn Turkish for the sake of communicating with grandchildren was described as follows:
"I talk to them in Kurdish, probably they also don't answer them, just run away." (Polite, first generation). The most important topic of conversations for the first generation is love of grandchildren. For them "if child is like a walnut shell, grandchild is the

among themselves in Kurdish since they do not know Turkish.

In our interviews we could see that past events continue to influence Tunceli.⁶¹ While telling us oral literary products for the purpose of recording them, our interviewees could not hold back their tears due to events those stories recount. We could feel enormous cruelty and oppression people of the region have been through and pain it has left.



Photo 3. Gedik Anne⁶² (Tunceli, city center, 99 years old, August 2014).

walnut kernel.” I not only heard of but also witnessed this love in my conversations with three generations of one family under one roof. However, this language barrier stood in the way of a satisfying dialogue and sharing between grandchildren and grandparents. They even spoke of grandchildren getting bored when staying too long with their grandparents. The source of this problem was lack of common language, lack of understanding. For more see: Çağlayan 2014, sayfa. 78.

61 Tunceli is the official name for Dersim [Translator’s note].

62 Lit. „anne” means in Turkish „mother.” Here it is used as a title to show respect [Translator’s note].

In our conversation with Gedik Annein the city center of Dersim, she wanted to address the prime minister of Turkey and described the fear still continuing since Dersim events:

-“This state murdered us, decreased numbers, wiped out!

-.....(silence)

-We told you that.

-Perhaps our voice will reach Erdoğan.⁶³

-.....(Gedik Anne is laughing and we laugh with her).

We were both amused and saddened by Gedik Anne’s words. It was obvious in the interview that people of Dersim still carry burden of the genocide.

B. Notes from the fieldwork

In the course of the research bot us and the people we worked with developed different feelings and understanding. Regional features, social life, local events and circumstances and many other factors are reflected in this study.

I. Change of the village names

Turkish state changed names of villages, towns and cities in the entire region of Northern Kurdistan.⁶⁴ It was geared towards cultural genocide and assimilation. It needs to be said here that the state did not achieve its goal because none of the villages is known by its Turkish name or the people do not use Turkish names. From the perspective of the people official names have no meaning. The state through repression only managed to instill these names in official institutions. In one of the state institutions we have encountered puzzling situation related to this subject. In Behdinan around Başkale there is a police station at the top of a mountain. We wanted to climb that mountain to get a better view of the Behdinan mountain range. With the permission of the officer in charge we took photos from the garden and then drank a cup of tea with him. In his office I noticed a big map on the wall and approached it to have a closer look. It was a map of the region with all old names of the villages and towns (the oldest names were in Kurdish or other languages). The state has banned Kurds from using these names, but they still use them to their own advantage.

⁶³ Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Prime Minister of Turkey 2003-2014.

⁶⁴ Since the establishment of the Turkish Republic 12 thousand names of villages were changed (Tunçel 2000). According to the researchers (Nişanyan 2011) in total 41 thousand names were changed.

In every village visited for the purpose of this study we could see the results of the ban on the old names. When we travelled from cities to villages and asked about a place by its Turkish⁶⁵ name we could not find anyone to show us the way, only when we asked by its Kurdish name we could get answers. In the visited villages only headmen knew Turkish name of their village and names of some villages in the vicinity, but no one knew all the Turkish names. Villagers and the headman knew their own village's and region's all villages' names in Kurdish.⁶⁶

In Northern Kurdistan when we asked people about names of the villages we would be given two kinds of answers. They would ask names of the village in both languages⁶⁷ or they would ask: "Is it in Turkish or in Kurdish?" in Civani village, Tuzulca county of Iğdır when we asked locals about their addresses and information about their village they replied: "By Kurdish name or by Turkish?" Due to this kind of confusion we started taking notes in both languages and moved on.

There were many different policies implemented to change and wipe out through Turkification peoples⁶⁸ living in Turkey. Mainly these policies meant changing names of many places and venues in many regions. As for cultural genocide of Kurds there was separate policy targeting Kurds. In the last chapter of a study "Change of Village Names in Turkey"⁶⁹ we can clearly see that changes took place mostly in Kurdish areas. The map below illustrates density of changes in Kurdistan.

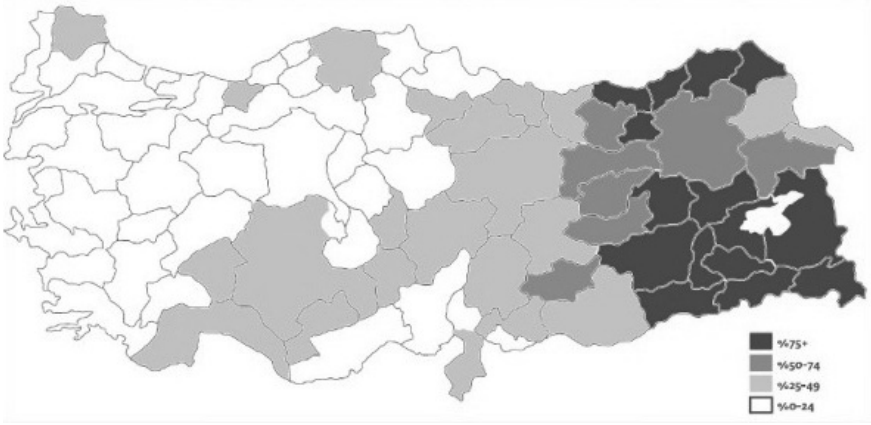
65 I.e. names written on official maps or information boards.

66 Original names or the names unchanged by the state.

67 Turkish and Kurdish.

68 Armenians, Kurds, Greeks, Syriacs, Georgians, Laz.

69 Hayali Coğrafyalar: Cumhuriyet Döneminde Türkiye'de Değiştirilen Yer adları (Nişanyan 2011)

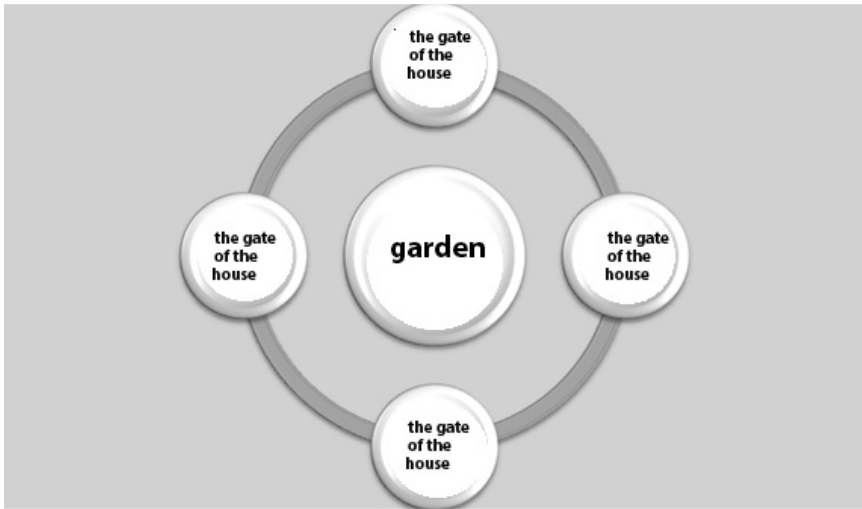


Graphic 1. Density of name changes in Turkey (Nişanyan, 2011, p. 52)

II. Cultural transmission

In Gola Bozovillage in Gürpınar county in Van province of Behdinan, we were hosted by an elderly man named Kalê Şinoyi. He used to be a writer and in 2000s his writings were published in a paper called “Azadiya Welat.” Kalê Şinoyi is eighty years old and number of his works is bigger than his age. He showed us his works collected in four chests that contain hundreds of them. Kalê Şinoyi is also an example of living history as these chests were also full of studies of his works done by the academia and other institutions. The man is well-read in history and literature and our interview with him was really pleasant. When we opened the topic of Kurdish customs he shared his critical opinion: “ many changes to original Kurdish culture occurred with change of the religion and the change came to villages from cities. A woman used to be able to breastfeed in public, but now it is impossible.”

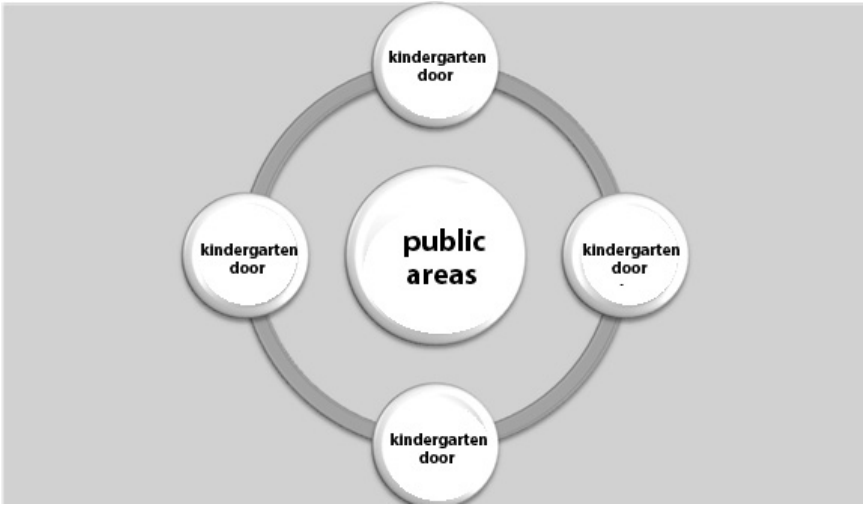
After the interview we walked around old ruins and Kalê Şinoyi told us about old houses’ structure and their utility. According to him old houses were built in a way that fostered socialization. When a house was built the door would open to a shared garden. The old man showed us in the village such houses. Houses he showed us were organized around one shared garden as doors of four houses opened to that garden. The garden was common space functioning as space for socialization. The graphic (Graphic 2) below is based on Kalê Şinoyi’s account. Door of four different houses lead to one garden. We have observed and heard that such special organization of houses is present in many regions of Kurdistan.



Graphic 2. Spatial organization of a house in Gola Bozo village, Gürpınar -Van/ Northern Kurdistan

There exist in e alternative models of education. One of them is Reggio Emilia's model.⁷⁰ Pre-school based on that model was established in Northern Italy. Purpose of spatial organization of that school and Northern Kurdistan's schools is the same. Reggio Emilia schools were usually one-floor buildings with classrooms' doors opening to a common space. There are events organized in the school with the participation of teachers and parents. These events foster socialization of the children.

⁷⁰ Reggio Emilia is a village in in Northern Italy. This village is known as Reggio Emilia Model. People of this village trust more in local enterprise. 10% of municipal budget of the village is allocated to schools. Schools in Reggio Emilia were built by families from the post-WWII ruins. Famous psychologist and philosopher Loris Malaguzzi created schools for Reggio Emilia under leadership of municipality and families. New organization of school was against traditional system. More schools were needed in the 1950s owing to growing birth rates and migrants from the South. At first Reggio Emilia school system was established by the parents and in time with regional government's support spread around the town. After the collapse of fascist regime free lifestyle became possible and everybody was free to conduct research. Once women gained their rights Reggio Emilia schools spread everywhere. Until 1967 management of Reggio Emilia schools was in parents' hands, afterwards municipality took the schools over. In 1996 Ministry of Education signed an agreement with Reggio Emilia municipality to train teachers. Reggio Emilia system is based on few principles: child is at the center of education and is guided by parents and teachers. Children's education is organized in two age groups of children 4 months old to 3 years old and 3-6 years old. (Pekdoğan 2012).



Graphic 3. Spatial organization of a pre-school in Reggio Emilia, Northern Italy.

Kalê Şinoyi also spoke about Armenians who in his view also lived in this region hence it also belongs to their ancestors. According to Kalê Şinoyi Armenians used to celebrate new year on January 27th. Nowadays it is called “Christian Day of the Cross.” There used to be many festivities organized to celebrate the new year. He recalled one of them in which a big pot was brought and filled with yoghurt. A small cross was dropped into yoghurt and stirred. Two or three people tried with their mouths and tongues to fork out the cross. The person who found the cross could keep it for the entire year and became the Cross Owner (Cross Mukhtar).

This kind of competition is organized in Turkey on 23rd of April during National Sovereignty and Children’s Day celebrations, especially in Northern Kurdistan region. Yoghurt is put into a big pot and some money dropped in and stirred. Two or three children with their hands tied behind their back try to fetch the coins with their tongues and mouths. In some regions instead of money gold is used.

III. Destroying History

There are hundreds of churches around Northern Kurdistan but only few of them are in use nowadays. ⁷¹ During the research starting from Kars un-

⁷¹ According to UNESCO report from 1974, since 1923 out of 913 Armenian historical monuments 464 have been completely destroyed. 252 are ruined and 197 need repairs.

til Midyat county of Mardin we came across thousands of churches. Around 90 per cent of these were either abandoned or ruined. In Pekran village in Digor county of Kars province the topic of churches surfaced in our interviews. There used to be two churches, one in the center of the village and one outside, but now both are in ruins. The one in the center is more devastated. According to the villagers Turkish army would in the evenings shoot cannon-balls at the church and sometimes they would knowingly open fire at the church to prevent anyone from entering and in order to further destroy it. The photograph (Photo 4) below shows marks left by soldiers' cannon-balls on the walls of the church. The photo is also testimony to negative attitude of Turkish state to history and culture of the peoples in Turkey.

State's policy of demolition and destruction of the churches was always carried out by state forces or society. One of the interviewees shared their ideas and opinions about state's repressive policy against Syriac churches:

-“We've repaired this church in secret from state's military forces and we are still afraid that the state will demolish the church!”⁷²

You can see in the eyes of the villages fear and suspicion of the state. Syriacs in Midyat have worked to restore, build or repair dozens of destroyed churches. However, villagers still encounter obstacles and threats by the state.

See: The Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute (http://www.genocide-museum.am/eng/cultural_genocide.php).

72 Syriac village of Aynwerd, Midyat, August 2014.



Photo 4. Armenian church in Pekran village, Digor, Kars, after shelling by Turkish Armed Forces, July 2014.

The church below (Photo 5) located in Hespistan village in Başkale county was abandoned and fell into ruin. Like in many other places it was destroyed by the villagers. According to the information provided by the locals stones from destroyed church were used to build houses. There is no awareness of the need to protect historical monuments. When we asked about reasons for this lack of awareness we realized that lack of religion is the primary reason. It is

clear that cultural, language and historical assimilation policies of the state have negatively affected Kurdish people. In the process of assimilation state played major role. In this respect the most vital matter is the effect this situation has on the society. Every massacre carried out by the state is witnessed by the society. Demolition of churches by the state is seen by inhabitants of villages and cities (see p.9). The state uses this method of assimilation to have an impact on the society. At first it creates in the society a sense of fear and later leads the society to neglect its own culture and history. Once this period of negligence starts the state withdraws while the villagers, as if under a grip of a disease, start destroying cultural monuments. There is a saying describing this kind of situation: “ he pushed people into fight and left to watch from afar.”⁷³



Photo 5.

IV. Situation of Kurdish language

The most important observation we have made during our study was whether people speak their mother tongue or not. In general it is possible to affirm that on account of years-long assimilationist efforts and dominant official language of the state, situation of mother tongue is bleak. This problem is

⁷³ This saying is mostly repeated in Serhed region. It is used for people who incite a fight or do something bad and then they pull out of the situation and observe results from afar.

more prevalent in cities. Villagers were also taken by the tide of assimilation and Kurdish language is on the verge of drowning. We witnessed the most striking assimilationist practices in places where special operations were carried out (Dersim-Bingöl, Serhed i.e. places of Kurdish insurgency). In these regions once can no longer observe assimilationist policies, but efforts to get assimilated. Even in places beyond state's authority Turkish has become dominant language of communication. We have witnessed this tendency as more prevalent in Dersim-Bingöl, Serhed- Diyarbakır regions while in Behdinan and Botan mother tongue is more commonly spoken.

Since the past until contemporary times Turkish state has used different assimilationist tools (Turkish language, education, television, newspapers, books and other means of communication) against Kurds.⁷⁴ This policy lasted for years and as a result brought negligence in Kurdish society. The state incited fights in the society and withdrew from direct participation, but did not cease to interfere and continued its aggressive policies. With time the same assimilationist tools of the state began to be utilized by Kurds themselves. Once awareness of mother tongue ceased to exist, people started departing from the language. In general these assimilationist tools were used in the cities and continue to be used at present too. Mothers speak to their children in Turkish and so do children among themselves.⁷⁵ As a result Kurdish children cannot learn Kurdish language. Later those who did not know Turkish start speaking it with children. In Dersim, Bingöl, Serhed and Diyarbakır regions, like elsewhere, in city centers Kurdish children communicate with each other in Turkish. For Kurdish children Turkish is the language of education, play-time, family and became the language of all other means of communication. If contemporary generation uses Turkish in their social life they will do so also in the future. Their paths will not easily cross with the Kurdish language.

As part of our fieldwork we have noticed in many regions efforts to revive Kurdish and projects to develop reading and writing are on the rise. It is

74 After Turkifying Kurdish plays, folk songs and tales they were presented as Turkish. Singing folk songs, writing, reading poems in Kurdish were considered as serious crimes. Those who participated in such activities were thrown into dungeons and tortured. Every instance of using Kurdish words or names in a newspaper was considered as a treason (Beşikçi, 1991, s. 54).

75 "I speak Turkish with children.(...) I will speak Turkish until he starts school. He should know Turkish before going to school so that he doesn't have problems later. So that he won't have the problems I experienced. I had difficulties because I didn't know Turkish. He shall not have the same problems." (Çağlayan, 2014, p. 74).

mostly so due to efforts of organizations focusing in their work on Kurdish language. Leading in the field is Association for Research and Development of Kurdish Language⁷⁶ (Kürdi-Der), which offers opportunities to learn Kurdish (in particular they offer Kurmanji and Zaza courses). It has been noticed that Kurdish education bears fruits since more and more young people make progress in reading and writing in Kurdish. In many regions participants of Kurdish courses have contributed to the development of Kurdish grammar and literature. As a result Kurdish literacy rate is steadily growing. Moreover, mother tongue undergoes revival in daily communication.

V. A folk song, a mother and mother's tears

It was evening darkness in Uludere region in Behdinan. After one interview in the village we were going to go to Uludere county in Şırnak. In the daytime followed by soldiers' looks (upon the entrance to Uludere we were thoroughly checked by the soldiers) we arrived in Uludere. Despite knowing very few people we made friends. In our eyes Behdinan's patriotism and hospitality seemed corrupted somehow in Uludere.

Like in other regions where women are free and active, here too that created different social structure and it fits people of Uludere like a glove. Women turned out to be the most helpful here. After dinner consisting of cheese and tandoor bread we set off towards the village. First we visited a family with a new-born baby and we sat on chairs in the shade of a tree. A female friend (young mother from Uludere) came with us from Uludere and was helping us with the research. We were sitting under grapevine to which we were reaching to pick grapes. I still have in my mouth taste of ayran⁷⁷ made of milk from the village.

From this house we paid another visit and met a chirokbej (minstrel), Şemsettin Uncle.⁷⁸ Once we dealt with introduction and short conversation he boarded our car and we went to a crystal clear riven on the outskirts of the village. We left our luggage by the river bank and set up recording equipment in the shadow of a tree. Before we started recording, we had talked to Şem-

76 Association for Research and Development of Kurdish Language (Kürdi-Der) is based in Diyarbakır. It has 37 branches in Northern Kurdistan and enjoys great interest of the people. Apart from Kürdi-Der there is a number of trade unions and cultural associations i.e. civil society organizations that teach, promote and develop Kurdish language.

77 A drink made of yoghurt and milk [Translator's note].

78 A familiar but polite form to address an older man [Translator's note].

settin Uncle and young mother had cried. Tears of the mother fell into crystal clear river mixing endless longing with the waters of the river.

Upon Şemsettin Uncle's permission we began recording. Botan Miri's⁷⁹ life story blended with the voice of Şemsettin Uncle and the frothing waters of the river.

We were listening to Şemsettin Uncle for some good two three hours. Once recording had finished recording we went to his house. After delicious meal we were sipping our coffees and chatting with our host. It got late. We left for Uludere. Upon the entrance to Uludere we were stopped by the soldiers. After lengthy interrogations (where are you coming from? Where are you going? What's your purpose? Etc.) and ID check they also search thoroughly our car and allowed us to pass. Each question felt like a curse and their looks pierced into us. It is such a system without official documents you cannot even pass a check point to get home. Village and county are nearby, inhabitants of both sides are relatives. Due to military controls visiting these two places is problematic.

After passing through military check points we set off towards Uludere. It got really dark. Smell of trees and fresh air cleansed us and made us drunk with the smell. We were exhausted, but the road was difficult: it was both narrow and tortuous so we all woke up. At some point I put on some folk songs and Rotinda⁸⁰'s song titled *Zilan* cut the silence. I had listened to that song before, but until that night I did not like it so much. The song starts as follows:

*Go and bring me seven colorful flowers
from seven mountain tops
Show these flowers around to Zilan
Bring these flowers and with seven embroilments beautify my Zilan
Make him so beautiful, so that he's not angry, my Zilan
He's handsome, he's a comrade...*

Everything that happened, happened after this song. Our beautiful mother was sitting in the back and when I looked at her I saw he crying a river of tears. We also cried out the pain. I turned off the music as the pain breaking mother's heart became also ours. Her eighteen years old daughter twenty days earlier decided to embark on a long path to freedom and joined the

79 A Kurdish leader from the first half of the 19th century [Translator's note].

80 Full name was Rotinda Yetkiner. He was born in 1963 in Varto. An artist at Mesopotamia Cultural Center (Wikipedia, 2014).

guerrillas.⁸¹ There was nothing we could say. Just mother's dignity and calmness were inspiring in us divine faith.

VI. A folk song, a girl and girl's tears

It was in the evening, we were following tortuous road to Dersim. It was strange melancholic and scary journey. We were by Munzur mountain pass. The place where in 1938 people were pushed down.⁸² Munzur was flowing with us and we were flowing with it. We were all tired. All the companions in the back were asleep. A friend called Seval was with us in the car. He travelled with us around Dersim and helped a lot. Wind of Munzur valley blew in our faces, bringing at point shrieks and at others hope. I turned on the music. It was a folk song from Dersim region "Tew Veyvikê" (Oh, Come) and Erdoğan Emir⁸³ was performing. The song started like this:

*Hey girl, look, it's fall
Let the blood on your skirt dry
Oh, oh, oh come
Oh, oh, oh my beauty*

*It's spring, everyone goes to the highlands,
If it was us, we would hold
Oh, oh, oh come
Oh, oh, oh my beauty*

The song continued like that. This song and music resonated well with the Munzur way. At that moment a scene from the movie "Azadiya Wenda" (Lost Freedom)⁸⁴ appeared before my eyes. Erdoğan Emir sang this song in the film himself. In the movie this music reminds Selvi about her brother and she begins to cry. A while later this scene became reality. Our friend Seval started crying tears of hope and longing. Tears fell down into the waters of Munzur. All of us had tears in our eyes, we stopped the music and remained in silence. The silence of the car became one with the roar of the river. Seval told us once

81 Kurdistan Worker's Party's People's Defense Forces.

82 After interview with Reşo Memed he showed us the place along Munzur river banks to which people were pushed down from the mountains. Reşo Memed, Ovacık, Center, Tunceli, August 2014.

83 Erdoğan Emir is a musician from Dersim. He performs in Zaza.

84 Written and directed by Umur Hozatlı and screened in 2011. The film tells life stories of the victims of JITEM (Gendarmerie Intelligence and Counter-Terrorism), which operated as a counter-guerrilla formation in the 90s.

again about her brother who a couple of months earlier had joined guerrilla forces of the Kurdistan Worker's Party. As far as Seval knew her brother was in Tunceli region, but she had no details as to his whereabouts.

These two moments we have just shared cannot be separated from oral literature of Kurdistan. In history and today, historical and social event shape and influence oral literature. Those kind of events have reflected on our research and recorded material.

CHAPTER 2

A. ORAL LITERATURE OF KURDISTAN

Once Kurdish oral literature came into being, just like other literary forms around the world, it was lower classes' extolment of the upper ones. As such it was used as a tool of communication between feudalism and the shepherds and farm workers. According to Vilchevsky feudalism was the force that protected national culture in Kurdistan.⁸⁵ In time oral literature entered daily social life and as a result of bans on the language and culture became even stronger and richer. Nature, social relations, daily events and interactions, historical and any major events, entertainment and mourning have also contributed to richness of oral literary culture.

Kurdish oral literature consists of many different forms including tales, folk songs, riddles, eposes and memoir-adventure. Love, war, daily life, clan relations, migration, heroism, nature and Mesopotamian mythology are what influenced Kurdish oral tradition. Among recurring themes one finds heroism, handsome young men and beautiful girls, shrewd, ugly and coward characters, stories of betrayal etc.⁸⁶ *Dengbêjs* (minstrels) play the major role in Kurdish oral literature and they are present in every region of Kurdistan to such an extent that we encountered dozens of them during our fieldwork. They not only sing folk songs and ballads that they call *kilam* and *stran* but know also other forms of oral literature (tales, riddles, chants etc.). Minstrels make themselves visible in Kurdish society on every social platform. Investing a lot of energy and effort they demonstrate their skills to large audiences. Their folk songs and ballads are used both in close and extended relations and interactions. Therefore *dengbêjs* occupy prominent place in Kurdish oral culture. It leads to competitions among minstrels. When faced with one another they consider each other as a competitor.⁸⁷ Moreover, minstrels do not give much

85 Many folk genres glorify feudal lords, sheikhs and kinsmen and this is not limited just to folkloric products. It is necessary to see this type of literature as an element of Kurdish folklore. See: Nikitin, 2003, p. 436.

86 History Foundation, 2011

87 In Evdalê Zeyniké's account of his meeting with Şêx Silê he told us:

„it was beautiful, a beautiful night.

Except for the rain, my heart was filled with joy at the gathering of Tahar Xanê.

For nights and days I would shout and stay in silence

My voice got stuck, got lower,

Still, they told me, they told me mighty nice, my body and voice were the cure, amen.

importance to other oral literary genres and they always give priority to folk songs and ballads. In the center of Iğdır we spoke to *dengbêj* Bekir Amca⁸⁸ and he told us the following about being a minstrel:

- *In the last years everyone went after the tale.*
- *They gave up on folk songs and minstrels.*
- *What's this?*
- *What will you do with tales and riddles?*

Dengbêj Bekir Amca, like most of other minstrels, wanted us to focus on his skills.

In every region there is a famous *dengbêj*. Once the grip of feudalism eased, Kurdish art and artists started to reach lower sections of Kurdish society. Minstrels were no longer performing exclusively for feudal lords and masters. *Dengbêj* Şakıro was one of them. Şakıro is adored not only in Serhed region but in the entire Kurdistan. In Zeynel village in Ağrı Diyadin county *dengbêj* Faruk shared with us his memories of Şakıro. In the village of Zeynel *dengbêj* Şakıro and a villager named Bişar Amca experienced the following encounter:

Bişar Amca is ill and he has come to the end of his life, death is at the door. A group at the main square of the village is talking about Şakıro. Bişar Amca says:

- *Oh, oh! I wish Şakıro would come here now and sang us some songs. If I heard him in my last moments it would be enough!*

A short while after Bişar Amca's wish, Şakıro comes down to the square. That day Şakıro⁸⁹ sings songs for the group at the square and Bişar Amca's wish is granted.

Minstrels play prominent role in Kurdish society. Many different folk songs and eposes reach listeners on many social platforms. It is widely accepted that Kurdish oral culture is dominated by minstrels. However, this study shows that products of oral culture are reproduced not only by minstrels. They give importance to ballads, folk songs and eposes. Except for ballads, folk songs and eposes they give little importance and time to tales, riddles, chants, lamentations and lullabies. Tales, riddles, chants and other oral literary products

Welcome Şêx Silê, a good guest, say what you have to say and leave with your song." Evdal recided these words in such a smooth way as if without thinking. See: Uzun, 1991.

88 Lit. „amca” means in Turkish „uncle.” Here it is used as a title to show respect [Translator's note].

89 In that period Şakıro would walk from a village to a village to sing songs. From Tucî village he accidentally comes to Zeynel village.

are common in daily lives. They are told not just to wider audiences, but also in the families, in daily life, during playtime, work and study, mourning and festivities. Sometimes the elderly or those who memorized these form re-tell them. In our research we met many *dengbêjs*. They would prefer to sing songs and they would not wish to tell tales, sometimes they admitted they did not know tales and other genres so well.

B. GENRES OF ORAL LITERATURE IN KURDISTAN

Many Kurdish writers and researchers have classified and discussed Kurdish oral literature. Here we only present two classifications. According to “Secondary School Kurdish Language and Literature Textbook” oral literature can be organized into seven categories:

1. *Proverbs*
2. *Epigram*
3. *Tales*
4. *Chants*
5. *Riddles*
6. *Idioms*
7. *Eposes*

Pertev⁹⁰ classified folklore literary products as follows:

1. *Unknown artist/anonymous*
 - a) *Prose*
 - Proverbs*
 - Idioms*
 - Legends*
 - Tales*
 - Folk tales*
 - Anecdotes/jokes*
 - Saga*
 - b) *Poetic*
 - Eposes*
 - Riddles*
 - Chants*
 - Spring songs*
 - Epigrams*

⁹⁰ Notes from Kurdish classes Mardin Artuklu University prepared by Ramazan Pertev.

Uzun hava/Folk songs with long vocal solo

Elegy-lullabies

Folk songs and ballads

2. Known artist

a) Minstrel literature

Includes Heroism, war, mourning, lyricism, epigram, plateau folk songs, arguments, work, study etc.

b) Dervish (religious-mystical) literature

Tawhid⁹¹, litany, Na'at⁹², Hijcraname⁹³, Hilye (talks about Prophet's attire), Miraciye⁹⁴, Mehtername/Shefaatname, Mahsarname⁹⁵, Cengname, Maktel (about someone's murder), eulogy, saga, Mevlit⁹⁶, Pendname/Nasihatname⁹⁷, Neuroziye.

There are differences between these two classifications in terms of details. Pertev's classification is more detailed in comparison with secondary school's textbook. Classification used in this book is explanatory for our collection. Both goals of our research and information obtained in the field contributed to this classification. In our study we mostly focused of works that can be used as educational materials for children. Therefore we compiled mostly tales, riddles, nursery rhymes, lullabies, games, autumn songs, proverbs, idioms etc. oral literature includes primarily among other ballads-folk songs, tales, riddles, chants, lullabies, games, proverbs, idioms. In this book we attempt to focus on children's literature and works we have collected for the study.

1. Tales (*chirok*)

Before we share our impressions from the fieldwork about tales (*chirok*) we would like to discuss ideas of Kurdish writers and researchers and contrast them with Pertev's.⁹⁸ In Kurdish literature there are debates and differences in opinions in regard with *chirok*. For instance Firat Cewherî believes that "at the present time for this kind of literature I prefer to use the term *chirok* or

91 Poems about creation and universe [Translator's note].

92 Poetry praising Prophet Muhammad [Translator's note].

93 Poetry about Prophet's escape from Mecca to Medina [Translator's note].

94 Poetry about Prophet's ascension to heavens [Translator's note].

95 Poetry about death and afterlife [Translator's note].

96 Poetry celebrating birth of the Prophet [Translator's note].

97 The book of advice [Translator's note].

98 Pertev, 2008, p. 88-89.

like Kurds in the South say short stories (*kurtechirok*).” In Hawar (1932-1943), Ronahî (1942-1945), Roja Nû (1943-1946), Hêviya Welêt (1963-1965), Çiya (1965-1970), Hêvî (1983-1992) and many other old and new magazines the term *chirok* has been in use. Moreover, a story written by Fuat Temo was published in category of *chirok* in Rojî Kurd (1913). Just like former Soviet Kurds would use word *serhati(ani-serüven)* apart from the word “story”, this word encompassed story, short story, adventure, just like in English “story” or “short story”.

Cewherî continues his argument by saying that “the fact also is that many people understand *chirok* lie a Turkish fable (*masal*) or Swedish saga. In many regions of Kurdistan people use world fable (*masal*) for *chirok*, however, in some places also term *chirchirok* is in use. No matter in how many regions terms *chirok* and *chirchirok* interchangeable, the difference between them is clear. The term *chirok* is commonly used in daily life, social communication, in people’s language. If someone starts talking about their life or somebody else’s life and the listener asks question, then the person telling the story says “the stories are mighty long” or “it’s a long story” or “it’s sure a long story.”

Rohat Alakom view this issue is the following: “without doubt *chirok* (*masal*) is one of the most valuable forms of oral culture. Tales are integral elements of folklore as they are created by the people themselves. In some periodicals tales are called memoirs or adventures, but this terminology is inaccurate since memoirs’ authors are known and it is modern literary genre. Moreover, in terms of topic and subject they are different from tales. This causes a great deal of confusion in naming genres. Sometimes also both forms are called a tale (*çirok*).

According to Zeynelabidin Zinar original folk works such as *chirok* (*hikaye-story*) and *chirchirok* (*masal-tale*) evolved from one another, but there is distinguishable difference. At the core of a story there is an actual event, that when retold might have been modified. For instance in some stories mention names of padishahs, kings or sultans. On account of these names we can estimate the time when some of the stories were first created. In case of tales, however, there is no actual event. The person who invented the fantasy and the plot or who told it first remains unknown. In some regions of Kurdistan there are other terms for tale (*masal/chirchirok*) e.g.: *çivanok*, *çirvanok*, *xeberoşk*.

During our research we have observed that people in Kurdish regions generally use the following words for a story: *çirok*, *çironek*, *çirnok*, *hikyat*, *xebrişok*, *dilok*, *sonik*, *sanik*, *estanika* (Zaza). As we have already mentioned above we use here the term *chirok* for a tale (*masal*). We follow Kurdsih writ-

ers and researchers in using the term *chirok* for a tale. In Kurdish society term “fabl” (*fable*) is not in use, but tales we are going to discuss here are *fables*. In Kurdish storytelling traditions a tale starts usually like this:

*“Bless the listeners with good fortune and beauty.
Once upon a time,
All the neighbors and their doors
All the poor and cuckoos
All the travellers and wanderers
Şenglo run for the axe
Menglo run for the pickaxe
Honky ponky calves are in the saz⁹⁹
After onion Keledoş’s¹⁰⁰ nice.”*

This paragraph both motivates the person who is to tell the tale and indicates the listeners that the story is to begin and gets their attention.

In Kurdish society ballads-folk songs are typically sang in the evening. In the daytime or work time or during any other activities *uzun hava*, lyrical songs or other types of oral literature are sung. Depending on the lengths of ballads and folk songs, sometimes everybody gathers in one house for few days in a row or sometimes every two or three days they gather and form an audience (*divan*). The house, where the audience gathers, typically belongs to a highly respected member of the community or it is any other common space. This gathering is organized for more minstrels, however there is also time devoted to storytelling. Gathering solely for tales is smaller than the ones organized for *dengbêjs*. The storyteller would establish the gathering and would continue talking until late night hours encouraged by tea and coffee treats. Depending on the topic, some tales and eposes would take four or six or even ten days to tell, sometimes they would finish before dawn. These events also offered space for socialization as many people would come together and discuss daily lives and community’s problems, they would look for solutions to their problems and make decisions as to how to resolve them. These would sometimes happen between ballads and folk songs and sometimes at private gatherings, but generally at *divan* gathered by a *dengbêj*. This event is at the same time indicator of communal character of life.¹⁰¹

99 Saz – a family of stringed musical instruments typical for Turkey and Iran [Translator’s note].

100 Dish from Bingöl [Translator’s note].

101 Communal life is shared life. It is against hierarchy, occurs without state authority’s



Photo 6. Children listening to the storyteller. Village of Ewçî, Iğdır , July 2014.

Storytelling in Northern Kurdistan is not what it used to be due to technological development, modernity and means of communication. In the regions where we carried out our research it appears that oral culture for the reasons mentioned above and assimilation¹⁰² is in danger of extinction.

In every region there are individuals identifying as *dengbêj- çirokbêj* (minstrel). These people are known in the society and their work to improve their rhetorical skills keep the expression fresh. Around 70-80% of the people we have interviewed were trained in rhetoric and expression of ballads-folk songs and possess broad knowledge of the field. Sometimes when talking about the past they were able to explain why and how folklore narratives came into being. It changes, though, proportionally to age group as in the group of 40-60 year olds they possess broad knowledge, those aged 20-40 are less knowledgeable and those aged 10-20 know very little or nothing.

permission. It stands against monopoly of power and theft of labour; it is a voluntary community based on shared principles of freedom and democracy and protection. This form of organized community is called communal life. See: Ocalan 2014.

¹⁰² Assimilation into Turkish.



Photo 7. Elderly lady called Hakime is telling a story. Village of Saidbey, Diyadin, Ağrı, July 2014.

Subjects of tales told to children speaking Zaza, Kurmanji or Syriac are quite similar. The hero of the tales in Northern Kurdistan is the fox. We have collected dozens of tales about the fox. They also exist in Syriac language. Although we label them as "children's tales" they are also listed by adults. We present examples of two stories in Kurmanji and Zaza. These two tales talk about the fox and its characteristics.

Many tales in Kurdish oral literature are told in different variations. Like in the case of "Şengê and Pengê" in Diyarbakır, "Şengilo and Mengilo" in Serhed, "Zeng and Beng" in Behdinan topic is the same, but the wording is different.

"Şengê and Pengê" in Diyarbakır :

My Şengê (Merry), my Pengê (Halcyon)

Your mother went to the highlands

She had a leaf of hackberries

Her breast got full of milk

Hurry up ! come to drink

"Şengilo and Mengilo" in Serhed :

Şengil, Mengil, Qaliçengil

Had been to the highlands

*Had in my teeth the spinters
Milk filled the breasts
To feed you your mother comes
Open the doors!*

“Zeng and Beng” in Behdinan :

*My Zeng, My Beng
Mother's gone to highlands
Munched the grasses
Milk came into her breasts
Open for your mother the doors
To feed you your mother comes*

The Fox and the Grandma¹⁰³

Once upon a time. Have mercy for those who are ready and parents of those who listen. There was a grandma and she always put her goat's milk to the cupboard on the wall. The fox came every day and drink the milk. It happened few times. The elderly lady got very angry and started to guard the milk. Late at night she saw that the door was opening. A fox slowly entered and went to the hidden milk. The fox wanted to drink the milk again, but the woman stopped him. With the sickle she had in her hand she cut fox's tail. The fox run away and went to his friends. When they saw him they said:

Fox's friends: *Qoto, moto, duupiloto! (words invented to mock) Where're you from? Where're you goin'?*

The fox was very embarrassed. He went to the grandma to get his tale back and said:

Fox: *Grandma! Grandma! Give back Uncle Fox's tale so that friends don't tell me Qoto, moto, duupiloto!) Where're you from? Where're you goin'?*

Grandma: *go to the goat and bring me my milk.*

The fox went to the goat and said:

Fox: *Goat!Goat! give me your milk. I'll give it to the grandma so that grandma gives the fox back his tail so that when he sees his friends they don't say Qoto, moto, duupiloto! Where're you from? Where're you goin'?*

Goat: *go to the forest and bring me an oak leaf.*

The fox went to the forest and said:

Fox: *Forest! Forest! Give me oak leaf. I'll give it to the goat so that she gives me milk. I'll give it to the grandma so that grandma gives the fox back his tail so*

¹⁰³ Bitlis, Kesrik, Hêrvêş, Nurullah Demir- Zeliha Demir, 2014.

that when he sees his friends they don't say Qoto, moto, duupiloto! Where're you from? Where're you goin'?

Forest: *Go to the blacksmith and bring me a sickle*

Fox: *Blacksmith! Blacksmith! Give me a sickle. I'll give it to the forest so that it gives me an oak leaf. I'll give the oak leaf to the goat so that she gives me milk. I'll give it to the grandma so that grandma gives the fox back his tail so that when he sees his friends they don't say Qoto, moto, duupiloto! Where're you from? Where're you goin'?*

Blacksmith: *Go, bring me an egg.*

The fox went to a hen and said:

Fox: *Hen! Hen! Give me an egg. I'll give it to the blacksmith so that he gives me a sickle. I'll give the sickle to the forest so that it gives me an oak leaf. I'll give the oak leaf to the goat so that she gives me milk. I'll give it to the grandma so that grandma gives the fox back his tail so that when he sees his friends they don't say Qoto, moto, duupiloto! Where're you from? Where're you goin'?*

Hen: *Go to the field and bring me wheat.*

The fox went to the field and said:

Fox: *Field! Field! Give me wheat. I'll give it to the hen so that she gives me an egg. I'll give it to the blacksmith so that he gives me a sickle. I'll give the sickle to the forest so that it gives me an oak leaf. I'll give the oak leaf to the goat so that she gives me milk. I'll give it to the grandma so that grandma gives the fox back his tail so that when he sees his friends they don't say Qoto, moto, duupiloto! Where're you from? Where're you goin'?*

Field: *Go to the cow and bring me some manure.*

The fox went to the cow and said:

Fox: *Give me some manure. I'll give it to the field so it gives me wheat. I'll give the wheat to the hen so that she gives me an egg. I'll give it to the blacksmith so that he gives me a sickle. I'll give the sickle to the forest so that it gives me an oak leaf. I'll give the oak leaf to the goat so that she gives me milk. I'll give it to the grandma so that grandma gives the fox back his tail so that when he sees his friends they don't say Qoto, moto, duupiloto! Where're you from? Where're you goin'?*

Cow: *Go to the hay-barn and bring me some hay.*

The fox went to hay-barn and said:

Fox: *Give me some hay. I'll give it to the cow so she gives me some manure. I'll give it to the field so it gives me wheat. I'll give the wheat to the hen so that she gives me an egg. I'll give it to the blacksmith so that he gives me a sickle. I'll give the sickle to the forest so that it gives me an oak leaf. I'll give the oak leaf to the goat so that she gives me milk. I'll give it to the grandma so that grandma*

gives the fox back his tail so that when he sees his friends they don't say Qoto, moto, duvpiloto! Where're you from? Where're you goin'?

Hay-barn: *It's raining, my roof is leaking.*

The fox climbed on the roof of the hay-barn. He jumped up and down, fixed all the damaged places and went to the hay-barn.

Hay-barn gave some hay and he brought it to the cow. The cow gave some manure and he brought it to the field. The field gave the wheat and he brought it to the hen. The hen gave an egg and he brought it to the blacksmith. The blacksmith gave a sickle and he brought it to the forest. The forest gave an oak leaf and he brought it to the goat. The goat gave him milk and he brought it to the grandma. Elderly lady embellished fox's tail with butterflies and tulle. She sewed torn tail in its place and said: "Go to your friends, they will no longer tell you Qoto, moto, duvpiloto! Where're you from? Where're you goin'?"

The fox went to see his friends and wagged his embellished tail with joy.

Fox's friends: *Fox!*

Fox: *Yes?*

Fox's friends: *How did you get such a beautiful tail?*

Fox: *I went to that temporary spring and there was a pond. I dipped my tail in the water until morning. When I woke up my tail was like this.*

He wanted to get even with his friends because they mocked him.

Fox's friends: *Let's also go to the pond tonight so that our tails are also so beautiful.*

All the fox's friends went together to the pond by the temporary spring. They dipped their tails in the water and were waiting for the morning. When they entered the pond the fox run to the vil-

lage and showed himself to the children. They followed him to the pond. When fox's friends saw the children they tried to run away. They jumped up and down but they couldn't run, waters froze and their tails tore and stayed in the pond. Out of fear foxes had to run and left their tails in the pond. Later they came to the fox and said:

Fox's friends: *Well, you said our tails would be embellished just like yours. Our tails are completely torn.*

Fox: *You mocked me, so I got even. If you hadn't mocked me I wouldn't have tried to take revenge on you.*

In Kurdish culture oral literary products have always been protected. They have been preserved until today through memorization and re-telling. Just like Şengê and Pengê tale, Pîrê u Rovî (The Fox and the Grandma) is also known, told and present everywhere in Kurdistan.

In previous studies, like other tales, tale of the Fox and the Grandma¹⁰⁴ was

¹⁰⁴ **Pîrê û Rovî** : Every day an elderly lady collected milk and put it into a pot. Also every day a fox came and drunk her milk. One day the elderly lady set a trap. The fox came as usual and drank the milk but the woman took him by his tail and cut it off. The fox quickly made off. He went to his friends who mockingly said: "Hutoz, mitoz, your tail is on your nose (poçik ser poz). The fox got embarrassed and went to the old woman and said: "Old woman, give me my tail so I can go to my friends." She replied: "Go, bring me some milk." The fox went to the goat and asked: "Goat, give me milk for the old woman so that she gives me my tail and I can go to my friends." The goat said: "Go to the tree and get me an oak leaf. I'll eat the leaf and give you my milk so you give it to the old woman and she gives you your tail and you can go to your friends." The fox went to the tree and said: "Tree, give an oak tree for the goat. I'll give the leaf to the goat, it will give me milk. I'll give milk to the old woman so she gives me my tail and I can go to my friends." The tree replied: "Go and get me water and water me. I'll give you an oak leaf and you give it to the goat. The goat will eat the leaf and give you milk so you give it to the old woman and she gives you your tail and you can go to your friends." The fox went to the water and said: "Water, come to the tree, so it gives an oak leaf. I'll give the leaf to the goat, it will give me milk. I'll give milk to the old woman so she gives me my tail and I can go to my friends." The water said: "Go and get some girls to play in me. Then I'll come to the tree and it will give you the leaf. You'll give it to the goat and it will eat the leaf and give you milk so you give it to the old woman and she gives you your tail and you can go to your friends." The fox went to the girls and said: "Girls, you need to go to have some fun in the water so that water goes to the tree and it gives me an oak leaf. I'll give the leaf to the goat, it will give me milk. I'll give milk to the old woman so she gives me my tail and I can go to my friends." They said: "Go, bring us shoes so we go to the water to have some fun and so that water goes to the tree. The tree will give you the leaf. You'll give it to the goat and it will eat the leaf and give you milk so you give it to the old woman and she gives you your tail and you can go to your friends." Now the fox went to the shoemaker and said: "Shoemaker, make shoes for the girls so they go to the water and have some fun so that water goes to the tree and it gives me an oak leaf. I'll give the leaf to the goat, it will give me milk. I'll give milk to the old woman so she gives me my tail and I can go to my friends." He told the fox to bring him an egg, so the fox went to the hens and said: "Hen, give me an egg, I'll give it to the shoemaker so he makes shoes for the girls. The girls will have some fun in the water so it goes to the tree and it gives me an oak leaf. I'll give the leaf to the goat, it will give me milk. I'll give milk to the old woman so she gives me my tail and I can go to my friends." Hens replied: "Go, get us some food." The fox went to harvestman and asked: "Give me some corn, I'll give it to the hens so they give me eggs. I'll give eggs to the shoemaker so he makes shoes for the girls that girls so they go to the water and have some fun so that water goes to the tree and it gives me an oak leaf. I'll give the leaf to the goat, it will give me milk. I'll give milk to the old woman so she gives me my tail and I can go to my friends." The harvestman said: "Come, help me with the harvest and I'll give you some corn. You'll give it to the hens and they'll give you eggs. You'll give eggs to the shoemaker so that he makes shoes for the girls. They will go to the water to have some fun so that water goes to the tree. The tree will give you the leaf. You'll give it to the goat and it will eat the leaf and give you milk so you give it to the old woman and she gives you your tail and you can go to your friends." The fox went to the hay-barn and cleaned it and so he was given the corn. He took the corn and brought it to the hens. They ate the corn. Each one of them gave him an egg. He took the eggs and brought them to the shoemaker. He made shoes and gave them to the fox. The fox took the shoes and brought them to the girls. The girls wore shoes and went to have some fun in the water. The water came to the tree and it gave an oak leaf. The fox took the oak leaf to the goat

also recorded. This tale was documented around seventy years ago by a Kurdish researcher and folklorist Heciyê Cindî. It is clear from our research that in seventy years since his study, against all the bans and difficulties, Kurds preserved their oral culture. When we compare two versions of Pîrê u Rovî (The Fox and the Grandma) we can notice that there are no big differences.

<p>Refrain of The Fox and the Grandma – 1940</p> <p><i>... He took the corn and brought it to the hens. They ate the corn. Each one of them gave him an egg. He took the eggs and brought them to the shoemaker. He made shoes and gave them to the fox. The fox took the shoes and brought them to the girls. The girls wore shoes and went to have some fun in the water. The water came to the tree and it gave an oak leaf. The fox took the oak leaf to the goat and it gave him milk. He brought milk to the old woman. The women embellished the tail with bells and beads and gave it to the fox. The fox returned to his friends.</i></p> <p><i>They said: "Look at this fox! We used to mock him, say Hutoz, mitoz, your tail is on your nose (poçik ser poz), now your tail is all in bells and decorations." They asked the fox: "Where did you get this?"...</i></p>	<p>Refrain of The Fox and the Grandma – 2014</p> <p><i>... The fox climbed on the roof of the hay-barn. He jumped up and down, fixed all the damaged places and went to the hay-barn.</i></p> <p><i>Hay-barn gave some hay and he brought it to the cow. The cow gave some manure and he brought it to the field. The field gave the wheat and he brought it to the hen. The hen gave an egg and he brought it to the blacksmith. The blacksmith gave a sickle and he brought it to the forest. The forest gave an oak leaf and he brought it to the goat. The goat gave him milk and he brought it the grandma. Elderly lady embellished fox's tail with butterflies and tulle. She sewed torn tail in its place and said: "Go to your friends, they will no longer tell you Qoto, moto, duvpiloto! Where're you from? Where're you goin?"...</i></p>
--	---

and it gave him milk. He brought milk to the old woman. The women embellished the tail with bells and beads and gave it to the fox. The fox returned to his friends. They said: "Look at this fox! We used to mock him, say Hutoz, mitoz, your tail is on your nose (poçik ser poz), now your tail is all in bells and decorations." They asked the fox: "Where did you get this?" The fox replied: "Go and put your tails until the morning in the water. It will all be embellished and with bells." The foxes went to the water and dipped their tails. Until the morning. Water around their tails froze. They could not take their tails out. They pulled, but couldn't get them out. They said: "Now our tails are full of decorations, that's why they don't come out." The men came to the lake and saw it full of foxes. They said: "Let's bring the dogs!" They went for the dogs. When the foxes saw dogs coming, they run away tearing off their tails. They went to their friends and they heard from them: say Hutoz, mitoz, your tail is on your nose (poçik ser poz). The story is taken from the book by H. Cindî. See: Cindî, H., 2011.

Zaza version

Wa pêro to rê bo¹⁰⁵

Va ki verg bi hes û bi lûya
Jûbînî dir benê bira.
Pîya vecênê nêçîra.
Ey leşê heşe gîrso bira.
Birayna verêna birayne bena.
Hîri teno qoçin dêm dano hewa.
Tejî lûyî rê sonê ra.
Lûyî xo xo ra vana;
“Ez nika se bikera
Ki nê leşan parekerî ro ma.
Heş zehf weno,
Verg herbe herb weno.
Mi rê teba nêmaneno.”
Lûyî vana;
“Bira heş, bê ma nî leşan
parekerê xo rê zey biran.
Her kes angorê xo boro,
Kes mafê kesî nêwero.”
Heş qareno ama xo wa nêveceno.
Vano; “Waya wakile, pareke.”
Vana; “Birayê vergî zaf zamatî kerda,
wa we parekero bira.”
Verg doçê xo keno berz ro hewa
Perseno vano; “Parekerî?”
Heş vano; “De haydê pareke bira.”
Vano; “No leşo jû mi rê,
No leşo jû waya wakile rê,
No leşo jû to rê.
Ma biray jûbînanê xo bi xo.
Xo rê boro her kes angorê xo.”
Heş qareno ser de oreno,
pencey xo goşê vergî de dano piro.
Verg yewhewî de bêgan şino.
Geyreno ya lûye ser vano;

105 Tunceli , Ovacık, Reşo Memed 2014

*"Pareke waya wakile
 nê leşî ro ma"
 Pêtkê lûye recefênê vana;
 "Bira heş, e çî pareka.
 Ti biray ma yo pîla.
 Na leşa jûye ara to sodirî,
 na leşa jûye perojîya to,
 na leşa jûye zî şamîya to ya."
 Vano; "Wayê, no adalet kota ama to vîra?"
 Vana; "Doçê biray ma ra.
 Biray ma pare kerd heqanî ser,
 Ti hêrs bî.
 Birayê ma mend bêgan.
 Ge ez zî vacî didi to rê mi rê jû ya,
 Ez zî bêgan bena
 Wa pêro torê bo pare çina."*

Children at ages 2-3 can start listening to tales. No matter how much they are able to understand, they do like tales. Not just tales, but all folkloric works perform four basic functions: to spent time well, entertainment and togetherness; to nurture and strengthen customs, social values and structure; to educate and transmit knowledge to the next generation; to preserve values of the community against pressure and difficulties and to help release tensions resulting from the these pressures and difficulties.¹⁰⁶ With regard to this matter Alakom believes that: "Kurdish tales are very entertaining and educational. In these tales we follow imaginary characters in their extraordinary efforts when confronted with hardships, helplessness, poverty and destitution. These works gradually get more serious starting with the opposition of good-bad, beautiful-ugly, clean-dirty but they even may end with the dilemma to kill or not to kill, even if this is unwanted and cold-blooded. Giants, commotion, adventures and incidents presented in Kurdish tales also reflect social pains, situation and worries and lay out before one's eyes human interactions and modes of communication. Kurdish tales are abundant with worldviews, customs, traditions and characters. The society in an artistic way, using language of tales defines anew hundred years long desires, hopes and dreams of the society. Over time the society has created thousands of stories or fulfilled artistic needs, it has satisfied us. Even though Kurdish storytelling is not real life, it presented us, gave us a gift of a fictional world. When one looks closer

¹⁰⁶ Pertev 2008.

at Kurdish storytelling, one can observe that works are abundant with topics and motives. The existence of such a variety of motives shows that the society fed all of these into the stories, made itself one of the subjects. In brief, one cannot separate, tear apart the society from the content of the tales.¹⁰⁷

As it has already been mentioned, advice and warnings occupy prominent place in Kurdish oral literature, however, we will focus here on its educational aspect. In this context, tales told children play an important role. It is valid for all genres of oral literature, especially in *chirok* (tale), *serpêhati* (adventure) and *stran* (folk song). In Kurdish tales subjects have more real-life dimensions. A narrative creates a platform for all these social issues to be evaluated. Therefore tales and other oral literary forms are extremely important for children's education. According to scientific research¹⁰⁸ narrative of tales have a positive influence on children with regard to their socialization. It has been observed that through tales children develop patterns of interaction between "themselves" and "the others." Tales, as oral literary products, play an important role in cultural transmission.

2. Proverbs

Generally, proverbs are not said in the same way in different regions. While there are minor differences in the way they are phrased, there are no difference in terms of meaning. They are used in social and daily life, in community's talks. Usually, during gatherings elderly members of the community say proverbs. Like other Kurdish oral literary products, proverbs also give advice or teach a lesson. Below are few examples:

- *Bad people don't act (work), dead buried people don't lift their heads. (Behdinan)*
- *Good deeds rewarded, bad deeds are cursed by God. (Behdinan)*
- *When a thief robs a thief the heavens and earth shake. (Behdinan)*
- *A lion is a lion. Neither female nor male. (Serhed)*
- *People rather be a month-old cow than a year-old ox. (Serhed)*
- *A village without a garden, a tent without sheep and a man saying "I", "I" are no good. (Botan)*
- *Some resemble him, some come from him. (Botan)*
- *Hide the stone in the summer in the haystack, you will need it in January and December. (Botan)*

¹⁰⁷ Alakom 1994, p. 8.

¹⁰⁸ Şahin 2011.

- *It's the fox's meat: neither helal nor haram.*¹⁰⁹ (Botan)
- *Roaming fox is better than sleeping lion.* (Botan)

3. Idioms

Idioms are specific part oral literature. Since they are used in everyday life, they are element of the way culture is used and narrated. Like other oral literary products, idioms are easy to use in daily lives and are used a lot in Kurdish social life. Use of idioms shows richness of the culture of the language. According to different studies¹¹⁰ idioms bring to the fore differences between societies therefore have become subject of philological, literary and sociological studies. Thus children, who learn idioms become aware of the richness of their culture and form bond with their culture and nation. Idioms are in use in every region of Kurdistan. Some of the idioms from Northern Kurdistan are presented below:

Botan and Behdinan regions¹¹¹:

- *He listened with the back of his ear (i.e. did not pay attention)*
- *Fires fell on the foot*
- *Waters of the head are boiling*
- *Have you come to take the fire?*
- *He talks, but doesn't do*
- *You're the one whose liver I'd eat (i.e. I like you a lot)*
- *His wound is the size of flea's wound*

Serhed Region:¹¹²

- *I wish my heart was a garden, so I could blossom in front of you.*
- *They told the cat his shit was a cure and he saved it*
- *Yes, world, (Oh, heavens)*
- *Lazy donkey farts abundantly*
- *No one says my ayran¹¹³ is sour.*
- *Killing a hero is fulfills, desiring a woman burns.*
- *One would think you have got frozen*

¹⁰⁹ Helal – permissible by religion (Islam); Haram – not permissible [Translator's note].

¹¹⁰ Idioms, indicate society's narrative strength. See: Mert, 2009.

¹¹¹ Şükrü Acer Hakkari- Çukurca-Çığıllı village- 2014, Abdulkerim Pusat, Cizre city center, 2014

¹¹² Faruk Birgül, Ağrı, Diyadin, Zeynel 2014, Siraceddin, Muş, Sêgir 2014.

¹¹³ A drink consisting of water and yoghurt [Translator's note].

- *Nose is curling*
- *Harmless snake*
- *A cat next to tandoori*
- *When I want to hunting, my hound needs the toilet*
- *He rolled up his sleeves*
- *He'd eat bones from us and bark up other's doors*
- *Master's property's gone, one would think it's the shepard's life gone*
- *It's either yes or no (both would do)*
- *Death is better than elderness*
- *He's four-kidneyed*
- *Even the dead would laugh at him*
- *He was an ass and he went as an ass*
- *The nose doesn't burn*

4. Chants

People call chants “bilerzok, bêhnok, zûgotinok, lihevanînok, lezgotin and lezvate.” In Botan and Behdinan regions also term “metelok-çîvanok” is used. They are used during entertaining completions and rivalry. There is no need to gather people for chants as they can be said anywhere any time. Chants are influenced by geography, climate and social events. Usually they begin tales and are said in a rhythmic manner. Chants are about social events, feelings, ideas, climate and nature. They are made of strange meaningful or meaningless words, quarrels and contests and since are said in a poetic, fast and rhythmic way their purpose is to amuse. In the course of our research we have noticed that there are also different kinds of chants:

- 1) *The ones said at the beginning of tales*
- 2) *The ones said for contests-competitions*
- 3) *The ones said for games*

We will focus here on the third type; the ones said for games. Since they are told for fun we can see them as the starting point for Kurdish oral children literature. Kurdish children have received from the richness of Kurdish oral culture and created their own oral literature. We will use chants to explain how Kurdish children made their own oral literature. Below are few examples of chants:

Serhed Region¹¹⁴:

- *On a tiny miny road
The rose's in the bush
I threw it a punch
I entered goodness*
- *The door's open
Bread and cheese are on one another
Red cow got mad
Mother also came and gave a kiss*
- *Either on kohl or the churn
My old lady's hip's broken
She didn't give me my son
Sit on the churn, just sit on it*
- *Sefo, where's the son, that donkey?
Where's donkey, son of a donkey
They took the donkey to the court
They made the donkey talk
Strong knife in the pocket
Kill the donkey in its sleep*

Behdinan Region:¹¹⁵

- *Three each of the yellow gold coins
Hey you! Bastard born from sin
Go to the ends of the world
Saw how it was
If you don't see twenty four karat
Come to my door armed with a club*
- *Wind is the wind during harvest
The sound of a shoe in the field
Who brings bad luck
Shall have their eyes fall out*

114 İsa Akkuş, Şeref naz Çiçek, Güzel Babacan, Sevgül Akkuş, Sadrettin Karabalık, Keziban Akkuş Bitlis-Adilcevaz- Wêrangaz-2014

115 Abdulkerim Alturk, Şırnak- Uludere 2014

- *I was a lump of hair
One was the tail
One was shit
This mouth went for berries
This hand went for hair
This foot stepped into shit*
- *My father
Simo with a walking stick
Simo with a walking stick that has seven holes*

Botan Region:¹¹⁶

- *Our tent got stuck in the asphalt, asphalt stuck to our tent
Our tent got stuck in the asphalt, asphalt stuck to our tent*
- *I went to Hodja's house, I saw a red apple, in the arms of Hodja's wife
I took a bite of the apple on my Hodja's wife's arm*
- *A religious man came to us wearing a diadem, I said:
You, diadem, what a diadem you are. You, diadem, what a diadem you are.
You, diadem, what a diadem you are.*
- *Forty birds and two birds and two cuckoos by this side of the water
Each of forty birds and two birds and two cuckoos called out to them from
this side of the water
Forty birds and two birds and two cuckoos asked the ones on the other
side of the water "how many birds and cuckoos are you?
"We are forty birds and two birds and two cuckoos," they replied*

5. Riddles

Terms used for riddles are *tiştanok*, *tiştonek*, *mamik*, *çivanok*, *çibenok* (Zaza). There are used in conversations for the purpose of a competition. Forms of the riddles depend on climate, nature and social events. Both meaning and content sometimes vary from region to region. According to Karademir¹¹⁷ historical events and persons, voice impersonations, exceptional events, real or abstract fantastic ideas are expressed in a manner of rhythmic questions. This

¹¹⁶ Silêmanê Sofî, Cizre, Dêrgul, 2014, Mihemedê Gindar, Nafiye Kodak, Cizre, Ernebat 2014

¹¹⁷ Karademir, 2008.

kind of anonymous literary forms are called riddles. They usually start with the following phrase: "I've got a thing, a thingy. It's a riddle, my riddle..." After chants riddles are most relevant for children. They are used by them for competition. Some examples of riddles we present below.

- *A female teacher asked another teacher:
There exists a page in the world
That you can't write on it, but you can eat it
What's that?
(cabbage)*
- *I've got a thing, a thingy
It's wrapped in linen
Has no foot nor heel
Goes to the stream every day
(jug)*
- *I've got a thing, a thingy
I hit the rock, it doesn't break
I hit the water, it breaks
What's that?
(paper)*
- *366 storks
Half are white, half are black
And two bulls and twelve cows
What's that?
(366 days, both darkness and night, daytime and light, they follow one another, 12 cows are months)*
- *Hocus Pocus, son's greater than the father
(fire&smoke)*
- *It's a bride in the morning and a cuckoo at night
(star)*
- *A blonde rides her bull in the sky
(churn)*
- *It's a dark gap, snow falls in*

(chimney)

Behdinan region:

- *It's a riddle, my riddle
I went to a world without people
I ate two boneless sheep
I rode a lifeless horse
(A child: there's nobody in mother's womb apart from it; when born it drinks milk from mother's breasts, which are boneless; it is put into a crib, which is still object)*
- *There's a tree in the world
Has twelve branches
On each branch there's a nest
In each nest there're 30 eggs
(year)*
- *Went to the mill
Saw a weird thing
A seven-headed thug
(crab)*
- *Long and narrow
Wide and narrow
Short and narrow
(girth)*
- *I've got a thing, a thingy
When it comes loosen your belt
If you don't eat it, it's a shame
(bowel)*

Botan region:

- *Throw it from a rock and it won't break
Throw it into water and it breaks
(paper)*
- *Hocus pocus. Son's bigger than the father*

(donkey&horse)

- *Bride in the evening, a cuckoo in the day
(lamp)*
- *Yellower than gold, the poltroon's shit is the name of the lion
(scorpion)*
- *Soldiers of the sky: took rivers' banks, no one stayed till morning
(stars)*
- *I went to a gathering and asked the elderly: "Have you ever seen a bird
giving milk?"
(bat)*

Riddles, in comparison with other oral literary forms of Kurdistan, demonstrate greater variety from region to region. As seen in the examples above, sometimes the answers and at times the puzzle changes. Regardless of this diversity, riddles must be protected and must not be disused. Each difference is peculiar to the region. Like other literary forms, riddles play important role in education, language development, socialization and progress of thought.

6. Epigrams

In Botan and Behdinan regions epigrams are called qese and are told in a rhythmic manner. Generally they are told by two people in a form of a battle of words. Epigrams are often critical in nature. The way they are told in daily lives depends on the time. Their purpose is the same as idioms. Epigrams are told to describe, compare, criticize and amuse.

- *Son, son, tell me boy,
Hunter kills a partridge
I was a shepherd for seven years
For seventy years I put cows and bulls out to pasture
That's how this chest got white*
- *Son, son, my sonny boy,
You had two wishes
Know your old man's farm
Fix the farm's plough*

- *Come slowly to my father's house
Open the door with your finger
If your mother-in-law makes any noise
Say that cats joined the game*
- *It's a church, a church with me
Şinto the soldier used to tell me
It's a blind owl on the rocks
Sits next to the tandoori
Counts balls of dough with sticks*

7. Payizok – Pirepayizok* Autumn Songs

These are sad, melancholic folk songs. Unlike güzel folk songs, they express gloomy feelings. They are sung only in the fall. When people who to the highlands return, they sing these melodic songs about love and romance. Fall is beginning of winter. Due to snow and harsh winter conditions, villagers are unable to leave their homes for five-six months. Dengbêjs sit together and take turns singing payizok. When these songs are sang no one dances halay¹¹⁸. These are particularly popular in Hakkari region.¹¹⁹ Payizok is not accompanied by musical instruments and is sung in a peculiar way as the voice comes out from the throat in waves. Form and development of payizok have been greatly influenced by melancholy and anticipation of long winter that comes together with autumn. Adventures, love, affection etc. are among the topics. The most important feature of payizok is the repetition. All our recordings bear this feature. In “Çemê Karê¹²⁰,” a place known as place of the nomads, we gathered for our study folk songs more in the style of payizok. Autumn songs are generally sung by one person. In our study dengbêjs sung them more in a form of a battle of words.

Autumn songs should be used as educational materials, the way and method of education, as something that gives meaning to the subjects. They are

118 South-Eastern Anatolian folk dance [Translator's note].

119 Çiftçi, 2012, p.43.

*Payizok: (payiz means autumn) songs sung upon return to highlands. Since they are sung in autumn they are melancholic. Usually sung by the elderly, talk about another year that has passed. Another reason is harsh winter that will immobilize people in their homes.

120 Highlands on the slopes of Herekol mountain, Pervari, Siirt.

important in terms of expressing children's ideas and opinions. Similarly to other oral literary forms, which are taken as examples of Kurdish culture, so should be payizok.

Payizok¹²¹

*Spring, spring close to the prey
Landlord calls out: the lady of the house
Here, in mourning, in all the pain
No, honestly, it's a ruin, the black-eyed
I mean, summer's labor
Autumn, autumn called out to me
This poor thing clanged to the branch of an oak tree
This grieving house stays grief-stricken, father's also grief-stricken, the love
between January and December
Why don't you put roses and camomile into your soul
Why do you want from me? Why do you want from me?
Summer's gone, with the fall of autumn, it's all gone in vain
At first you didn't want anything from me, you gave no sign
Spring's gone, summer's gone, what do you want from me in this autumn
This autumn, come talk to me, hey, you the black-eyed.*

Payizok¹²²

*Lift her up! Up! Let's see the bride
Lift her up! Up! Let's see my love
Where's the cure for my love...uncover my love
Where's the cure for my love...uncover my love
My beauty, my love...they'll make it rain, my dear
My beauty, my love...they'll make it rain, my dear
She went to into the soil...my love went into the soil
She went to into the soil...my love went into the soil
Oh, the bride's way... it's pouring rain on her
No more sound of galloping bride's horse... bride's horse no longer comes, my
dear
No more sound of galloping bride's horse... bride's horse no longer comes, my
dear
Our home's in Xendeyok, it won't come to us, to Xendeyok*

121 İsmailê Koçer, Silopi, Şırnak 2014.

122 Mihemedê Gindar, Ernebat-Cizre Botan bölgesi, 2014.

Our home's in Xendeyok, it won't come to us, to Xendeyok
The groom doesn't leave the window, he's by the window, don't come my love
The groom doesn't leave the window, he's by the window, don't come my love
He longs for the coming of the Black-eyed, the coming....but the Black-eyed
doesn't come, my love
He longs for the coming of the Black-eyed, the coming....but the Black-eyed
doesn't come, my love
The house of the worker cannot be on the hill... the house of the worker cannot
be on the hill, don't come my love
The house of the worker cannot be on the hill... the house of the worker cannot
be on the hill, don't come my love
Oh, thief, you destroyed us... destroyed us, the thief, my love won't come
Oh, thief, you destroyed us... destroyed us, the thief, my love won't come

8. Epos

People know it as a long tale. According to our observations during fieldwork, they are usually told by dengbêjs. They gather big audiences and tell stories of war, heroism, love. Since eposes are long, telling them might sometimes take days. It is also opportunity for socialization. How in other places a concert, movie screening are anticipated by art enthusiasts, that is the interest eposes evoke in Kurdish society. Listeners get carried away by the excitement of war and battles, remain under the spell of the protagonists, are entertained by the love stories, and sometimes are overwhelmed by pain and destiny. Kurdish epos usually starts with a story and is interrupted by folk songs. Among eposes popular known by the people there are: : Memê Alan\Mem and Zin, Siyabend and Xecê, Dervêşê Evdî, Ebdalê Zeynikê, Rustemê Zal, Ker û Kulik, Zembilfiroş, Dimdim, Filîtê Quto, and Binevşa Narin...From these, we have gathered ourselves Siyabend and Xecê, Dervêşê Evdî, Ker and Kulik, Filîtê Quto, Zembilfiroş, Binevşa Narin and Mirze Mihemed.

Dimdim¹²³

Roaring, nicely roaring,
It's the job of the Golden Claw Khan

¹²³ Abstracts come from the beginning and the end of the Dimdim epos. Layout of the original is maintained. Dimdim is the name of a castle erected by the Golden Claw Khan and no force could destroy the fortress. The epos tells the story of a war between Kurdish Golden Claw Khan and Iranian Shah Abbas. It talks about Kurdish will to risk their lives, bravery of women, treason and Iranian tricks (Cindî H. , 1962, 1985).

*That's the truth, there're no lies
There was a khan from Miqurî
He was wandering in the desert or along the stream
He had no residence
The khan arose from Kurdistan
Went to the Shah of Iran
To get goods and the khanate
The Khan was unknown orphan
Went to the Shah Abbas
Asked for the sword and the diamond
Khan, the orphan, went to the Shah of Iran
Asked him for a sword and belt*

The war between The Golden Claw Khan and Shah lasted long. This time they fought till morning. The Shah saw that Golden Claw Khan and his son are not to be easily defeated. He has a poison prepared and sprinkled it over the battlefield. Towards the morning Golden Claw Khan and his son went to the poisoned battlefield. All of them burnt there. Shah and the soldiers were in a hurry to get to the Dimdim castle. Khan's wife looked through the window and what did she see? Shah and the soldiers were in a hurry to enter the castle. Then she turned to daughter-in-law and said: "After the death of the Golden Claw Khan and his glorious son it would be a shame for us to become Iranian." Shouting: "No! Something like that never happened and never will!" she run downstairs and set on fire gunpowder magazines. Explosions started there. The castle was destroyed from four sides and no one stayed alive. Only the Golden Claw Khan's daughter-in-law survived. The wind blew her scarf and took like a bird and landed in a Sunni village.

Blood line of the Golden Claw Khan runs till this day thanks to the daughter-in-law.¹²⁴

The Cripple and The Deaf

(...)

The cripple tells the Deaf: Mate, we haven't seen their daughters. How can we go and bring Bêcan. First we need to see the girls.

124

*The Deaf screams out in the square
My heart is pounding
Eli Emerler should bring their daughters
Let the Cripple see the girls
And then go and bring Bêcan
Eli Emerler screams out in the square
He says: the Cripple son, you're right, you're tyro
You're not in your right mind
We have a daughter who's really Telî Reuşen Hatun
She's a tiny pearl
When she drinks water you can see it going down her throat
In the fountain of Paypur
Seventy dogs guard her
Each one of them is in good shape
In addition, there' also one white dog
If you like it, go there,
If you don't, go back.
(...)*

9. Curses¹²⁵

Curses are important elements of oral literary culture of societies that have been oppressed and looked down on. Likewise swearwords are elements of the oral culture that humiliate and oppress the wretched. Therefore analysis of the curses give insight into psychological condition of the people and social situation. When we look at curses we notice miserable women, reproachful people, the deprived, the marginalized.¹²⁶ Like in the case of other oral literary products the research has not moved beyond collection of data. Socio-psychological study is yet to be carried out. As stated above, curses are the voice of the Kurdish society, and Kurdish women in particular. They are the voice of Kurdish women's hearts. Of the curses reverberating in children's ears that we managed to collect and that had been collected earlier, two features stand out. First of all, they are used/said more frequently by women/mothers. Secondly, they are told primarily for male children. In this sense curses shed light

¹²⁵ Curses quoted below were collected in Serhed, Botan, Dersim , Bingöl and Diyarbakır regions.

¹²⁶ Kurdish curse dictionary Kürtçe Beddualar sözlüğü (Demirhan, 2014).

of the interaction between sexes.¹²⁷ Women curse men. This is the reality of curses in Kurdish society that presented itself to us during our study.

C.G. Jung in “Psychology and Literature” explained the relationship between the artist and the artistic product. According to S. Freud artist creates artwork out of their own life experience in order to solve their problems. Some solutions found this way might be right.

Artistic skills of people may be called as neurosis, can help to overcome psychological tumors. It seems logical to the people.¹²⁸ According to Freud’s views and what Jung said, we can accept curses as a form of neurosis. If we accept curses to be neurosis, then wording of the curses brings to light Kurdish women’s subconscious. Since Kurdish women are unable to stand against bad treatment and violence of husbands or other oppressive powers, what they cannot say directly, they tell their children in the form of curses.¹²⁹ From psychoanalytical perspective curses and lullabies are the same. They are secret way Kurdish women can express their ideas and thoughts. Curses cited below usually start with “heyîê” and end with “-yo, -i.” In Kurdish grammar these suffixes are used to address masculine gender. Therefore it is clear that curses are told for the men. Curses we have evaluated here have all been said by mothers. Sometimes men also curse. It is crystal clear that Kurdish curses are told by women and address the men. When we look at some curses quoted below (see: 6, 8, 17, 20, 22, 35) we can observe that women address the children, but they do in fact mean men. In these curses male children are used as a sort of scapegoat. Women do not target sons, they target their fathers. In curses and lullabies Kurdish women’s subconscious can be broadly evaluated.

- 1) *May his throat be pierced*
- 2) *Have him wear black pants (i.e. like mourning black clothes)*
- 3) *May my germs get you*
- 4) *May he be stricken by electricity*
- 5) *May his eyes be blackened*
- 6) *May his bloodline end*
- 7) *May his house be turned up-side-down*
- 8) *May you lose your hair and fall between arms of your father*
- 9) *May you be torn into pieces*

127 Husband-wife.

128 Aka, 2010, p.40.

129 All are males: brother-in-law, father-in-law, neighbor etc.

- 10) *May you drown*
- 11) *May you bring the curse upon yourself*
- 12) *May you be taken by the river's flow*
- 13) *May your stomach get swollen*
- 14) *May your cheese turn into a stone*
- 15) *May your stomach bleed*
- 16) *May your days become the darkest*
- 17) *May your end be not pleasant*
- 18) *May your house be the house of a black crow*
- 19) *May you turn into ash*
- 20) *May your wishes remain always only wishes*
- 21) *May you get bitten by an angry wolf*
- 22) *May your wishes remain in your anus*
- 23) *May your bowels be pulled out through your throat*
- 24) *May your nose becomes arthritic*
- 25) *May his belly darken*
- 26) *May he have cancer*
- 27) *May his eyes fall out*
- 28) *May his arm break*
- 29) *May his house collapse*
- 30) *May he be unwell*
- 31) *May he stay under the train and never come back*
- 32) *May he eat but not digest*
- 33) *May his life be like spring beetroot's*
- 34) *God damn you*
- 35) *May you miscarry*
- 36) *May God curse you*
- 37) *May your woman miscarry*
- 38) *May your house be set on fire*
- 39) *May you be struck by a lightning*
- 40) *May you not see your grandson*
- 41) *May you die before your wishes are granted*
- 42) *May you have a gallbladder stone*

Curses said for girls expose Kurdish society's worldview and its reality. Like other literary forms they also reflect characteristics of the Kurdish society. "May your stomach get swollen" is said to a girl. Social and religious factors underlie this phrase. In Kurdish society, following Islamic traditions,

pre-marital sexual relations are sinful and forbidden. If a couple enters a relation without marriage it may result in pregnancy, for which according to the social norms all the responsibility and shame are attributed to a woman. When such news becomes public it brings upon the woman enormous shame. Social norms are imposed on women in particularly oppressive way. Such things do occur in Kurdish society and that is the reason why mothers would tell their daughters “may your stomach get swollen.” Here also women’s subconscious speaks through the curse. When this curse is uttered, it in fact criticizes the men, masculinity and social life and the daughter is used as a tool. The purpose of older women in this curse is to give a warning and make them face the realities of their society. This way they also protect themselves from men.

“May you lose your hair and fall between arms of your father” is a curse also told to girls. For Kurdish women long hair and braids are symbols of womanhood and beauty. Cutting hair of a woman is very meaningful in this society. Women cut their hair to demonstrate disagreement and to mourn after significant events (death, murder or another tragedy).

It also exists among Yazidi women. Şirin İsmail Ali, member of Yazidi Free Democratic Movement Congress (TEVDA), talks about women from town of Sinjar near Mosul¹³⁰ in Kurdistan: “sisters or other women leave their hair and braids on the graves of the loved ones prematurely departed; they offer the most precious thing they have to those who by death were deprived of the beauties of life. Sometimes when a visitor from Europe comes to our cemeteries is astonished by the sight of hair and ask for the meaning. We tell them: ‘I haven’t seen in my life such pain.’ I bury my entire beauty and attractiveness. Hair is very important for Yezidi Kurdish women. That’s why cutting hair and burying it is the beginning of a very long period of mourning for a woman.¹³¹” According to that, hair cutting is one of the old traditions practiced by Kurdish women. Such a curse is very harsh on a girl, but like other curses directed at men, it also contains criticism. “(...)and fall between arms of your father” is direct criticism of the men while exposing women’s subconscious.

10. Other oral literary genres

a) Games

¹³⁰ Iraqi Kurdistan [Translator’s note].

¹³¹ Ali, 2011.

In oral literature plays are based on the role of the chants. Children's games differ depending on climate and physical conditions. Games played at home and outdoors are different. Both of them use chants. Among games played at home there are: kapavêtin¹³², şeşik, pêncok, heftok, ring game¹³³ and many others. Games played outdoors include: bire, blind man's bluff, shoes tearing. From our observations we have concluded that in the winters children and adults spend time in the same place and play games together or observe. In other seasons, conditions of the games are adjusted according to natural conditions, are changed or new games are invented. Children's games involving chants are presented below.

Games are played by group of two or three children. One of the children is the leader, the other kids put their fingers on the ground; they play in turns.

¹³² Tools used in the game are sheep and goats' back legs' bones. When goat or sheep is slaughtered children collect bones. Once they find the bones they clean them and place on a flat stone and further clean bones using another stone. When this is done, they pour lead into the bones. Such a bone with two endings covered in lead is called the spotted bone. It is the most important bone in the game due to the whole procedure of its preparation. With this bone you can play many different games. The game in question here, is game about destruction. Its name is also Kawxirê. 10-15 people can play Kawxirê. Every player must have a bone because they are subject of competition. First, it is played by a group of people, its size does not matter. Everyone plays individually. The players make a line and organize their bones vertically along it standing 1m away from the line. With the other bone they have they aim at the bone that's in the ground and try to make it fall. They can do this as many times as the number of the bones they have. There is also another game very similar to this one. Its name is "bızdım-badım." This game is played in a similar way. Players put their bones in a line and take one shot at their bone. In "bızdım-badım" game the bone that falls must be at least a foot away from the line. When the bone falls they step back a bit and say "bist û bade" and then they measure the distance between the line and the bone. If it's one foot away the player wins the bone. If the player wins five times he is believed to be successful so friends award him with dried grapes and nuts. The game ends like that... İsmailê Koçer, Abdurrahmanê Koçer, Mihemedê Sipertî, İdris Torlak, Şırnak, Silopî 2014.

¹³³ The ring game: during cold winter nights a crowd gathers in one house and separate into two groups. Each group (6 people) covers themselves with a blanket and one person from each group hides a ring among members of the group. Each person one by one bends over and turns away from the other group. One person puts hands under the blanket and frisks the others. The ring is hidden in a pocket of one of the participants. The same selected person touches everybody in the group and suddenly they open their hand under the blanket. At that moment puts the ring into somebody's pocket. The one who gets the ring is afraid and slouches. Very often it is clear from the movements and the posture who got the ring. The person hiding the ring should select the most controlled, cold-blooded person so that the ring does not pass over to the other team. After the ring is hidden, the opposite team take their turn to find the person who has the ring. If they find the person with the ring they win. The game continues for a few rounds. Losing team brings dried plums, grapes and eat it them together.

To start, for fingers of one hand they say:

*"Hêklo mêklo
Çalim çêklo
Hestiyê mamo
Kewê gozel
Hat ser wê de rît"*¹³⁴

Whichever finger the chant ends with, it must be hidden. It is repeated for all fingers; whose fingers end must place their hand on the chest and continue with the other hand. When all the hands "finish" in this way, the leader checks whose is hotter. Kids one by one take their hands from their chests and touch the face of the leader kid. The leader decides whose hands are the hottest.

"Veşartok-çavpirtinok" is played in Batman region with this chant. A person who closes their eyes chants, the others also chant and hide. Group of players changes from two to ten participants.

*"Oooooooooo
Hocus pocus
Take hostage
Sultan of the bulbuls
Foreseeing childbearing
What a childbearing woman knows?
She always knows the color of the water
She's the rose of the roses
She's better than red poppies
Hide yourself
Look, I came"*¹³⁵

Games like these are also discussed in the chapter about children's oral literature in Kurdistan.

b) Anecdotes

Anecdotes usually draw on social life. They are told for amusement. In many regions people who tell anecdotes are very famous. They occupy prominent place in Kurdish oral literature. Anecdotes, among other names, are also called "empty talk."

¹³⁴ Miraz Murat, Iğdır, 2014

¹³⁵ Abide Özdemir, Batman, 2014.

“A man was going to get married one day, but he didn’t know much about anything. They told him: ‘When there’s time for the marriage ceremony, just repeat whatever the Imam says.’ He said ‘OK’ and went home.

Imam: Whatever, mate.

The man: Whatever, mate.

Imam: Do you know who you are?

The man: Do you know who you are?

Imam: Dude, I’m the imam, know your place!

The man: I’m the imam, know your place!

Imam: I’ll marry you to a woman.

The man: I’ll marry you to a woman.

Imam stood up and said: “Whoops” and the man stood up and said “Whoops to you.”¹³⁶

c) Memoir-legend

In some periodicals tales are called memoirs or adventures, but this terminology is inaccurate since memoirs’ authors are known and it is a modern literary genre. Moreover in terms of topic and subject they are different from tales. This causes a great deal of confusion in naming genres. Sometimes also both forms are called a tale (chirok). This terminological confusion needs to be addressed and solved (Alakom, 1994, p.7-8). In some regions they are called tales, but are different from tales. In comparison with tales, writers of memoir-adventure are known. They are written by the person who experienced events in the plot or by a person who saw the events or knows the person who had experienced them. These works are called memoir-adventure. Adventures are scattered around in different versions. Once they spread around they turned into tales. In every region one may find memoir-adventure narratives. Weird events, comic stories, war and competition are some of the topics. In general they are told as an anecdote.

d) Heyranok – Dilok – Spring songs

Spring songs are one of the genres of oral literature and are sung to its own distinctive melodic mode. They are inspired by love and affection. The coming of spring excites the youth and with their first spring loves they start to sing love songs. Dilok is a oral literary product sung to melodic mode. One may find dilok sung in the workplaces and daily life. They are about the love be-

¹³⁶ Kalé Şinoyi, Van, Gürpınar, Gola Bozo, 2014.

tween a bride and groom and about work. These songs are sung to entertain and to give moral support. In Botan region all farm laborers sing diloks while working. These songs cheer them up and help to work at a faster pace. Dilok is sung in turns.

e) Logical puzzles³⁷

Logical puzzles come along riddles. They are told in every region. Usually they are used by the elderly and also children ask depending on their knowledge. During work, holiday or in the evenings people ask each other logical puzzles to compete.

- *A sheep, wolf and grass are next to each other. They need to be moved to the other side of the river. How can it be done without letting them eat each other?
(First the sheep should be taken to the other side then the grass. Afterwards the sheep should be taken back and the wolf taken to the other side and only then the sheep can be taken to the other side so they do not eat each other.)*
- *There were three men and three wives and one horse. They came to the bank of a stream. No one trusted one another. They did not dare to leave their wives with another. How can they pass to the other side?
(First three women get on the horse and cross to the other side. Then two of them stay and one goes back to her husband and three men get on the horse. Two men stay with their wives and the third one goes back to take his wife.)*
- *There are three camels. One eats people, one eats saddles and the third one eats camels. You must tie these animals one behind the other and give them to somebody. They will travel like that. How will you tie them?
(The camel that eats camels must be the first one as you'll give the reins to the person. The camel that eats people must be the last one and the one that eats saddle must be in the middle. Tie three saddles to this one and go like that.)*

11) Women's oral literature: lullabies

Lullabies are quatrains rhythmically told to help children sleep. People call them lorik or lori. Lullabies play a significant role in teaching and learning

³⁷ Faruk Köstekçi, Bitlis, Adilcevaz, Yukarı Sipan village, 2014.

one's mother tongue. The child first recognizes and learns mother's voice. Through lullabies children learn new words and establish relation with the world. They also become familiar with characteristic features of the society and cultural heritage is passed down to them.¹³⁸ Lullaby when sung, is each time re-invented by the teller. Psychoanalytical studies of lullabies suggest that they are sung not just to help the child sleep.¹³⁹ A mother while singing a lullaby contributes to it her own feeling and thus re-creates it. As a result a mother becomes a kind of an artist since she re-invents the lullaby and passes it on. To reformulate the lullaby mother uses her own life experiences.

As a consequence of Freud and Jung's psychoanalyst ideas, literature and lullabies are seen as a kind of neurosis. According to this view, lullabies seem to have a different purpose. They are the way a mother tell the child her sub-conscious feelings. A mother, who has no one else to share her problems and sorrows with, shares them through a lullaby with her child.

We shall try to evaluate collected lullabies from this perspective. Although they are just lullabies told by Kurdish mothers to their children, they must be further studied from psychoanalyst perspective.

*Serhen region*¹⁴⁰

- *Hush, hush, hush, hush*
Hush honey, hush sonny boy
Will hush, won't hush
My honey wasn't waking
Hush, hush, hush, sonny boy
Will hush, won't hush
My honey wasn't waking
- *Hush, hush, honey hush*
Hush, hush, honey hush
My beloved little tall sonny
You're black-eyed, why are you crying?
Will hush, won't hush
My honey doesn't wake up in the morning
Hush, hush, honey hush

¹³⁸ Toker, 2011, p. 27.

¹³⁹ Aka, 2010.

¹⁴⁰ Werdek Civelek, Faraşin 2014

- *Hush, hush, honey hush*
Night's coming, place to stay's far
Hush, hush my cibrê¹⁴¹, hush
- *Sonny boy, sonny boy*
I'm angry wolf
I'm miserable
Sonny boy, sonny boy, oh sonny boy

Behdinan region:

- *Cibri sonny boy, hush, hush*
Little cibri tells the big cibri
Go you crazy kid, I said they're gone
Oh, I've gone like a black eagle, honestly don't
I wish I knew your home
I'd come on foot, hush, hush
- *I'll hold hand of Hekeryan Mirî's son, Cembeli*
I'll bring Berçelan to the highlands and I'll make her a wife
She'll respect me and entertain
Oh, hush, hush my Cembeli, hush
Yes, Cembelie of the house, hush sonny boy
Hush, don't break your poor mother's heart
Hush, your tears make mama sad
Mother-in-law will come and rock you herself
Be aware your poor mama's no longer here
She won't rock her Cembeli's cradle
Oh, hush, hush my Cembeli, hush...¹⁴²

When Binevşa Narin got a baby, she named it Cembelî after a man she loved. She sings her son lullabies. In the lullabies she tells the child her subconscious feelings. She talks about Hekeryan Mirî Cembeli and tells her child of her wishes and desires with regard to Cembeli.¹⁴³

¹⁴¹ Cibrê: a name of a hero from an epos Binevşa Narin- Cembeliyê Mirê Hakariyan

¹⁴² An abstract from "Binevşa Narin- Cembeliyê Mirê Hekaryan" epos, Nadiye Ana, Hakkari, 2014.

¹⁴³ From Binevşa Narin- Cembeli Mirê Hekaryan epos: "She got up and put her son into the cradle and in the evening run away with Hekari Mirî's son. From the mountains

Through the character of Cembelî, Kurdish mothers make their children listen about their problems, sorrows and pains. Putting aside interpretation we might derive from psychoanalytical perspective, we can clearly see that this particular women's behaviour is related to the role and mission they have been given in the society. In other words it shows us patriarchal character of the society.¹⁴⁴ In a patriarchal society women are always in the background. There is no space for women to express themselves freely.

C) CHILDREN'S ORAL LITERATURE OF KURDISTAN

In the view of the people interviewed for this study nursery rhymes came to the fore. Accordingly, nursery rhyme is children's oral literary product. Adults, embarrassed due to their age, did not tell us any nursery rhymes. They would say: "This is kids' thing." In the interviews they made it clear that they would tell us what they used to say in their childhoods. What they said when they used to play. They would tell us in a rhythmic manner nursery rhymes about social life, nature and animals from games they used to play.

Nursery rhymes are a literary form created by children during their games. This is the source of children's literature. Body of research in this area supports our findings with regard to Kurdish oral literature.¹⁴⁵

Children reveal interesting things about themselves in the nursery rhymes. According to our interviewees, children among themselves used to say rhythmic verses about social life, nature and animals. For instance in Serhen region some children told us a rhyme about "Sun and Shadow." However, depending on the weather, they would change some words. They used to say "Sun and Shadow" the following way:

they came to Tiyarê and from there to Hekarî and finally to the highlands of Berçelan. Got bored of the father and did not stay also in Hakkari. Kemal Şimşek, Hakkari, center, 2014.

¹⁴⁴ In a patriarchal society women are second-class citizens. In the women-men relations, men are depositors of authority. See: Ökten, 2009.

¹⁴⁵ According to this study there are following types of nursery rhymes:

1. Tale nursery rhymes
2. Game nursery rhymes
3. Ritual nursery rhymes
4. Individual nursery rhymes acrobatics

Children are mostly interested in games. Therefore children are interested mostly in nursery rhymes that are parts of games. Game nursery rhymes are invented by children and inspired by daily life. These nursery rhymes are primary products of children's literature. (Toker, 2011).

Sun go, your son's dead
Shadow come, your daughter's dead
Sun go, your son's dead
*Shadow come, your daughter's dead*¹⁴⁶

Children in this nursery rhyme are somewhere else. A source for this rhyme must have been a daily event. Mother plays the main role. When children cry, mothers at once are by their side and show their interest. Children in this nursery rhyme wanted to play "Sun and Shadow."

In the same way they would say a rhyme for a ladybug. When a ladybug would sit on one's finger, in order to guess or learn results of a family event, they would say two words taking turns. Words that were said when ladybug flew, were believed to come true. For instance, there was a pregnant woman in a child's family and children would try to guess sex of the child according to ladybug's take off. When the ladybug was on the finger they would say:

"Girl boy
Girl boy
Girl boy
*Girl boy*¹⁴⁷"

Around Ovalık it is different. There, children would want something from the ladybug. They would list their wishes in a song or a rhythmic chant. They believed that if the ladybug flew quickly, the wish would come true. In Diyarbakır they tell to the ladybug:

"Grandpa grandma
Bring us the robe
Take your hand back
Make your son's hat purple."

In Batman in one village we heard children saying "selîma" for a ladybug:

*"Selîma bring me a pair of shoes. (a girl)"*¹⁴⁸
In Cizre they say the following:
"Ladybug, ladybug,
*Dad's house's where?"*¹⁴⁹

146 Xwişka Pembe, Ağrı, 2014.

147 Hakan Şahini, Ağrı, 2014.

148 Ronya Bewran, Diyarbakır, 2014 .

149 Sümeyye Gezici, Batman, 2014.

Direction where the ladybug flew after these words was where the house was located.

Apart from nursery rhymes about animals children also say others during their playtime. In the following game children wanted to defeat the other side of to surprise them. The word game would go as follows:

*“Child 1: Hey, say twenty!
Child 2: Twenty!
Child 1: shall I pee into your ear?!
Child 2:.....?!¹⁵⁰”*

Another game, involving three or four children, also consists of rhythmically said phrases. In this game there’s one joker a the rest of the kids, one by one, put five of their fingers on the ground. At the beginning for each finger of the hand they say:

*“Heklo mēklo
Çalım çēklo
Mamo’s bone
Partridge
Came and sh***d on me!¹⁵¹”*

The finger of which the rhyme finished would have to be hidden. It was repeated for all the fingers and whose hand “finished” they would remove it from the chest. Later they would continue with the other hand and when fingers finished again they would put hand on the chest. Once everybody’s fingers finished the joker kid would check whose hands were the hottest. To determine that kids would take their hands out and touch joker’s face. The joker kid would end the game by saying whose hand was the hottest.

On the slopes of Sipan Dağı we hears a nursery rhyme from a mother:

*O mo kara do
Sîne mîne bi bando,
Teke tûka şeke şûka ker bando. ¹⁵²*

Two or three children sit in a circle next to each other. The game is initiated by one of the kids. When the rhyme starts children start clapping their hands

¹⁵⁰ Cûdî Seçen, Murad Sadak, Cizre, 2014.

¹⁵¹ Miraz Murad, Iğdır, 2014.

¹⁵² Sevgül Akkuş, Bitlis, Adilcevaz, 2014.

and when it ends they hide their hands behind. The child who pulls back their hands the fastest with the last word of the rhyme wins. They are plenty of games accompanied by rhymes. In one of them 3-4 or 4-5 children sit together and start the game. One of them is the joker and initiates the game with the following words:

*“A woman’s coming downhill
Her hair is a mess
Her dress is torn and dirty
Her hands are cracked
Between legs there are
A snake, a mouse, a worm and an insect
Sh*t, dung, horsesh*t and the trots
Baaaaang!”¹⁵³*

With the word “baaaaang” children close their mouth. The last one to cover their mouth hears: “may all the things from between women’s legs get into loser’s mouth.” The game continues and the list of “women’s things” is extended. When all the children take their turn the game ends.

There are also chants that contain swearwords and criticism. These are said in a rhythmic manner in order to condemn something. These chants are used among children. Some kids are not liked by their friends as they go against child community rules and these words are used to discipline them. Some chants used to criticize a child who does not share its food and drinks are below.

*“Donkey’s son
In the field during harvest
Would not eat enough hay
Would not give enough to the donkey.”¹⁵⁴*

We can state, based on these examples, that there exists oral literature of Kurdish children. There is a need for further fieldwork and more sources to enrich and provide continuity for Kurdish children’s oral literature. The need for more sources includes daily life and oral literary genres. Creation of Kurdish children’s literature is a precondition for them to start using mother tongue. In addition written literature and education in mother tongue will strengthen children’s literature. According to different research results, nurs-

¹⁵³ Feridun Birgöl, Ağrı, 2015.

¹⁵⁴ Rohat Asê, Ağrı, 2014.

ery rhymes contribute to the progress in education in the mother tongue.¹⁵⁵

D. THE FOX: HERO OF KURDISH TALES

In tales around the world there are many animal heroes for example, a bear, a rabbit, a fox, a wolf etc. Like in world-famous “Fables of La Fontaine and Esop”¹⁵⁶ animals were used and attributed specific characteristics. In the same way animals were utilized in Kurdish children’s oral literature. Oral literary products we have examined in the aftermath of our fieldwork were mostly fables and tales.¹⁵⁷ Among all the animal heroes the most common one was a fox. In tales fox’s treachery, deception, laziness and other features are dealt with.

In the past Kurds faced treachery, deception and similar treatment which all bore important results. If there is destiny, that is the destiny of the Kurds. Forces that affect the Kurds, never approach without deceit and duplicity. Kurds and nature have always been under attack and in these attacks the states and other actors tried different methods. Among them the most far out were deceit, duplicity and fraud. Qazî Muhammad in his testament wrote about Kurdistan Republic of Mahabad which was destroyed by treachery and deceit:

“I did not aim to leave you at mercy of heartless enemies. Most of the time I thought about the future and our great men. About the people killed by the Iranians through lies, cheating, promises, duplicity and deceit...They were always on my mind and I never trusted the Iranians. However, before returning here, in letters and meetings with Kurds, Iranians and the Shah I was given their word that not a single drop of blood would be spilled in Kurdistan when this job is done. Now you can see with your own eyes how they kept their word. If the clan elders and our allies had not betrayed us and had not sold themselves to the Iranian government, this would not have happened to us, you and our state. My advice and last will is for you to educate your children. Because in comparison with other nations we are not worse. Study, learn so we are not left behind other nations. Knowledge is the weapon that can kill our enemies.”¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁵ Toker, 2011

¹⁵⁶ Erkan, 2014.

¹⁵⁷ In Kurdish for a fable terms Çîrok, hikayat and *xeberoşk* are used. In this book we use instead of the term fable, the term tale (çîrok).

¹⁵⁸ From Qazî Muhammad’s testament (Qazî Mihemed, 2013).

In 1938 Seyid Riza¹⁵⁹, the general of Dersim Rebellion, described an example of lies and deceit against the Kurds. İhsan Sabri Çağlayangil, a man responsible for security in Malatya, in his memoirs recounts Seyid Riza's words about the Turkish state:

*“Dishonourable and deceitful government,
I could not cope with your frauds and deceptions, it pestered me. I did not bow
my head before you, and may it be your nuisance.”*

In “The Journal of American Folklore” W.R. Bascom in an article titled “Four Functions of Folklore” he answered the question whether the people who listen to a folkloric product are in any way influenced or not and whether it contributes anything to their lives. In Bascom's view, folklore is not just aimed at entertainment. Amusement is an important element of folklore, however, today we cannot accept this as an answer. There is clearly a deeper meaning to the laughter.¹⁶⁰ Taking this into account, the need to further investigate and analyse Kurdish oral literature is apparent. Frequent presence of the fox in Kurdish tales provides the reason for further studies. If we analyse the matter in depth, Kurdish history will present itself to us. These tales can be told to the children, but sometimes adults could learn something too.

Departing from Bascom's views and the reality of Kurdish society, the meaning of tales about the fox is much more than just amusement. Through the fox, tales show the dominant force as lying and deceiving. Kurdish mothers and fathers teach their children what deception, duplicity and treachery lead to on the example of the fox. Children who listen to these tales may laugh, but subconsciously they try to understand and question these matters. In this way questioning and criticism of the past events is filtered through the story. This perspective on fox tales in Kurdish oral literary culture leads to a broad psychoanalytical study.

E. GENDER IN ORAL LITERATURE

Role of women in oral literature will be evaluated on two levels: female characters in oral literature and active role of women in passing down oral literature.

a) Women in oral literature

¹⁵⁹ Xıdır, 2012.

¹⁶⁰ Aka, 2010, p.38.

Undoubtedly women are one of the most prominent subject and motive in Kurdish tales. When we thoroughly analyzed the tales, we concluded that Kurdish society always gave a lot of respect and value to women and that women always played important role in men-women relations and in marriage. On the other hand, all the women were placed in the same basket, they had made a distinction between good and bad women in accordance with social norms of the time. They praised the good women and shamed the bad ones. Women's "badness" or "goodness" was measured according to her usefulness for the society, family and children or to the liberation of women. When we see good women as the ones who overcome evil, liberate themselves and survive, we can see the bad ones as the opposite of this image. Emancipation of women is a prominent topic of Kurdish tales. At the end of every tale all their wishes come true they unite with their loved ones and stay happy together. We can say that righteousness and justice are always distributed in Kurdish society.¹⁶¹ According to Alakom's conclusions, the role of Kurdish women in oral literary narrative and particularly in tales' narrative is clearly visible. In many oral literary genres includes eposes, tales, memoir-adventures, ballads and folk songs women are usually the main protagonist. In these genres women are given respect and value, they are given a duty. In eposes such as Memê Alan, Siyabend û Xecê, Ker û Kulik, Binevşa Narîn- Cembelî Mîrê Hekaryan, Mem û Eyşe, Zembîlfiroş, Sêva Hecî, Menşax Eliyê Selîm Axa, Dimdim, Filîtê Quto, Bişarê Çeto, women's courage and resistance are the subject matter.

Just like in Ker and Kulik epos, women's prominent role comes to the fore in Wegrek and Becanê. In this epos, as already mentioned, a woman is given a role and duty in social life and men-women relations. Werdê's courage and Becanê's decisiveness are evident features of the protagonists of Werdê and Becanê. Women's courage is seen in Kurdish oral literature through such eposes as Ker and Kulik and Dimdim. In these eposes women demonstrate not only courage but also strong determination. In Ker and Kulik Werdê who wants to marry Silêman, but does not have her father's approval, breaks his head. Later, she marries Silêman. In Dimdim women make impression of courageous and self-confident. Iranian Shah through deception and treachery kills the Golden Claw Khan and his sons and moves against the Dimdim fortress. Wife of the Khan and his daughter-in-law blow up the entire fortress. They refused to surrender both the fortress and themselves to the Iranian

¹⁶¹ See: Alakom, 1994.

Shah. In these two eposes we can see women's courage and self-confidence. Roles of the women in Kurdish tales are different than their roles in societal life. It is due to negative influence of Islam on women's role in marriage and honour.

b) Women's influence on oral literature

In nationalist ideology and practice women have a responsibility to "delineate limits of national culture, to protect, preserve and pass it down to new generations." Culture assigns women two duties based on gender. The first one is biological and demands reproduction for the sake of future generations. The second one is cultural as it demands women to pass down the culture. These responsibilities are related to women's position in the family and society. In the 20th century nationalist struggles against colonial forces played important role in changing women's position in the family and society. Family and domestic sphere are important in reorganizing and appeasing politics. Family and domestic sphere are at the same time space to resist oppression and repression by the dominant force, it is a place that allows continuous existence of culture and resistance.¹⁶² Apart from women's role in this sphere, we will evaluate women's role in literature on two levels. Firstly, women create themselves, and secondly under the effect of societal life they assign or are assigned a narrative role.

On the first level, there framework designed by women. A woman creates oral literary forms within that framework and contributes it to daily life. With lullabies and curses women have created for themselves a peculiar and niche space. Men's oppression and prohibition are the reasons why this space is so niche. Women are not the reason why space for creativity in oral literature is so limited. It is not within her power, she has helplessly opened for herself this space. This situation can be explained using Freud's term of "sub-conscious." Women unwind themselves through lullabies and curses. Since woman is creative she at the same time expresses her artistry. It is also possible to happen in different spheres. Due to male dominance women's active participation in art cannot come to light. Women tell and use a lot of oral literary products, for example songs, riddles, poems, tales, eposes and others. As already mentioned above, women's participation is very limited. In some regions repeating oral literary products is believed to be a sin. According to religious worldview, a woman must not tell an epos or sing ballades-folk songs. She is allowed to sing lullabies by the cradle or while cooking, baking

¹⁶² Çağlayan, 2014 p. 136.

and doing the dishes or she can hum while milking animals. A woman selects her area and demonstrates her skills in that field.

As to women's position in the social sphere during our fieldwork we encountered an interesting observation. In the past in villages water was not connected to each household. There used to be one fountain in each neighborhood. This fountain used to be one of the important places for socialization along with harvest, washing the wool, weddings, holidays, mourning and late night guests. Women would go to the fountain, depending on their needs, three to four times a day. Sometimes they would carry water in jugs or do the dishes. Women would come together around the spring and chat. Meetings by the fountain were the most important opportunity to socialize and to discuss daily matters of the village. They would share information, ask questions, exchange advice. Groups by the spring were organized according to group age. Married women with children would sit elsewhere and single women elsewhere. The fact that young women formed a separate group attracted men's attention. As a result men and women had an opportunity to see each other and develop affection. This would lead to a wedding and the cycle would start anew. However, connecting water to every house disrupted this form of socialization. Regardless of how much easier their lives became with water at home, women underline the fact that this change did not make them happy at all. They reveal that now "everybody is closed off at home and talks to no one."

Before Kurds converted to Islam, they were Zoroastrians and Yazidi. With the conversion many customs and traditions related to women were abandoned. Some of the researchers attribute this to Mevlana Xalid religious order. Naqshbandi order prohibited women from singing songs. According to sharia law, it is prohibited for men and women to sit together and sing songs. Therefore women are not present in significant numbers at the meetings with dengbêj. Meyremxan and Ayşe Şan face a lot of difficulties on their path as dengbêjs. Interestingly, Fatma İsa and Aslika Qadır who are Yazidis, Gula Bavfile and Pêroya Têxûtê who are Armenians have occupied leading positions among minstrels. However, despite all these obstacles Kurdish women did not give up on being dengbêjs. Some of the old habits exist to this day. In nomadic Kurdish communities, the tent during evening visits used to be separated by a curtain. Women and men were seated in different places and could not see each other.¹⁶³

¹⁶³ Çiftçi, 2014 p. 55.

On the second level, women's role in telling and narrating comes to the fore. The role of a woman in Kurdish social life is influenced by religion. Women's participation in oral literature was perceived as immoral and sinful and this attitude has become a norm in Kurdish society. Thus women cannot openly pursue career in arts. In Kurdish society women who have gained recognition in oral literature can easily pursue their talents. Famous female dengbêj are known and they are accepted by the society. During our research we have confronted women's role in the society with stereotypes. In our view women recognized as dengbêjs could easily present their skills as storytellers. Women supported by Kurdish Political Movement¹⁶⁴ could freely express themselves through art. However, those women who due to religious and social norms remain under the yoke of religion cannot freely pursue arts and were unable to meet with us. For these women, as already mentioned, lullabies and curses are the only mode of artistic expression. They also have limited access to socialization spaces. In terms of discourse and work, women perform all activities in front of men e.g. fill in tea glasses, serve dinner. Sometimes men speak on behalf of women and do not allow them to say anything.

*"No, a woman cannot tell a story!
A woman doesn't know how to tell anything!
She forgot, must have!
Those who have work, are busy, with food and stuff!"*

We were told these and other things. This way women are ignored by man on a social platform. As a result men create obstacles for women to enter social life. Celia Calil in Yerevan Radio talked about this problem:

"I want to say something here. In my father's times, in my times too, it was hard to find a woman to sing songs on the radio. Among Kurds there were many women with beautiful voices, they sang songs very well. They did around me, during women's gatherings but most of them would not come to the studio, they didn't want their voice to be recorded. One day a girl named Gulizer came to the radio, sang few songs and we recorded her. Her voice was beautiful and she also sang Kurdish songs without any problems. Then she got married. Gulizer's songs were played on the radio because people asked for her a lot. However, according to what I was told, until she died her husband would insult her when her songs were played on the radio. Men's oppression of

164 Çakır, 2014.

*Kurdish women continues.*¹⁶⁵

In politically advanced regions we did not encounter such problems. Kurdish political movement creates space for women where they are able to freely and easily express themselves. Women develop themselves and lead in social sphere. Women, like men, share with us their skills in every area. In these regions women come more to the fore and run social and political activities. They are present in institutions of the party and civil society, local governments, in villages and cities, as co-chairs of municipalities and in many other areas.

F. CULTURAL INTERACTIONS AND ASSIMILATION IN ORAL LITERATURE

a) Aesop fables and Children's Literature of Kurdistan

Cultural diffusion among civilizations has been continuing since time immemorial. Regardless of geographical and cultural distance, cultural traits spread from one culture to another. This phenomenon may subject of academic study. If this occurs within borders of Roman Empire, it can be easily explained. On the other hand, Aesop's tales and tales of Saadi Shirazi, an Iranian, bear similarity.¹⁶⁶ It is known that Shirazi travelled around Kurdistan before he wrote Gulistan. On the other hand, cultural borrowings did occur between Kurdish and Farsi cultures. Since Gulistan was translated into dozens of languages and it must have been translated into Kurdish. A research related to the topic suggest that Aesop must have travelled around Mesopotamia.

Aesop, a Greek (Aisophos, 6th century B.C.E.) is known as the first fable writer in world's history. According to the research Aesop's fable's roots reach Indian, Mesopotamian, Hebrew and Phoenician traditions.¹⁶⁷ This research also suggests that used to be social and cultural interactions between civilizations. If there ever is a study done concerning Kurdish literature, it will bring to light interactions of the Kurds with the world. In this study, it has become visible that Kurdish culture did interact with the world and it has already been documented.¹⁶⁸ Kurdish literature might have been the source for some of the Shirazi's and Aesop's fables. In Bismil county of Diyarbakır we have recorded a

¹⁶⁵ Celil, 2011.

¹⁶⁶ Celil, 2011.

¹⁶⁷ Yılmaz, 2011.

¹⁶⁸ See: Derdiyok, 2010, Yılmaz, 2011.

tale related to this matter. “The Fox and the Stork” is known to be Aesop’s fable. However, the same tale is told among Kurds. So a question arises whether “The Fox and the Stork” isn’t originally a Kurdish tale. There is a need for a broad investigation of the issue.

The Fox and the Stork¹⁶⁹

The fox and stork liked each other. One day the stork told the fox: Fox, you’re a beautiful fox, you’re appreciated. I’d like to offer you something. One evening I will have a guest. I’ll cook for you delicious dinner. You’ll eat it with pleasure. When you taste it you’ll be full. When the stork said it like this, the fox didn’t believe. He was waiting for stork’s invitation.

Fox: Hmm, I wonder, when will the stork invite to dinner?

One day the stork gave a sign.

Stork: Fox!

Fox: Hah!

Stork: Fox, tonight you’re my guest.

Fox: when am I invited?

Stork: you’re invited before the evening. I’ll finish cooking for you just before the evening.

The fox didn’t believe it would happen towards the evening.

When the evening came the fox went towards stork’s house. When the stork saw the fox coming he dug a hole in the ground. He made the whole according to his own size, fox’s mouth, let alone tongue would not fit in.

Stork: Fox, my brother, welcome! I’ve been preparing for your visit since the morning. Come, let’s go to get the food, it’s ready. When they got to the food, the fox put his tongue out, but whatever he did, he could not taste it. Whatever he tried doing, he could not solve the problem. The stork with his beak could reach

The Fox and the Stork¹⁷⁰

*No one should hurt anybody,
But if one misbehaved to somebody,
Shall get what’s coming.
That’s the moral of this story!*

First the fox invited home for so called feast.

Our haci father, in a big marble pot in the pastures offered soup.

Or stork is very hungry, but what shall he do?

Can’t even get a single sip of the soup.

The other one calls the fox. In response made a big ball of dough and served it in a long-necked bottle.

The stork put his beak in and easily got the food to get full. If you ask, the guest is dying from hunger. The fox’s licking the bottle’s neck for nothing.

Our haci father told him: “one should bear the consequences of their deeds.”

¹⁶⁹ Hecî Şerifê Ferqîni, Diyarbakır, Bismil, 2014

¹⁷⁰ Derviş Cemaloğlu, 2014, p. 478.

the food and got full. He stopped and said:

Stork: Fox!

Fox: Hah!

Stork: Bon appetite, brother. Are you full yet?

Fox: Yes, mightily. Thank you. Tomorrow you're my guest.

Stork: I'm smart. The fox will make the food and I'll peck and get full again.

The fox said to himself: I'm the fox. Just wait and see how deceptive and smart I am.

In the evening the fox made a thick soup. At the door there as a flat rock. He spilled the soup on it. "Welcome, brother stork." Both of them went to the food. The stork tried hard, but no matter what he did his beak was empty, he could not catch anything. The fox licked and ate everything.

Fox: Stork, brother, did you get full?

Stork: Yes, I did!

What goes around, comes around.

b) Grandma's Keloğlu and Keloğlan

"Grandma's Keloğlu" is a story told by Kurdish people. Protagonist of a story titled "Keloğlan" is hand-working, bold and poor. He lives with his mother. This is such a story that it became part of Turkish literature under title "Keloğlan" and is said it Turkish. Most of the children in Northern Kurdistan think that Keloğlan's story comes from Turkish literature. Moreover, films,¹⁷¹ cartoons,¹⁷² and stories¹⁷³ about Keloğlan were made and continue to be made in Turkish. As a result Kurdish children see Keloğlan as a Turkish character. If we evaluate this situation based on cultural communication it might be transformative. But Turkish state has always used in Northern Kurdistan Kurdish oral literature. As a result a lot of Kurdish works had been translated into Turkish, appropriated as Turkish literature and presented to the Kurdish society. Kurdish children, educated in Turkish, for years were being familiarized with Kurdish tales, but as Turkish. When we think of years-long language assimilation, this tale is just one tiny example. This tale also demonstrates that Turkish state

171 Rüştü Asyalı (b.1947, Ankara, Turkish theater and cinema actor) played Keloğlan. Film titles:

1. Keloğlan among us-1971- Keloğlan
2. Keloğlan and Cankız- 1972- Keloğlan
3. Keloğlan in charge- 1975- Keloğlan
4. I'm a poor Keloğlan- 1976-Keloğlan

See: Wikipedia 2008.

172 Keloğlan cartoon was broadcasted by TRT. 2009-2013 107 episodes were broadcasted.

173 Keloğlan Tales, Timaş Yayınları, İstanbul.

aimed and aims not only at language assimilation, but eradication of the entire Kurdish culture, its annihilation.

“Grandma’s Keloğlu” story¹⁷⁴

(...)

When emir’s wounds healed, he said that he’d give him such a condition that he’ll not get away.

He called again our Keloğlu. Servants brought him right away to the emir. This time emir thought

“This time I have to say something he can’t do” and he said: “Go, bring my father’s hat.”

Emir’s father died few years before so he planned that whichever hat Keloğlan would bring, he would say it wasn’t his father’s and would chop his head off. Then he would make his wish come true and marry Raqk.

Keloğlan figured out what the emir had in mind. He knew there was no end to this, that the emir would always find something else and eventually cut his head off. Again, crying and mourning he went to Raqk. Raqk told him: “My dear Keloğlan, don’t you worry. Go that small window you always do, then you’ll see cave around the horses. This small window will take you to the dead-men’s world. Go and meet emir’s father. And ask him where’s his hat. He’ll tell you. Tell him about our problems with his son and he’ll show you the way.” The next day our Keloğlan went to the window described by Raqk. He sees a cave and enters. After he a long and dark way, he sees the other world. It’s the dead-men’s world. Full of grassland and water.

(...)

c) The reality of assimilation and cultural genocide under the name of change

Kurdish culture has been translated into Turkish and used in the cinema, music, literature and other cultural and art fields. The state three times collected and translated folk songs. In 1926 delegation from Daru’l Elhan collected 250 songs in Antep and Urfa. In 1938 teachers from the Ministry of Education and Ankara State Theater collected 491 songs in Malatya, Diyarbakır, Urfa, Maraş, Adiyaman and Seyhan. Another research was carried out in 1967 by TRT resulting in a collection of 1778 songs. The latest research was done by

¹⁷⁴ By Mirad Gundiki, Botan region, village of Meli.

National Folklore Magazine published by the Ministry of Culture. In 1976 300 songs were collected and translated into Turkish. Collecting songs and notes is a good thing of course. However, gathered songs are performed by Kurdish dengbêj in Turkish. Keça Kurd was the first recorded piece and translated into Turkish as Turkmen's Daughter (Türkmen Kızı). The same happened with Buka Kurda, which was titled Turkmen's Bride (Türkmen Gelini). Some artists (İzzet Yıldızhan) cannot stop themselves and in the Buka Kurda part they sing stronger and applaud. First Kurdish works were recorded in Turkish by such artists as Celal Güzelses, Mukim Tahir, Kel Hamza and Cemil Cankat. Over time Zamanla Mahmut Güzelgöz, Kazancı Bedih, Nuri Sesigüzel, İbrahim Tatlıses, Burhan Çaçan, and İzzet Altınmeşe also sang Kurdish songs as Turkish. Celal Güzelses was considered to be the most successful. Mustafa Kemal¹⁷⁵ praised him as "the bulbul of the East." After Güzelses, Muzafer Sarısözen translated Kurdish songs into Turkish and sung them accompanied by a komuz¹⁷⁶, a national instrument of the Turks according to Ziya Gökalp¹⁷⁷. Song Coktar sung for years by Tahsin Taha was translated by Mehmet Özbek and named White Rose, Red Rose.

As already mentioned Turkish-Kurdish cultural interaction cannot be seen as cultural diffusion. Within the scope of assimilationist project, due to state ideology what happened was cultural change and negligence. Policy of change lasted for fifty years using state's power. In that time a lot of people, either following state's policies or on their own accord, appropriated Kurdish, Armenian or other cultural products and used to their own benefit. To the extent that tons of songs of Hesân Zîrek, a Kurdish artist, were translated.¹⁷⁸ In 1946 he wrote a requiem for Kurdistan Republic of Mahabad titled Ey Niştîman which was translated without quoting the source into Turkish as Look at Ankara's Rock (Ankara'nın Taşına Bak). Many songs of Hesân Zîrek (like Yallah, driver) were taken without citing the source.

(...)

Oh, beloved nation

Oh, Kurds, oh, lion-hearted

175 Atatürk [Translator's note].

176 String instrument [Translator's note].

177 The ideology of Pan-Turkism [Translator's note].

178 An artist from the South of Kurdistan. Born in 1921 in Bikan. Recorded songs for Baghdad radio. In 1966 he wrote a book titled "Çirîkey Kurdistan." He died in 1972 but songs he left behind are timeless. (Xulami, 2013).

*Oh, motherland, oh, motherland
Pure land, the motherland of Kurds*

*From the depth of my heart I rebel for you
For the success of the land of Kurdistan*

(...)Hesen Zîrek

The following song, Ez ê Herim Welatê Xwe, was also sung by Armenians:¹⁷⁹

*Don't cry comrades, I'll go to my motherland
I won't stay long, I'll go to my motherland
It's not the right place for me, there are many troubles and sorrows here
Being a foreigner is painful, I'll go to my motherland
I hope you won't cry after me
I'll go to my motherland, all my troubles will end*

We know the melody of this requiem from Look at Ankara's Rock. A requiem, full of pain and trouble, was deprived of its cultural and historical context and only the melody remained the same as lyrics were written anew and later set an example for killing people. Cemila Cemil criticizes Kurds harshly with regard to this matter:¹⁸⁰

Unfortunately, Kurds did not oppose such things. If someone takes something from us, we [don't - translator's addition] catch their hand, stop and ask what are they doing [say that] this is our father's grandfather's property, it's my identity, heritage, culture. We always say "good for you." For example, Armenians have translated a lot of Kurdish songs and play them on the radio as Armenian. They know them now as Armenian songs, because they do not say this and that is a Kurdish song, for the archives they also do not write them as Kurdish songs. The same thing happens in Turkey. Sadly, not just by the Turks, but also Kurdish denbêj do this and turned Kurdish songs and credited them to Turks. Those would definitely never talk of the origin of a song. Is a song is translated into another language then certainly it must be stated from which language and culture. I see such ventures as highly questionable. This is theft. Such singers sell their nations, with their own hands they open the door for the occupiers. I don't know what to say. Is it ignorance or lack of understanding or is it complicity?

As Cemil argues, we have to, as a society, protect ourselves and stand against

¹⁷⁹ Etöz, 2011.

¹⁸⁰ Celil, 2011.

attempts at destroying Kurdish cultural values. Due to past and on-going attacks on culture, environment, society and land of Kurdistan by occupying and assimilationist countries, many were forced to migrate. There is a need for social self-defence against these attacks.

According to M. Yücel, a researcher, in national literature movement led by Ziya Gökalp, the Kurd was assigned a role of a savage villager while the Turk was a city-dweller. Here, Kurds are seen as “female.” How Europe perceives the Turks is how Turks perceive the Kurds.¹⁸¹ After the establishment of the state of Turkey, such writers as Yakup Kadri, Mithat Cemal Kuntay and Nihal Atsız maintained state ideology and ignored Kurdish existence. Later, in novels of Nazım Hikmet, Sait Faik, Yaşar Kemal and Orhan Kemal Kurds started to be presented as humans. Kurdish characters entered cinematography owing to Atıf Yılmaz. In the 50s, “Dağları Bekleyen Kız” (A girl waiting for the mountains) was the first production of this kind. A novel by Esat Mahmut was adapted for the cinema. It tells a story of a female Kurdish character, Zeynep, who is savagely bad villager. Lieutenant Adnan, however, is a courageous and handsome man. The message was that Turks are good. Nowadays, Kurdish culture continues to be plundered on television. In short, Kurds are not people! They are always objects. These are not empty words.¹⁸² Within this framework it is clear that Kurds were cornered and ignored by colonial hegemonic force.

Not only Kurds were subjected to assimilation and cultural genocide. There are other peoples in Northern Kurdistan apart from Kurds and they were subjected to similar policies. Not just state policies, but also many people were involved in collection and gathering of the cultural artefacts and contributed to cultural genocide.

G) SLANG IN ORAL LITERATURE

G.K. Chesterton in his book, “The Defendant,” in 1901 wrote that “slang is metaphor, metaphor is poetry.” It is constantly being created through broad use by unnamed poets. Alan Dundes in his article titled “Who are the Folk” stated that a group consists of people who share common values. Such a group such as family or a nation come together and produce knowledge according to their peculiarity. Slang is considered to be part of people’s knowledge. Academic studies place slang among other forms or oral literary cul-

¹⁸¹ Osmanlı- Türk Romanında Kürt İmgesi (Yücel, 2008).

¹⁸² Yücel, Türk Sinemasında Kürtler, 2008.

ture. Metaphors play an important role in the use of slang. George Lakoff and Mark Johnson believe that at the core of a metaphor there is a value judgment and that one understands an event according to one's own experience. For example, money and time are contemporary metaphors for time management and wasteful use of time. It appears that metaphoric character of slang lies at the core of its evaluation.¹⁸³ The use of slang in oral literature of Kurdistan would be understood according to Chesterston's metaphoric interpretation. Social life, nature and climate shape and create slang. In Kurdish slang animals are frequently used as in metaphoric meaning. Conversations or critical comments are contexts when slang is most commonly employed in Kurdish. Animal characters are supposed to convey criticism of people. To a liar one would say "Go, graze by the river." "Cut this" would be used to silence an ignorant, blabbing person. "Don't fart under your tail like a sheep" criticizes a person talking behind one's back. Slang expressions are similar to idioms and proverbs as they are also said in a rhythmic manner. According to the examples collected in the field, slang expressions come as the second clause through a cleaning metaphor. "First wipe your own ar*e" is used as criticism and suggestion that one cannot easily get away with their words and actions. Nobody believes him that he uses these words as a metaphor. It is more commonly used for men. Below are some examples of Kurdish slang:

- 1) *They eat each other out of hunger*
- 2) *Shook his a*s and left¹⁸⁴*
- 3) *First wipe your own a*s*
- 4) *Don't fart under your tale like a sheep*
- 5) *Go, wipe you're a*s in the stream*
- 6) *Go grazing¹⁸⁵*
- 7) *The bear played*
- 8) *Throw your sh*t behind the rock*
- 9) *Go, graze by the river*
- 10) *Let's chop*
- 11) *Let's cough*
- 12) *Put you're a*s into cold water¹⁸⁶*

183 Yücel, (Türk sinemasında Kürtler, 2008).

184 i.e. did not care [Translator's note].

185 i.e. go f**k yourself [Translator's note].

186 i.e. take it easy [Translator's note].

- 13) *You don't even know wipe you're a*s*¹⁸⁷
- 14) *He scattered his sh*t*¹⁸⁸
- 15) *He took the pill*
- 16) *Get lost or see the job by the fountain*
- 17) *Get off you louse*
- 18) *Cut this*
- 19) *When he walks insects fall from his clothes*
- 20) *Don't hee-haw*
- 21) *Ride*
- 22) *Don't be successful*
- 23) *Stupid idiot*
- 24) *Dirty a*s*
- 25) *Drunk of the plains*

Use of slang expressions in oral literature of Kurdistan is related to Kurdish society's sense of humor. It comes through swear words, but they are not meant to insult. When someone swears at his wife, he does not do this to insult, but to convey love and passion. "Daughter of donkey's son" is not meant to insult, it contains love. A woman called like that will not be offended, she will turn to her husband with a positive demeanor. Such as a father addresses his son with love when saying "you donkey's son." This sometimes comes to the fore in a social context. To extol someone one may say: "Look at him/her, a son/daughter of a donkey, how well he/she can sing!" This expression can also be used to convey eroticism, more frequently by men though, to describe women's characters. "Why, am I a woman?" or "I'm gonna eat you" are used mostly by men in an erotic context. This changes depending on a region and is present in a different form.

Slang expressions contain references to people's features. In some Kurdish chants such words as "gas" or "fart" are used as metaphors. These words are used in many genres of oral literature and even more in daily life or other communities. Usually, in a society, using these words ("gas" and "fart") would bring shame upon the person using them. Also in our interviews, in order to remind the storytellers different expressions, we would give some examples and the interviewees would either laugh at or get embarrassed by our words and give less of these kind of examples. One of the chants we said in the field was:

¹⁸⁷ i.e. you're inexperienced/don't know what you're talking about [Translator's note].

¹⁸⁸ i.e. he couldn't handle [Translator's note].

*Two beaked hoopoe
Climbed a tree to poo
Got down the tree to poo
Went to the court, said nothing
Went home and lied.*

Kurdish society, which accepted Islam, considers loud flatuses as immoral and amusing. When something like this happens during a conversation, the interlocutor would express their discontent. According to Islamic beliefs, loud or not, flatuses interfere with ritual religious ablutions.¹⁸⁹ Majority of Kurdish society is Muslim therefore they know requirements for religious ritual purity. On the other hand, expressing discontent affects social relations. As a result of this study we have concluded that slang exists. At the same time the society is aware of this fact. It is possible to infer that some of the oral literary genres are rooted in pre-Islamic tradition, from the time before ritual ablution was introduced.

In Moristan,¹⁹⁰ a book series prepared for pre-school education, the following chants were used (among others):

- *Climbed a tree to poo
Got down the tree to poo
Went to the court, said nothing
Went home and lied.*
- *Went under the blackberry bush
Three baskets come with the water
One with berries, one with hair,
The other one with sh*t
I swallowed berries
I combed the hair
I stepped into sh*t¹⁹¹*

In 2012 under the auspices of Diyarbakır municipality, a school offering education in mother tongue was opened. Moristan books were used there at a primary school level. We discussed use of nursery rhymes with one of the

¹⁸⁹ Hanafi, Hanbali and Shafi schools agree that flatuses interfere with ritual religious abdest. (El- müderris 2013).

¹⁹⁰ Moristan (volume 2-5, Birgül, 2012).

¹⁹¹ Rêzan Erdoğmuş Cizre,

teachers from this school working with young children.¹⁹² According to his experience, some families express their dissatisfaction with the nursery rhymes with the following statements: “ why are you teaching our children things like these? Shit and farting are not good words.” Parents express their point of view in accordance with social norms. Such slang words to exist in Kurdish oral culture. There is element of humor embedded in these expressions. At the same time it is part of this society and is in use. To conclude, religious norms an ideas have influenced the society and kept it away from literature.

¹⁹² Evin Taşdemir, 2012.

CHAPTER 3

TOWARDS PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION WITH ORAL LITERATURE

Education is a human right and necessity for social life. It is a matter of life and as a right cannot be shared or delegated to anyone. Principles of life protect and use this natural societal right. To obtain the right to education and to exercise it is necessary for a society to struggle. The first step is for an individual to step up and own their culture, history and language. Kurdish struggle against hegemonic force and states will obtain the right to education. Principles of education in mother tongue build upon this foundation will be put into practice. Important question here is how and what should be taught. The society needs to be responsible for education, must be aware of qualities and level of education, must be able to take on this task and be empowered in this area.

Pre-school education is said to be the fastest passing year of one's life. In this context, early education is important from the perspective of individual's future success. Pre-school education involves children aged 0-6 and this is extremely important period. At this stage children very quickly develop their skills and dispositions. This is also important period for the entire life. In the pre-school period speaking and learning abilities develop simultaneously. Children discuss subject of their interest. In this period the way they learn a language is very important. Nursery rhymes, riddles, poems, stories and games utilized in the pre-school education develop children's understanding of language, teach them how to learn and socialize. Through these activities a child is able to express itself, develops creativity, has confidence in self and learns causal relations between events.¹⁹³ As stated above, the most important aspect of pre-school learning is the language. Learning a language is related to personal growth, understanding individual's self in physical, emotional and social terms. Socialization is the most important element in language development. Culture, traditions, geographical location and social relations have an effect on language. A child starts to learn language in the family by repeating and imitating adults. Socialization begins and continues inside the family. Prior to starting formal education, a child has a strong capability of learning a language. A child aged 3-4 develops ability to form sentences. With the start of education, child meets more people and develops socially,

¹⁹³ Demir, 2011.

expands lexis and syntax. Until that moment the child remains inside the family and speaks its mother tongue. Pre-school education is important for the development of the mother tongue and education in mother tongue is an imperative. Language of education and curriculum must be the language the child uses in its neighborhood, village, group. Teachers and school staff must speak clearly and properly for the formation of child's pronunciation, structure of the language and conceptual understanding of words. Through stories, poems, riddles, nursery rhymes, songs, games, anecdotes, epigrams and role-plays language is developed and activities utilizing these forms are very important in children's preparation for primary school. A variety of materials and tools shall be designed to allow children speak their languages. They must be provided with opportunities to speak as a basis for their socialization. When it happens, the child is able to freely express itself, speak properly, establish communication, develop lexis and ability to think and analyze with attention problems of "why and how" emerging from communication.

The use of oral literature in pre-school education

1. Nursery rhymes

Nursery rhymes consist of repetitive words. Some of the rhymes involve a dialogue with another person. They are said in a specific way. In the pre-school activities nursery rhymes must not be too long and the teacher should first alone repeat the rhyme a couple of times and later children should repeat after them. Children love nursery rhymes and it is not appropriate to force them to say or memorize the rhymes.

Knock knock floppy clumsy	One, two, believe even three
Sleepy groom	Farting sound
Sir Mustafa	Crazy friend
Eats a grape	Huge sad blue-eyed
	Shi**y mustached
Two black holes, two black snakes	Sticky eyed
We get along well	My hose

2. Riddle

Riddles draw on both tangible and abstract concepts. In the period of pre-school education riddles with tangible problems are more appropriate for children in terms of their ability to understand. They can more easily under-

stand and solve riddles containing tangible problems. When told, a riddle has clear, understandable features. In case a child cannot give the answer, they contain clues that allow the child to find the solution. Children above age of 3 start to show interest in riddles. They like to create their own riddles and like to be asked ones too. When they do not find the answer, it is the teacher's role to help.

<p>It grows in water Has wrinkled fingers Lives both in the water and on the land. (a frog)</p> <p>Found in layers on a tree. (a pomegranate)</p> <p>Wall on one side and the other and a furious one inside. (a tongue)</p>	<p>I've got a thing, a thingy When hit with a stone it doesn't break, When thrown into water it breaks (paper)</p> <p>In a clean room sat 32 disciples. (mouth and teeth)</p>
--	---

3. Poetry

Poetry develops in children tolerance and brings to the fore their aesthetic sense. Poems selected for children must be short and contain easy and understandable words so that they can attract attention. They should be told to children periodically and children must not be forced to memorize poems.

<p>School</p> <p>School is good With friends and buddies With writing and teachers With story of the valley We all love it It's a fountain of knowledge There's fun and laughter School is a beautiful home</p>	<p>Mouse</p> <p>Ah, you naughty mouse Ah, you naughty mouse You hate old bread You hate old bread Ah, you naughty vicious mouse Ah, you naughty vicious mouse You're half way through our saddlebag Ah, ah, ah, ah, ah (...)</p>
---	--

Stories

Storytelling is important in children's education. Through stories children learn to understand national and universal values, expand their imagination, encounter unknown concepts, develop ability to form sentences and learn to describe things. Recurring chants, dialogues of the characters, idioms, proverbs and songs present in stories contribute to children's language development. Listening to stories increases children's imagination.¹⁹⁴ Teacher may revise the story if it contains words that might present difficulty to the children. She may ask questions pertaining to the story or include the children in storytelling. If teacher's storytelling is accompanied by theatrical gestures and facial expressions, the topic can be better presented to the children. A story told in an interesting way will grasp children's attention and they will not get bored.

(...)

Grandma: I promise you, I won't say anything if you don't eat my chickens. If you eat someone else's chickens, eat, again I won't say anything to you.

Fox: I promise. I won't eat your chickens. But the tiger and lion will eat your chickens.

Grandma: How will the tiger and lion eat my chickens?

Fox: Well, I'm not on my watch, they'll eat them.

One day the fox was hungry and while passing the tiger and lion said few things.

Fox: The grandma has two chickens and they give three eggs a day. Let's go and have one. I'm also your friend, your partner. Later I'll tell the grandma that we all ate the chicken.

The fox and the tiger went to steal grandma's chicken. Grandma was asleep. She thought that the fox is somehow on his watch. She wasn't worried. Because they gave each other their word. She didn't know that the fox might betray her. That he would go to the tiger and lion and tell them " let's go and eat grandma's chickens." Grandma was sleeping snoring loudly, unaware of what was going to happen to her.

Fox: Come! The tiger's coming!

Tiger: Well, I'm afraid of this grandma. If you betray us, she'll kill us.

Tiger was afraid of falling into fox's trap. He was right about that. Because the fox set a trap for the tiger. He made a promise to the grandma and he was not supposed to eat the chickens. He set a trap for the tiger by the chicken coop. while the tiger was peeing he saw the trap.

The tiger was also smart.

Tiger: Fox!

(...)

¹⁹⁴ Ass.Prof. Ali Göçer, 2010.

INSTEAD OF A CONCLUSION

This study was carried out in order to emphasize the importance of children's literary products in children's education. In the course of the research oral literary products of Kurdistan were evaluated within scientific framework. At the same time, this study brings together examples of oral literature of Kurds in Northern Kurdistan. To this day important research has been conducted on oral literature of Kurdistan and as a result thousands of literary products have been interpreted and published. This study contributes our own compilation of works that had previously been collected. On the other hand, it became clear that many works presented here had not been investigated before. Thousands of works are published for the first time. There is need to collect more folkloric products. This study differs from previous folklore studies due to two main principles. Studies of Kurdish oral literature to this day, have been sometimes published in foreign languages and were not easily accessible. Some studies, were kind of compilation of all types of literary products. The result we have achieved through this study is the need to use in education previously collected oral literary products.

Works collected in this study have been organized as materials to be used in pre-school education. Secondly, this study for the first time investigates Kurdish children's oral literature. To this day, there is limited body of research on Kurdish oral literature. This study is a step towards future broader and more comprehensive sociological and socio-psychological studies.

Wealth of Kurdish art has been until now protected in oral form. Years long assimilationist policies targeting oral culture have brought a lot of harm to Kurdish society. In some places the language is no longer spoken and in other culture and traditions have been lost. With every passing day Kurdish children depart further from their own values. Misuse of technological progress is the greatest threat to Kurdish oral culture. Assimilationist policies of the state are coupled today by technological advancement and negatively reflect on Kurdish culture. In the light of these, there is a need to protect the values, but the biggest and most important matter is education in mother tongue. This study brings to the fore some materials to be used in education in mother tongue.

In the course of this research we have arrived at the conclusion that Zaza dialect has reached a dangerous point. In Dersim-Bingöl region proportion of mother tongue speakers is far smaller than in other regions of North-

ern Kurdistan. In general, children in these two regions speak Turkish during their daily activities, games and on the streets. Only the elderly speak among themselves Kurdish and Turkish language is the means of intergenerational communication. There is a need to conduct comprehensive research in these two regions and to organize awareness campaigns as to the importance of mother tongue. To this end appropriate policies must be developed. To provide opportunities to learn Kurdish, speaking Kurdish must be encouraged and popularized. Projects to this end must be created.

Cultural transmission still takes place through oral literature. Culture and traditions reach new generations through dengbêj and storytellers as well as other forms of oral literature. We have seen ourselves that with the help of oral literary products one can get informed and appreciate cultural characteristics of a society. Therefore, it is possible for oral literary forms to bring to us today past lifestyles and past features of the society. Education in mother tongue is a big step towards formation of Kurdish oral and written literature. Institutions and organizations working on issues related to Kurdish language must work hand in hand with politicians, movie directors, writers and other artists to develop common way and methods. As a result of such efforts awareness and sense of ownership will develop in Kurdish society. Thus struggle for language rights that has lasted for many years will be strengthened and bring about education in mother tongue. Today's circumstances differ from those of the past. Nowadays cinema, theatre, music and literature are intertwined and contribute to the progress.

Territory of Kurdistan has been divided into four parts by state borders (of Turkey, Syria, Iraq and Iran). In Kurdish view the borders have no meaning. Studies carried out by Kurds are concerned with all four parts of Kurdistan. Both political and cultural studies are valid for the whole Kurdistan. Entire Kurdistan is the subject in the cinema, literature, theatre and music.

Oral culture has always been the source for written literature. Children's written literature is designed according to the needs of children. Works prepared for children must take into account children's satisfaction, enrichment of their imagination and perform educational function. It is an imperative that these works play a role of a game in children's lives. In terms of the language, they must be simple, smooth and easy.

Due to modernity, technological progress as well as assimilationist policies of dominant powers oral culture of Kurdish society is on the brink of disappear-

ance. Protection of Kurdish language from pressure of dominant cultures and widespread use of mother tongue in education are paramount. Organizations and institutions working in the field of language do not meet the needs of Kurdish society in terms of education. Along the education in mother tongue, scientific study of history, linguistics, folklore and oral literature must be carried out. We believe that with this study we have made a small step in this direction and from now on bigger steps will be made. With hope for all the children to study, read and live in their mother tongue...

Bibliography

- Aka, Belde, "Ninnileri Psikanalitik Yaklaşımla Yeniden Okuma Denemesi", Millî Folklor, volume: 88, page: 38-43, 2010.
- Alakom, Rohat, Stûneke Çîrokbêjiya Kurdî Xelasiya Jinan, Petersburg: Nûdem Publications, 1994.
- Ayvacı, Hakan Şevki, Devocioğlu, Yasemin, "10. Sınıf Fizik Ders Kitabı ve Kitaptaki Etkinliklerin Uygulanabilirliği Hakkında Öğretmen Değerlendirmeleri", Amasya Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi, volume: 2, page: 418-450, 2013.
- Beşikçi, İsmail, Tunceli Kanunu (1935) ve Dersim Soykırımı, İstanbul: Belge Publications, 1990.
- Beşikçi, İsmail, Unesco'ya Mektup, Ankara: Yurt Kitap-Publication, 1991.
- Birgül, Feridun, Moristan/ Seta Perwerdeya Pêşdibistanê, Diyarbakır: TZP Kurdî Publications, 2012.
- Blau, Joyce, Kreyenbroek, Philip, Allison, Christine, Kürt Kimliği ve Kültürü, İstanbul: Avesta Publications, 2003.
- Bülbül, Abdulkerim, "Kürtçe Şarkılar Nasıl Türkçe Oldu?", Derin Düşünce, 9th September, 2011, <http://www.derindusunce.org/2011/09/09/kurtce-sarkilar-nasil-turke-oldu/>, access on 15th April, 2015.
- Cindî, Heciyê (ed.), Epîkên kurdî, Borås: Invandrarförl, 1985.
- Cindî, Heciyê (ed.), Hikyatên Cimeta Kurdan, Yêrêvan: Lîmuş Publications, 2011.
- Çağlar, Özgün, "Ezidiler: Mezopotamya'nın Dağılan Tespih Taneleri", Agos' Website, 2th October, 2014, <http://www.agos.com.tr/tr/yazi/8164/ezidiler-mezopotamyanin-dagilan-tespih-taneleri>, access on 16th April, 2015.
- Çağlayan, Handan, Same Home Different Languages/Intergenerational Language Shift/Tendencies, Limitations, Opportunities/The Case of Diyarbakır, İstanbul: Diyarbakir Institute for Political and Social Research (DISA), 2014.
- Çakar, Mehmet Sait, et. al, "Sözlü Kürt Edebiyatı", Ortaöğretim Kürt Dili ve Edebiyatı Ders Kitabı, İstanbul: History Foundation, 2011.
- Çakır, Ruşen, "Hereketa Kurdî di serdema zêrîn de" (Çeviri: M. Kurşun), Ruşen Çakır's Personal Website, 9th September, 2014, <http://www.rusenackir.com/Hereketa-Kurdi-di-serdema-zerin-de/2859>, access on 5th May, 2015.
- Çiftçi, Tekin, Di Kilamên Evîni yê Dengbêjan de Temaya Jinê, Master's Thesis, Mardin Artuklu University, 2013.
- Demir, Sebahat, "Okul Öncesi Dönemde Dil Gelişimi ve Sorunları", Gazi Üniversitesi Türkçe Araştırmaları Akademik Öğrenci Dergisi, volume:1, page: 38-49, 2011.
- Demirhan, Umîd, "Ferhengoka Nifirên Kurdî", Fritillaria Kurdica-Bulletin of Kurdish Studies, volume: 5, page: 3-21, 2014.

Derdiyok, İ. Çetin, "Sadî'nin Bostan'ı ve Ezop Masalları'nda Ortak Temalar", Çukurova Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi, volume:12, page: 1-14, 2003.

Dervişcemaloğlu, Bahar, "Ortaokul Düzeyinde Bir Fabl İnceleme Örneği", Turkish Studies-International Periodical For The Languages, Literature and History of Turkish or Turkic, volume: 9/9, page: 475-488, 2014.

Ehmedê Xanî, Mem û Zin, İstanbul: Nûbihar, 2000.

Ekim Gençliği, "Asimilasyon Aracı Olarak Kürdistan'da Eğitim", Ekim Gençliği's Website, 2005, <http://www.ekimgencligi.net/index.php/makaleler/137-bir-asimilasyon-ara-ci-olarak-kurdistan-da-egitim.html?catid=102%3Aekim-gencligi>, access on 15th May, 2015.

El-Müderriş, Abdullâh Saîd, "Dört Mezhebe Göre Abdest", tevhididavet.com, 2013, http://www.tevhididavet.com/pdf/risaleler/dort_mezhebe_gore_abdest.pdf, access on 4th May, 2015.

Erkan, Senem Seda Şahenk, "İlköğretim Kademesinde Fransızca Eğitiminde Fabl İncelemesi Örneği: La Fontaine - Karga ile Tilki", Eğitim ve Öğretim Araştırmaları Dergisi, volume: 4, page: 74-78, 2014.

Ermeni Soykırım Müzesi ve Enstitüsü, "Kültürel Soykırım", Website of The Armenian Genocide Museum and Institute, http://www.genocide-museum.am/trk/cultural_genocide.php, access on 5th April, 2015.

Esperi, T., "Sîmîne û Zerîne", Newroz TV, 26th May, 2013.

Etöz, Zeliha, "Kimlerin İlahilerini Marşlara Çevirdik?" Birgün Kitap, volume: 118, 2011.

Göçer, Ali, "Türkçe Öğretiminde Çok Uyarınlı Bir Öğrenme Ortamı Oluşturmak İçin Seçkin Edebî Ürünlerden Yararlanma", TÜBAR-XXVII, 2010.

Gültekin, Mehmet, Zargotina Kurdên Serhedê - Kilam û Destanên Epîk ên Dîrokî, Mêrxasî û Serhildanan, İstanbul: Avesta Publications, 2013.

IHD, "Zorla Yerinden Etme Uygulaması", Website of the Human Rights Association, 27th December, 2011, <http://www.ihd.org.tr/zorla-yerinden-etme-uygulamasi/>, access on 8th April, 2015.

Karaca, Emin, Ağrı Eteklerinde İsyân, İstanbul: Puslu Publication / History Series, 2013.

Karademir, Fevzi, "Halk Bilmecelelerinin Oluşumunda Öne Çıkan Etkenler", Akademik

Bakış, Uluslararası Hakemli Sosyal Bilimler E-Dergisi, volume:14, page: 1-18, 2008, <http://www.akademikbakis.org/eskisite/14/bilmece.pdf>, access on 28th April, 2015.

Kızılyaprak, Z. Abidin, vd., 1900'den 2000'e Kürtler - Kronolojik Albüm, İstanbul: İstanbul Kurdish Institute, 2000.

Kurij, S., "Bi Cemîla Celîl va li ser radyoya Erîvanê hevpeyvînek", Rizgarî's Website, 22th October, 2011, <http://www.rizgari.com/modules.php?name=Content&pa=showpage&pid=1565>, access on 9th May, 2015.

Mert, Esra, "Deyimler ve Deyim Öğretimi", Adyaman Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi, volume:2, page: 83-89, 2009.

Mihemed, Qazî, "Qazî Mihemed'in Kürt Ulusuna Vasiyeti", Kurdistan Post.eu, 16th February,

2013, <http://www.kurdistan-post.eu/tr/kurdistan/qazi-mihemedin-kurd-ulusuna-vasiyeti>, access on 20th April, 2015.

Nikitin, Bazil, Kürtler/Sosyolojik ve Tarihi Bir İnceleme, İstanbul: Deng Publications, 2013.

Nişanyan, Sevan, Hayali Coğrafyalar: Cumhuriyet Döneminde Türkiye’de Değiştirilen Yeradları. İstanbul: The Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation (TESEV), 2011.

Öcalan, Abdullah, “Komün ve Meclisler”, Kom, Komün, Komünal Yapılar ve Komünalite Örnekleri, Diyarbakir: Aram, 2014.

Ökten, Şevket, “Toplumsal Cinsiyet ve İktidar”, Uluslararası Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi, volume: 2/8, page: 302-312, 2009.

Özar, Şemsa, Uçarlar, Nesrin, Aytar, Osman, From Past To Present A Paramilitary Organization In Turkey: Village Guard System, İstanbul: Diyarbakir Institute for Political and Social Research (DISA), 2013.

Paris Kürt Enstitüsü, “Kurdish Diaspora”, Website of Kurdish Institute of Paris, http://www.institutkurde.org/images/cartes_and_maps/ckur100.gif, access on 1st March, 2015.

Pekdoğan, Serpil, “Reggio Emilia Yaklaşımı Üzerine Bir Çalışma”, Abant İzzet Baysal Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi, volume: 2, page: 237-246, 2012.

Pertev, Ramazan, Zarok û Çîrok (Destpeka Pedagojiya Kurdî), İstanbul: DOZ, 2008.

Ramazan, Abdullah, “Kadınlar neden saçlarını toprağa gömer?”, Yeni Özgür Politika’s Website, 17th August, 2011, <http://www.yeniozgurpolitika.org/index.php?rupel=nuce&id=1039>, access on 15th May, 2015.

Reş, Kone, Bajarê Cizîra Botan û Hunera Mîr Bedîrxan, İstanbul: Azad Publications, 2013.

Şahin, Mustafa, “Masalların Çocuk Gelişimine Etkilerinin Öğretmen Görüşleri Açısından İncelenmesi”, Millî Folklor, volume: 89, page: 208-219, 2011.

Terzioğlu, Öykü, “Anonim Bir Halk Edebiyatı Ürünü Olarak Argo”, Millî Folklor, volume: 71, page: 102-104, 2006.

Toker, Sinem, “Türkçenin Anadili Olarak Öğretiminde Ninni ve Tekerlemelerin Yeri”, Uluslararası Sosyal ve Ekonomik Bilimler Dergisi, volume: 1, page: 25-29, 2011.

Tunçel, Harun, “Türkiye’de İsmi Değiştirilen Köyler”, Fırat Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi, volume: 2, page: 23-34, 2000.

Uğurlu, Seyit Battal, “Çocuk Edebiyatı Eleştirisi”, Turkish Studies-International Periodical For the Languages, Literature and History of Turkish or Turkic, volume: 5/3, page:1921-1945, 2010, http://www.turkishstudies.net/Makaleler/1466564553_87u%C4%9Furlu_seyit_battal.pdf, access on 20th April, 2015.

Ulugana, Sedat, Ağrı Kürt Direnişi ve Zilan Katliamı (1926-1931), İstanbul: Peri Publications, 2012.

Uzun, Mehmet, Rojek Ji Rojên Evdalê Zeynikê, Stockholm: Welat Publications, 1991.

Wikipedia, “Rüştü Asyalı”, 21st January, 2008, http://tr.wikipedia.org/wiki/R%C3%B-C%C5%9Ft%C3%BC_Asyal%C4%B1, access on 20th April, 2015.

Wikipedia, "Rotında", 4th December, 2014, <http://ku.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rot%C3%AEnda>, access on 16th May, 2015.

Xıdır, Sey, "Seyit Rıza Kimdir? Seyit Rıza'nın Hayatı", Dersimnews.com, 2012, <http://dersimnews.com/seyit-riza.html>, access on 15th April, 2015.

Yılmaz, Serpil, "Dünya Edebiyatında Hayvan Metaforları", Mesnevi'de Geçen Hayvan Metaforlarının Tasavvufî Yorumu, Master's Thesis, Selçuk University Social Sciences Institute, 2011.

Yücel, Müslüm, Türk Sinemasında Kürtler, İstanbul: Agora, 2008.

Yücel, Müslüm, Osmanlı-Türk Romanında Kürt İmgesi, İstanbul: Agora, 2011.

Zagrosi, Aso, "General İhsan Nuri Paşa'nın Anısına", Bajarê Agırî, 10th April, 2013, <http://ararat-welat.blogspot.com.tr/2010/07/general-ihsan-nuri-pasann-ansna-aso.html>, access on 15th April, 2015.