

RESEARCHING INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT

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Effects of Internal Displacement on the Usage of the Kurdish Language in Turkey

“...being *in* one’s country but not fully *of* it”
(Uehling, 2021: 1555)

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Abstract

The Kurdish language, which belongs to a nation without having a country of its own, is affected by internal displacement in the Turkish context. Through interviews, this paper aims to gather the voices of the experts in the field who are working with internally displaced Kurds or working to keep Kurdish alive by producing and protecting Kurdish literature. These voices shed a narrow but devoted light on the relationship between the internal displacement of the Kurds living in Turkey with the Kurdish language and the effects of internal displacement on the usage and persistence of the language. This relationship gives some insights into the future of Kurdish and whether it is at risk of extinction or not. The results of the interviews indicate that some risks remain and these should be discussed and analyzed since there is not a sufficient amount of research on this particular topic in academia.

Keywords

Kurdish; Language; Extinction; Internal Displacement.

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“An old lady is sitting on the top of my heart and I tell the stories through her.”¹

1. Introduction

Without a doubt, language is one of the main components of a culture and identity. As the world’s largest stateless ethnic group, Kurds have a diverse language with different dialects (such as Kurmanjî, Soranî, or Zazakî) that vary across different regions of Kurdistan (Khezri, 2021: 56). The Kurdish that is spoken in Turkey has a tight relationship with Turkish and a “long-lasting coexistence in the linguistic setting of Turkey” (Çabuk, 2020: 467). Nevertheless, this language belonging to the 15 million Kurds in Turkey has never had a chance to be taught in schools or used in governmental settings alongside Turkish. Delving more deeply into the specific Turkish context, the inability of the Kurdish language in Turkey to advance according to world standards has been a consequence of its lack of official recognition. However, for a better understanding of this situation, it is necessary to consult experts in the field who are working with internally displaced Kurds or working to keep Kurdish alive by producing and protecting Kurdish literature. That is the aim of the present study, but first, brief background information about both internal displacement and the historical situation of Kurdish in Turkey will be provided in the following sections.

2. Internal displacement of Kurds in Turkey and status of Kurdish language

Internal displacement is not a new phenomenon, but its driving factors are variable and constantly changing (Havryliuk, 2022: 2). Accordingly, the outcomes also vary according to the specific setting. There is general agreement that the scale of internal displacement is underestimated in comparison to international migration, although it is a situation of “being *in* one’s country but not fully *of* it” (Uehling, 2021: 1555). In some cases, internationally displaced people may be granted more rights than internally displaced people, such as being granted refugee status, which may come with rights and obligations that are important dimensions of citizenship (Joppke, 2007). On the contrary, internally displaced people may not be granted any rights; they may be stateless, such as Kurds in Syria without any citizenship before the Syrian civil war. They may also be prohibited from using their rights due to fundamental differences such as ethnicity, language, religion, or political affiliation. As a result, “Internal displacement therefore has the potential to significantly shape subsequent patterns of violence and broader conflict dynamics” (Lichtenheld & Schon, 2021: 1).

The internal displacement of Kurds has also been underestimated by the Turkish government and society in general, with issues linked to the so-called *Kurdish problem* being labeled as terrorism. In Turkey, one of the most important aspects of this internal displacement is language. Kurdish has never been a formal, official language and it has never been taught as a second language in schools since the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923, in contrast to the Ottoman

¹ This is how Ayhan Erkmen, who will be introduced later in the text, described sharing narratives in Kurdish.

Empire, where education was provided in Kurdish in some madrasas.² At the same time, Kurds have been displaced often throughout history.

A recent massive internal displacement began in Turkey in the late 1970s as leftist movements began to form and act due to the freedom demands of the Kurds. These demands could be listed as cultural, linguistic, and political (Gunter, 2000: 849). The Kurdish cultural rights have been oppressed by the Turkish government since the establishment of the Turkish Republic within the framework of the one-nation policy. The Kurdish society's cultural contribution to Turkish society was delimited by demolishing the differences. This also refers to the linguistic aspect of the culture. Political demands vary from political representation in the assembly to taking an equal role in the elections. As one of the consequences of not getting an answer to those demands, the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) was established in 1978. PKK became bigger over years by receiving many members, especially from the Kurdish regions of Turkey. It is estimated that 3,000,000 people were internally displaced as a result of the conflict between the PKK and the Turkish armed forces throughout the 1980s and 1990s (Gunter et al., 2011: 6), and recent data indicate that "of the individuals internally displaced by the Turkish army, almost 98 percent do speak Kurdish" (Sönmez, 2008: 384). Because of the linguicide that Kurds have faced over the decades in Turkey, Kurdish has not been able to evolve as a written or academic language and many Kurds do not know how to read and write in Kurdish (Khezri, 2021: 56). However, despite the lack of development of Kurdish as a written language due to prohibitions, Kurdish culture has developed extensively through verbal language in the forms of music, oral literature, and art.

As a result of some promising legislation implemented by the Justice and Development Party (AKP) in the first years of their rule, some universities in Turkey opened Kurdish language and literature departments and a Kurdish-language Turkish Radio and Television Association (TRT) channel was established,³ but these were small steps rather than a comprehensive language reform. Following these small initial achievements, the negative pressure on the Kurdish language began increasing again throughout the ruling period of the AKP. Turkey's politics are largely hostile to the idea of school education in Kurdish even though Kurds are a constituent element of the country. Kurds are not provided education in their native language although access to education is a fundamental human right. At the same time, forced displacement and "poor fluency in the language of the country" cause mental health problems including symptoms of Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Gülşen et al., 2011: results).⁴

3. Contribution of this paper

² These schools were Islamically oriented and could be described as "the living form of an educational system which thrived in the past," being institutions that produced science and wisdom and connected students and teachers (Butt & Khalid, 2017).

³ TRT Kurdî began test broadcasts on December 25, 2008. It launched fully at the beginning of 2009 with promises that it was not being done only for upcoming elections in order to win the votes of the Kurds (ANKA, 2022).

⁴ The cited study was conducted via surveys with 1,127 Kurdish women, 558 of whom were internally displaced within Turkey, and is one of the rare sources in this field that help to understand the effects of forced internal migration and ensuing language barriers on the mental health of women.

There are no specific data on how internal displacement within Turkey has affected verbal Kurdish language communication within the society. The daily usage of Kurdish among internally displaced Kurds has not been sufficiently explored. Therefore, this paper is intended to address that gap with a narrative description of the effects of internal displacement on the usage of the Kurdish language in Turkey according to the opinions of experts, regarding both daily usage and future prospects. I aim to provide a micro-understanding of the current situation of the Kurdish language among internally displaced Kurds by presenting the ideas of experts and relevant NGOs.

This descriptive paper is based on four interviews with participants selected by the snowball method. I recorded the interviews and took notes after receiving the informed consent of the participants. The interviews initially targeted introductory information about these experts' studies and backgrounds regarding the Kurdish language and internal displacement. I conducted the interviews with two representatives of organizations and two experts, all of whom were working either with internally displaced Kurds or the Kurdish language. All interviews were in Turkish and were conducted with the KAMER Foundation,⁵ Başak Culture and Art Foundation,⁶ Lal Laleş at WEŞANEN LÎS,⁷ and Ayhan Erkmen.⁸

All translations to English are my own and the English versions were shared with the interviewees as either text or verbal translations for their final approval. The first common question for all interviewees was how they saw the future of Kurdish in the next 50 or 100 years if we assume that Kurdish is a language at risk of extinction. The second common question was whether women and men have different approaches to using the Kurdish language. The final common question was whether Kurdish people in the region have made demands for education in Kurdish in schools. The other questions varied according to the specific expertise of each interviewee. In the following section, I introduce each interviewee and their work, focusing on the parts of the interviews most relevant to this paper's main focus.

3.1 Başak Culture and Art Foundation⁹

The first interview was held with Dilan Şahin, who is the general coordinator of the Başak Culture and Art Foundation and has been working there for almost 10 years. Şahin studied acting at Beykent University and is also an undergraduate student of sociology at Istanbul University. Her life intersected with the foundation while she was providing theater lessons on a voluntary

⁵ The KAMER Foundation was founded in 1997 to address the general violence in the eastern and southeastern parts of Turkey and specifically violence against women as well as "to identify local practices of the sexist system that harm women and children, to develop alternatives, and enable their implementation" (https://www.kamer.org.tr/eng/icerik_detay.php?id=270). It was established in the city of Diyarbakır but now has 23 branches.

⁶ The Başak Culture and Art Foundation was founded in 2002 in Istanbul and organizes cultural activities for disadvantaged children and youth, specifically targeting the internally displaced (https://europa.eu/youth/volunteering/organisation/47402_tr).

⁷ WEŞANEN LÎS is a publishing house founded by Kurdish writer, translator, and poet Lal Laleş and three of his friends, focusing on the Kurdish language.

⁸ Ayhan Erkmen is a well-known Kurdish storyteller.

⁹ www.basaksanatvakfi.org.tr is the website address of the foundation; at the time of writing, it was in the process of being updated.

basis and she then began working there professionally. The foundation was established in 2002 and it has 5 formal employees and nearly 50 volunteers, most of whom are female. The foundation works with disadvantaged children and young people, including the children of internally displaced Kurdish families who had to flee to Istanbul from the eastern and southeastern parts of Turkey.

Şahin emphasized that their work is based on political grounds due to the inherently political nature of internal displacement. When I asked if they had ever faced pressure from the government or any other sources, she replied that one of the organizations they collaborate with was negatively targeted via Twitter and an official investigation was launched because they had used the word “gender,” which was argued by critics to evoke “dangerous” LGBTIQ+ concepts. Sometimes they receive negative reactions from residents of the neighborhood, who wonder about the supporters of the foundation or their possible links to other suspicious parties. The foundation’s statements on sexual health and LGBTIQ+ rights receive negative reactions particularly often. However, Şahin says that this suspicion is actually understandable because a trusting relationship has to be maintained with families who leave their children at the foundation’s events.

The founder of this organization, whose name was Şah Hanım Kanat,¹⁰ lost her daughter on a bus because of a PKK shooting while they were traveling. Her daughter died in front of her eyes. Dilan Şahin says:

“Şah Hanım Kanat wanted to inspire the society for creating hope for peace in Turkey. She aimed to help the others by establishing a foundation and distributing this goodness among the people who were seeking peace.”

The Kurdish children who are the beneficiaries of this foundation are the third generation now. Based on her observations after about 10 years with the foundation, Şahin explained that there are certain reactions regarding Kurdish language-learning. Some children do avoid the Kurdish language because of past traumas, and some of them mimic the same negative reactions to the language that they see in their parents. However, most of the families do carry a desire for education in Kurdish in public schools. These families usually still use the language fluently. The children largely have Kurdish language knowledge acquired by listening since birth; they generally understand, and sometimes they use both Kurdish and Turkish at the same time. Children who are speaking Turkish may suddenly switch to Kurdish for a few sentences and then continue with Turkish. Şahin furthermore said:

“We can observe that internal displacement caused overreactions such as over-denials and over-acknowledgment in terms of sense of ownership of the Kurdish language.”

3.2 KAMER Foundation¹¹

The second interview of this research was conducted with Nebahat Akkoç, the founder of the KAMER Foundation. Akkoç worked as a primary school teacher for 22 years and was the former

¹⁰ Şahhanım Kanat was interviewed by various media organs before she died (YERİNDEN EDİLEN ÇOCUKLAR, n.d.).

¹¹ <https://www.kamer.org.tr/eng/>.

head of the Diyarbakır branch of the Eğitim-Sen Union for 3 years.¹² After losing her husband and three friends in unsolved murders, she left the union and founded KAMER in 1997. Subsequently, Akkoç filed a suit regarding freedom of expression, prohibition of torture, and unsolved murders. Her case reached the European Court of Human Rights and was one of only two cases that was accepted regardless of the status of exhaustion of domestic remedies.¹³

The following lines of the court decision are significant in showing the reasons for the internal displacement that has happened in the region:

“The Government have claimed that Zübeyir Akkoç was not at more risk than any other person, or teacher, in the south-east region. The Court notes the tragic number of victims to the conflict in that region ... It is undisputed that there were a significant number of killings – the ‘unknown perpetrator killing’ phenomenon – which included prominent Kurdish figures such as Musa Anter as well as other persons suspected of opposing the authorities’ policies in the south-east ... The Court is satisfied that Zübeyir Akkoç, as a Kurdish teacher involved in activities perceived by the authorities as being unlawful and in opposition to their policies in the south-east, was at that time at particular risk of falling victim to an unlawful attack. Moreover, this risk could in the circumstances be regarded as real and immediate” (Akkoc v. Turkey, 2000).

KAMER was originally founded to combat violence against women and describes its goal as follows: “To identify local practices of the sexist system that harm women and children, to develop alternatives, and enable their implementation” (Kamer, 2022). The foundation is active in 23 cities in Turkey, with physical offices in 20 of them, implementing activities and social projects regarding violence, internal displacement, poverty, and education. There are a total of approximately 200 volunteers and 60 employees. Women established KAMER and women are still defining and managing the plans and programs, but KAMER is now organizing more general awareness sessions and men are also getting involved. After completing the awareness sessions, these men are eligible to be volunteers of the foundation.

KAMER is implementing its studies multilingually and defends multilingual politics as well as the right to education. Akkoç said:

“The ‘one language, one identity’ policy in Turkey has been targeting assimilation by destroying all the differences. And of course, the Kurdish language is one of those targets. But as KAMER, we see Kurdish as a formal educational language in 50-100 years in Turkey or outside of Turkey as some effective studies on language have been implemented. So we don’t think that the Kurdish language is at risk of extinction.”

Akkoç explained that because of internal displacement, Diyarbakır has received displaced people from nearby provinces such as Gaziantep, Şanlıurfa, and Van. There have also been movements from villages to districts or city centers within Diyarbakır.¹⁴ Akkoç noted that Kurdish women

¹² Education and Science Workers’ Union (<https://egitimsen.org.tr/>).

¹³ Akkoç case: [https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/tur#{%22itemid%22:\[%22001-58905%22\]}](https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/tur#{%22itemid%22:[%22001-58905%22]}).

¹⁴ Diyarbakır is one of the most populous cities in the southeastern region of Turkey and endured particularly harsh conflicts between the PKK and the Turkish army.

are the main carriers of the culture and they try to speak Kurdish more than men. She also indicated that there are more non-Turkish speakers among women than men, adding that:

“We observe that the Kurds who used to speak Zazakî had to learn Kurmanjî as it is more widely spoken.”

3.3 Ayhan Erkmen, the narrative hunter...¹⁵

Ayhan Erkmen, who travels city by city and village by village, describes himself as a “narrative hunter,” collecting narratives, true-life experiences, and biographies. In addition to publishing books, he compiles video narratives on his YouTube channel.¹⁶ Erkmen, born in Kars in 1973, studied law at Dicle University in Diyarbakır. He was then elected mayor of the town of Dağpınar in Kars province in 2004, a position that he held between 2004 and 2009.

He believes that women are more disciplined and sensitive about carrying social memory. He also said that his videos have helped some people who were internally displaced or had migrated to find their family members:

“In 1918, when the Yazidi Kurds fled from Turkey, a Yazidi woman didn’t and stayed in Kağızman,¹⁷ married there. Her family escaped to the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics. Her grandchildren were looking for her family to get to know and meet her. At the same time, this woman’s siblings’ children, who were living in Krasnodar, watched my videos incidentally and contacted me. Then we arranged a gathering for the first time ever. Secondly, approximately a month ago, a 78-year-old lady found me through my videos and called me, looking for her grandfather’s brother’s grandchildren who had migrated from Iran to Turkey by the 1850s. And after this call, we found some people who know these relatives and they are still looking for them. I hope it will conclude happily.”

Erkmen said that every language is beautiful but Kurdish represents something very special in his emotional world, which he described in the following words:

“I feel that an old lady is sitting on the top of my heart and I tell the stories through her.”

Ayhan Erkmen was born in a village in Kars where there was no electricity and first encountered Kurdish stories in that setting. After sunset, all of the members of the family would gather together and elderly relatives would tell stories. “When I am telling the stories, I am traveling to my childhood,” Erkmen said. He noted that he keeps the same structures of the stories as were narrated by the people who originally told him.

¹⁵ His website: <https://ayhanerkmen.com/>. Erkmen has engaged with the Kurdish language since childhood and has published four books, one of which was written in both Turkish and Kurdish: *Çiroken Dengbejan* (2022), *Çiroken Serhede* (2021), *Şewu* (2009), and *Edo Deran* (2006).

¹⁶ [youtube.com/hashtag/ayhanerkmen](https://www.youtube.com/hashtag/ayhanerkmen).

¹⁷ A district in Kars.

“There has always been pressure on the Kurdish language and still there is. Kurdish has come to this day because of the efforts of the dengbêjs¹⁸ and çîrokbêjs.¹⁹ I was in prison for 7 years due to political reasons and their work of art always helped me to endure harsh circumstances. So, by gathering these narratives together for an audience, I am honoring a debt.”

He said that a large percentage of Kurds have migrated or been internally displaced, so there is a significant population of Kurdish refugees in the world. They are unable to receive Kurdish-language education in the new lands that they have migrated to. He explains that even in 2022, Kurdish theater plays, concerts, and music are being banned and there is huge pressure on the community and the culture. He sees this situation as a serious threat to Kurdish, but he is relieved when he remembers that in Rojava²⁰ and Başûr,²¹ Kurdish is a language of education. He predicted that Kurdish will vanish from the routines of daily life and will primarily remain an artistic language. He also believes, however, that the prohibitions on the language cannot continue indefinitely as no system can remain in place forever by denying, destroying, or banning.

The narratives that he shares are mostly about the last decade and their original narrators have reached him from the different places where Kurds have migrated, including Siberia, Europe, the United States, Iran, Syria, and Iraq.

3.4 Lal Laleş and WEŞANEN LÎS

Lal Laleş is a Kurdish poet and publisher. He established the publishing house WEŞANEN LÎS in 2004 with three friends in Diyarbakır, publishing books in Kurdish. He has also published four books of poetry, three of them in Kurdish and one in Turkish. His poems have been translated into Turkish, Arabic, Swedish, Georgian, and English. “Laleş” refers to the pilgrimage place of the Yazidi Kurds. Lal Laleş says that he chose this name because the Yazidi Kurds have been oppressed even more than the Kurds in general.

I asked him what he did to develop his writing skills in Kurdish, as it is not an academic language and has never been taught in schools. He said that when he was in high school, he benefitted from underground copies of the books of Kurdish writers who were living abroad due to prohibitions in Turkey, such as Mehmet Uzun. He has been inspired by many Kurdish authors. In particular, Osman Sebrî has had a great impact on him in terms of shaping his emotional world into art, together with other authors such as Cegerxwîn, Celadet Alî Bedirxan, Nuredîn Zaza, Melayê Cizîrî, Ehmedê Xanî, and Feqîye Teyran. Having been born into a Kurdish family where his mother never learned Turkish and his father learned Turkish during his military service, his primary linguistic affiliation was always with Kurdish.

¹⁸ *Deng* means voice and *bêj* means to tell something. Dengbêjs are essentially poets who tell old stories, memories, and historical facts in the form of songs (Scalbert-Yücel, 2009). Ayhan Erkmen describes them as “those who sing strans,” with *stran* meaning an unmetred folk song in Kurdish.

¹⁹ *Çîrokbêj* means storyteller.

²⁰ Rojava refers to Western Kurdistan, which is the northeastern part of Syria.

²¹ Başûr refers to Southern Kurdistan, which is the northern part of Iraq.

Laleş described growing up in a large home where dengbêjs gathered and verbal Kurdish literature was kept alive. As a consequence of this intimacy with Kurdish, he was familiar with the linguistic opportunities of the language from a young age. While still in primary school, he began copying down the narratives that his mother shared with him. I asked him if readers face any difficulties in comprehending the meanings of his poems, and he replied that there are dialectical differences, although Zazakî and Kurmanjî are the only dialects spoken in Turkey. However, he did not view those as obstacles to understanding his poems. He focused instead on another possible obstacle:

“I do not intend to play to the audience by prompting the nationalist feelings of the people; I am trying to write permanent poems. I am trying to write poems on the themes that I do focus on or I am concerned about, which are obviously affected by the Kurdish problem and the painful matters linked to this problem. So, my poems can be described as introverted or obscure.”

He thinks that the internal displacement of the Kurds in Turkey has had a positive effect on the language:

“The Kurdish language was also displaced from villages to urban residences. Kurdish burst out of the villages to the streets of the big cities, which transformed the language into an objection language and an opponent against the ruling power and demanding a solution for anti-democratic practices. The language which was derived from the villages, valleys, and meadows gained a completely new habitat and adopted a new lifestyle, where the language was producing, changing, and shaping itself. As a consequence of internal displacement, the verbal Kurdish art sources have been recorded and archived. These are positive aspects, but likewise, I would like to see a revival in the villages, a literary gathering of the nature and the language in these depopulated areas by implementing a return.”

Laleş thinks that in the next 50 or 100 years, the number of native Kurdish speakers will decrease, perhaps even rapidly, until Kurdish gains a legal status one day. At the same time, alongside that quantitative decrease, he predicted that the quality will increase among intellectuals and scholars who are concerned about the language and work on it through translations and academic studies. He also believes that Kurdish will obtain a protected legal status eventually as oppression of the language is not sustainable. Even in a world where English dominates all other languages, the struggles of Kurdish are an important discussion topic:

“I think all the languages are equal and rich. As long as the languages are given freedom economically, socially, politically, and philosophically, the language will keep producing itself. We can never say that Kurdish is insufficient. We can feel insufficiency because of the pressure on the language, and the opportunities that haven’t been provided and the language having been not given a status. But this doesn’t mean that Kurdish is insufficient.”

Laleş says that women are more persistent than men in terms of reading Kurdish literature and their commitment to keeping the language alive is much more natural and intimate. However, the publishing house has difficulties finding female Kurdish authors.

4. Conclusion

Becoming a language at risk of extinction or in other words, a ‘language death’ can happen due to ‘improved communications, globalization processes and being a low-status language’, being spoken in a limited area, by a small group of people, and when nobody speaks it any more (Isern & Fort, 2014: 1,2; Amano et al., 2014: 7; Crystal, 2000:1). The surveys indicate that there are around 4,500 living languages in our world (Crystal, 2001: 3). We can assume that this number is decreasing because of the domination of some languages such as English or because of many other reasons which Kurdish language struggles, as well. It is interesting to learn that even a language called ‘Yoruba’ is called ‘deprived’ despite 20 million speakers who speak this language since it is dominated by English in higher education (ibid.:13). Keeping the insights of these researches in mind, we can assume that Kurdish is dominated by English, Turkish, Arabic or other languages where Kurds have been living without having a country of their own. This means Kurdish is lacking the opportunities of a proper, formal education.

In addition to language domination, the globalization process, and being a low-status language; forced internal displacement of Kurds in Turkey has also negatively influenced the language. The disengagement from the villages, and the movement towards the massive western cities after forced internal displacement, formed a new habitat for the language. The Kurdish-spoken areas have gradually decreased, the big families split into small groups inside apartments and the city schools have been substituted for the small village schools where the children would feel more comfortable speaking Kurdish. Despite all these facts, is the political attitude of the Kurdish people towards their language advantageous in terms of protecting it? The interviews presented here share many common points and some similar insights. First of all, it is interesting to notice that the interviewees had quite similar thoughts regarding the future of Kurdish. They predicted that Kurdish will not die; the number of Kurdish speakers may decrease, but the language will remain alive in the framework of art and culture thanks to the efforts of Kurdish intellectuals and scholars. Nevertheless, it is another paper’s theme to ask if these efforts of the Kurdish intellectuals could compete with all the risks that the languages at risk of extinction face. Secondly, they believe that the roles of Kurdish women in the development and protection of the Kurdish language are essential. A deeper exploration of that point was beyond the scope of this introductory paper, but KAMER in particular has conducted studies that provide significant data regarding gender which can be searched through their website. Thirdly, as the interviewees all noted, Kurdish still has a risk of disappearing from daily life if precautions are not taken as it is not a formal language of education, in spite of its roles in art and culture.

In conflicts with an ethnic dimension, internally displaced people often belong to a non-majority ethnic group in the country that subjects their language to a secondary position under the dominant language. Internally displaced people who cannot speak that dominant language often face language barriers that constitute obstacles to the use of fundamental human rights. At the same time, differences in accents may also cause discrimination. Specific to Turkey, in addition

to the pressure on internally displaced people, administrative and political pressures are arising for the NGOs who help these people, particularly in the context of the conservative policies of the AKP. At present, we may say that there are not many signs that full freedom will be provided to different languages in Turkey. I hope that the struggles and efforts of people such as the interviewees of the present study will become more visible and that they will have opportunities to spread their work throughout the region and create more awareness of the Kurdish language. This is simultaneously a question of to what extent Kurds are ready to embrace and protect their language and cultural practices, such as encouraging the work of dengbêjs, which are inseparable elements of this culture (Korangy, 2020: 156).

In conclusion, internal displacement inherently changes the language practices of a nation, and the new practices have much to say about a community's level of integration or assimilation (Babar, 2020). Ellie Kemp's research sheds helpful light on this field: "There needs to be more attention paid to the languages and communication needs of those at risk of experiencing and recovering from internal displacement" (Kemp, 2018). As one of the main components of cultures, many languages are like endangered creatures of our planet, and members of all societies should respect and protect them regardless of political views, biases, or sects. I hope that one day the stories of the old lady who is sitting on the top of the narrative hunter's heart will reach more people.

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