

Maintenance of the Circassian Language in Jordan

Self-identification, attitudes, policies and practices as indicators of linguistic vitality

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Contents

- Introduction 3
- 1. The settlement, proportion and number of Circassians in Jordan 5
 - 1.1. Ethnic background and settlement in Jordan..... 5
 - 1.2. Investigating the number of Circassians in Jordan..... 6
 - 1.3. Exposing the reasons for manipulation with numbers..... 10
- Conclusion..... 13
- References: 13
- 2. Ethno-linguistic self-identification and factors affecting intergenerational language transmission of Circassians in Jordan 15
 - 2.1. Ethnic and linguistic self-identification..... 16
 - 2.2. Circassian language instruction, proficiency and motivation among the younger generation 31
- Conclusion..... 36
- References 38
- 3. The Main Challenges of Circassian Language Instruction in Jordan 41
 - 3.1. Circassian language learning opportunities in Jordan 41
 - 3.2. The main challenges of Circassian language instruction in Jordan 47
- Conclusion..... 64
- References 65
- 4. The Impact of NART TV on Circassian Language Maintenance in Jordan..... 67
 - 4.1. The rationale for establishing NART TV in Jordan 67
 - 4.2. The impact of NART TV on the status of the Circassian language in Jordan..... 72
- Conclusion..... 75
- References: 77
- 5. Attitudes and Beliefs as Indicators of Circassian Language Maintenance in Jordan 78
 - 5.1. Attitudes toward the official and minority languages in Jordan..... 79
 - 5.2. How symbolic attitudes are reflected in language practices..... 84
 - 5.3. Community members’ beliefs and concerns with regard to Circassian language maintenance.. 91
- Conclusion..... 93
- References: 95

The one who does not have a language, does not have a nation.(Circassian proverb)

Introduction

The research project "Maintenance of the Circassian Language in Jordan" was funded by an A. W. Mellon grant in 2007 and 2011 at the American Center of Oriental Research. The aim of the study was to analyze and explain the impact of ethno-linguistic self-identification, symbolic attitudes, personal beliefs and official language ideologies on minority language practices by examining the maintenance of the Circassian language in Jordan. The main focus was on UNESCO Language Vitality and Endangerment Factors (UNESCO, 2003) 1 – the absolute number of minority language speakers and the proportion of speakers within the total population, 2 – language policies, attitudes and beliefs, and 3 – language practices, including intergenerational language transmission, instruction and use in new domains, e.g., National Adiga Radio and Television (NART TV).

The topic is relevant because little research has been conducted on minority language policy issues and the factors influencing the maintenance of the Circassian language in Jordan. Circassians are one of the invisible expatriate minorities living in the Middle East where the actual number of people belonging to these minorities is not known precisely, but only estimated. The absolute number of minority language speakers and the proportion of speakers within the total population are essential determinants of ethno-linguistic vitality, because a small community dispersed among a mainstream population always faces the risk of assimilation, to the point of losing its own language and identity. However, data on the total number and proportion of ethnic groups appears to be an object of frequent manipulation in

Jordan, where ethnic groups are a politically sensitive issue and official data pertaining to them is not available from the Department of Statistics.

The project provides useful and meaningful data which furthers our understanding of why Circassians in Jordan and other expatriate communities (e.g., in Turkey) fail to teach and maintain their language despite a positive attitude toward doing so. According to the UNESCO Language Vitality and Endangerment Factors, attitudes and beliefs are a key indicator for assessing linguistic vitality. Ingroup identification and positive language attitudes are important precursors of language maintenance. However, attitudes may be symbolic: they are based not on specific information or experience, but rather on important ideological values. Although symbolic attitudes seem to reflect strong convictions, they usually do not influence behavior. This helps to explain why emotional statements about the importance of maintaining the language of the minority community do not lead to actual language maintenance practices.

The research is based on a longitudinal study covering multiple sources of information; primary empirical data was collected through interviews and surveys of 545 respondents. The results will be presented in five forthcoming articles: "Circassians in Jordan: Exposing the Reasons for Manipulating Numbers," "Ethno-Linguistic Self-Identification and Factors Affecting Intergenerational Language Transmission among Circassians in Jordan," "The Main Challenges of Circassian Language Instruction in Jordan," "The Impact of NART TV on Circassian Language Maintenance in Jordan," and "Attitudes and Beliefs as Indicators of Circassian Language Maintenance in Jordan." A short documentary presenting the research results is available at <http://www.integrationresearch.net/circassians-in-jordan.html>.

1.The settlement, proportion and number of Circassians in Jordan

1.1. Ethnic background and settlement in Jordan

Circassians are one of the minorities living in a diaspora situation in many countries all over the Middle East. The reason for this was the Great Migration that occurred at the end of the Caucasian War in 1864. Circassians were forced to migrate due to various measures of oppression and injustice; the main period of Exodus falls between 1864 – 1878, and lasted until the year 1900. Ottoman Empire encouraged the emigration (from the annexed territories of the Tsarist Russia) and it is estimated that the number of immigrants from all nationalities reached to one and a half million people, of whom approximately 600,000 were Circassians (Haghandouqa 1985, 29). Circassians resettled in various parts of the Ottoman Empire, eventually becoming residents of a variety of states, for instance, in Iraq, Israel, Syria, Jordan and Turkey. Lot of them perished during the Exodus and the main bulk was assimilated and lost their identity, becoming mostly Turks and Bulgars (personal interview with Mohydeen Quandour in Amman, February 2007).

Jordan was reached by Circassians settling from 1868 in Amman, along with other sites at Wadi-Sseer (1880), Jerash (1884), Naur (1901), Russaife (1902-1904) and Sweileh (1906) (Shamy 1996, 307). First immigrants were of Shapsugh origin who settled in the Roman Amphitheater and in the caves and valleys of Amman in 1868 (Haghandouqa 1985, 36). They were the first tribe to leave Turkey by sea route. Accidentally, the ship caught fire at sea and

around 700 people burnt to death, the survivors landed in Acre and moved after a year to Jordan (Mufti 1972, 272). These were followed by Kabardians, who settled in Amman, Jerash (1885), Sweileh (1905) and Ruseifa (1909), and the Abzakh and Bzhedugh, who established settlements in Wadi Seer (1880) and Naur (1900) (Haghandouqa 1985, 31; Shamy 1996, 307). In 1905 a small number of Chechens and Daghestanis resettled also in Jordan, however, they are of differing ethnic origin not affiliated with Circassians. There were altogether 481 Circassian families who originally settled in Jordan (Haghandouqa 1985, 134-140). According to Dean A. Walker (1984, 202-4) the Circassian colonies at Amman and Jerash were small: "There are but few women and children. They are not on good terms with their neighbors, in occasional quarrels, their numbers are diminishing. They do not themselves hope that they can long hold their ground."

The term "Circassian" is a cover term which denotes people of the North-West Caucasus: Adigas, Kabardians, Abkhazians, Abazinians, and Ubykhs. There are five recognized languages in the Northwest Caucasian family: Kabardian or East Circassian, Adyghe or West Circassian, Abkhaz, Abaza and Ubykh. Circassian includes the literary languages of Adyghe and Kabardian, as well as several dialects: Shapsugh, Bzhedugh, Abzakh, Adamey, Hatukuay, Kemirgoy, Makhosh, Natekuay, Zhane, Yegerikuay. According to Amjad Jaimoukha (personal interview in Amman, February 2007), there are four Circassian dialects spoken in Jordan. There are Kabardians and Shapsugs in Amman, Bzhedughs and Abzakhs in Wadi Seer and Naur, Kabardians and a few Shapsugh families in Russaife, and Kabardians in Sweileh and Jerash.

1.2. Investigating the number of Circassians in Jordan

The absolute number of minority language speakers and the proportion of speakers within the total population are major evaluative factors of language vitality, because a small community dispersed among the mainstream population always faces the risk of being assimilated, to the

point of losing its own language and identity. Data on ethnic groups, such as total number and share appears to be a frequent object of manipulation, especially in Jordan and Turkey where the ethnic groups constitute a politically sensitive issue and the official data on the ethnic groups is unavailable by the Department of Statistics. During this research on the Circassians in Jordan it appears that the the number of Circassians increases rapidly in Jordan, contrary to the expected decrease (from 5,000 to 100,000) and the same is true in Turkey (from 277,000 to 2 million). As it is demographically impossible to number the population, the aim of the current paper is to provide estimates on the most reliable size of the Circassian diaspora in Jordan and investigate the reasons for the manipulation with numbers. Here, several factors including immigration, political context as well as the fear of loss of privileges (e.g. seats in Parliament) are considered. The topic is relevant because in the long run, the manipulation with numbers in the media augurs more harm than profit to the Circassian community, as it renders all other facts they present equally unreliable.

According to the data from the Department of Statistics (Jordan in Figures 2009) the total population in Jordan in 2009 was 5.97 million (Jordan in Figures 2009). The majority of the population comprises Arabs (98%) (including 1,835,704 Palestinian refugees and ca 700,000 refugees from Iraq), while the remaining 2% of the population represents the other ethnic and religious minorities, such as Circassians (102,000), Druze (18,000), Gypsies (6,300), Turkmen (6,300), Azerbaijanis (5,400), Chechens (5,000), Filipinos (5,600), Kurds (4,700), Greeks (1,300) and other minor groups (Joshua project – Jordan, 2011). The numerical data regarding the size of the ethnic and religious minorities in various publications and Internet sources tends to remain constant or decreases as a rule (e.g. the number of Armenians has dropped from 5,000 to 4,300); however, only the number of Circassians appears to increase

rapidly (e.g. from 5,850 (Mackey 1979) to 102,000 in Jordan, and from 277,900 (Gordon 2005) to 1-2 millions in Turkey (Besleney 2004; Mufti 1972; UNPO Circassia website 2008).

As the official data has not been released by the Department of Statistics of Jordan, there is scope for possible manipulation. Amjad Jaimoukha, the former Vice President of the Royal Scientific Society, claimed in his personal interview (in Amman, February 2007) that the exact number of Circassians is unknown. Each one would offer you their own estimation. "The fact is that in Jordan there is a sensitive political situation with ethnic groups." Jaimoukha refers here, to the official data provided in many sources that estimate the numbers to be as low as 40,000 to 50,000 (Rannut 2009). Hassan R. Abd-el-Jawad (2006) claims that Circassians number approximately 1-2% in Jordan (as there were about 4.5 million people in 2006, there should be 45 – 90 thousand Circassians). According to the interviews conducted with distinguished community members from the Circassian Charity Association there should be a roughly estimate of about 100,000 Circassians in Jordan (personal interviews in Amman, February 2007 and March 2011). However, this estimated number of Circassians was rejected by Iklas Aranky and her co-workers at the Department of Statistics, who strongly argued against it, claiming instead that the number of Circassians could not possibly be even 40,000 (personal conversation at the Department of Statistics, March 2011). The Department of Statistics suggested considering the number of the families who originally came in to Jordan as the numerical basis for further extrapolation: thus, it was determined there were 481 Circassian families who had originally settled in Jordan (Haghandoqa 1985:134-140). According to Dean A. Walker (1984, 202-4) the Circassians colonies at Ammân and Jerash were small "There are but few women and children. They are not on good terms with their neighbors, in occasional quarrels, their numbers are diminishing. They do not themselves hope that they can long hold their ground."

The census taken in 1933 by the British Government was the only one where people in Jordan were ethnically distinguished, and it therefore disclosed the total number of the Circassian population to be at 5,850 (Mackey 1979:82). According to Franc. R. Scheck in 1997 the number of total population in Jordan was 4.6 million from which Circassians comprised 0.5% (23,000), Armenians 0.2% (9,200), Turks 0.1% and Kurds 0.1% (Scheck 1997:21). Some years earlier Peter Gubser (1991:28) claims that there are around 25,000 Circassians in Jordan which is confirmed as well by the Rough Guide to Jordan (2002:99). Interviews with members of the Committee of the Circassian Charity Association revealed that there are currently about 6,000 members (personal interview with Omar Janbek in Amman, March 2011). Jaimoukha claims that from the number of members in the Circassian organisations we can assume that there are a few dozen thousands Circassians currently in Jordan (personal conversation in Amman, April 2011).

Table 1. The number of Circassians in Jordan according to the different sources of information

Source of information	Number or percentage of Circassians
The census taken in 1933 by the British Government (Mackey, 1979).	In 1933 there were 5,850 Circassians
Peter Gubser (1991)	In 1991 around 25,000 Circassians
Franc. R. Scheck (1997)	In 1997 Circassians comprised 0.5 percent (23,000) of the population.
Rough Guide to Jordan (Teller, 2002)	25,000 Circassians in 2002
Ethnologue Report for Jordan (Gordon, 2005)	44,300 Adyghe language speakers in 1986; 56,000 Kabardian language speakers in 2005
Joshua project for Jordan (Joshua - 2011)	102,000 Circassians in 2011
Personal estimations of Amjad Jaimoukha (personal interview in Amman, 2007)	40,000 to 50,000 in 2007
Personal estimations of community members (personal interviews with members of the Circassian Charity Association, in 2011)	Around 100,000 Circassians in 2011

The data presented in Ethnologue Report for Jordan (Gordon 2005) holds that in 1986 there were 44,300 Adyghe language speakers, while in 2005 there were 56,000 Kabardian language

speakers in Jordan, which appears to be, considering the facts mentioned above, rather unreliable data. First, these two numbers should ideally refer to different ethno-linguistic groups in Jordan; however, in reality, they refer to the same ethnic group, at different times, under a different linguistic label. Second, the number of people identifying themselves as Circassian (Kabardian, Adyghe, Shapsugh, Bzhedugh, Abzakh) language speakers, expresses mainly an emotional bond with the language rather than competence in it. According to this present research finding (Rannut 2009, 2011) the ethno-linguistic self-identification of Circassians in Jordan does not correspond to the actual language use and proficiency. The survey among the 362 students of Circassian ethnic-background in Amman who identified themselves linguistically as Circassian language speakers revealed that Circassian (Kabardian, Adyghe, Shapsugh, Bzhedugh, Abzakh) was used as a first or second language only by 21% of the students (Rannut 2011).

Thus, we may presume, based on more reliable data (Grubser 1991:28; Scheck 1997:21) as well as on a personal interview at the Department of Statistics (March 2011) that there are approximately 20,000 to 40,000 ethnic Circassians currently residing in Jordan. However, this does not correspond to the actual number of Circassian language (Adyghe, Kabardian a.o. dialects) users, which is considerably smaller.

1.3.Exposing the reasons for manipulation with numbers

The main reason for such a manipulation with numbers among Circassians appears to be a fear of loss of their privileges, e.g. seats in Parliament. This was confirmed by Jaimoukha, who claimed that "Perhaps, if the true number of Circassians were to be known, the other ethnic groups would ask why Circassians were getting all these privileges." (personal interview in Amman, February 2007). In the 110-member Chamber of Deputies of Jordan's National Assembly, three seats are reserved for Circassians and Chechens (Hourani et al.

2004). According to Mohydeen Quandour in Jordan the Circassians enjoyed much higher privilege and standing in the country than in anywhere else in the world. "We had the real hand in making this country and the government the Hashemite Dynasty relied on Circassians as earnest Jordanian citizens. And so they got certain privileges." (personal interview in Amman, February 2007) Circassians gained their privileges when Prince Abdullah arrived in Amman in 1921. They immediately allied themselves to him and proved to be loyal subjects, expressing their fidelity on various occasions, especially by volunteering to protect the palace during Sultan Adwan's revolt and attack of the capital (Mufti 1972:325). This loyalty was rewarded through the granting of various privileges. For example, the electoral law of 1928 contained a special section regarding minorities which allocated one seat to Circassians for every 5000 inhabitants versus one seat for every 27,000 inhabitants for the rest of the population (Mackey 1979: 76-78). As there are currently two seats reserved for Circassians in the Parliament, it implies that according to the privileges granted in 1928, there must be at least 10,000 Circassians in Jordan. In the case when the number of Circassians might drop below 54,000, they still have privileges to lose, and as the number of seats in Parliament has not varied in accordance with the number of population, Circassians now stand to lose even more privileges than before. Thus, the fact that demographic data on ethnic affiliation has not been made public, definitely serves the interests of the Circassians in Jordan.

Another reason for the community growth is the immigration from the Caucasus, which was confirmed through interviews, observations and surveys conducted by the author in 2007 and 2011 in Jordan (Rannut 2009, 2011). Circassians who received academic scholarships in the historical homeland in Caucasus, would marry there and bring their wives to Jordan. The survey conducted among 323 Circassian students revealed that about 5% of them used Russian as the home language. However, according to the author's observations and

interviews with the community members, the impact of immigration on the number of Circassians in Jordan was still quite marginal, and thus could not be the cause for the rapid growth of the community.

There are various historical and political reasons for such a kind of manipulation of numbers. In the Caucasus, the number of Circassians dropped considerably because of the Russification policy, which divided them among three small republics (Adyghe (108,115; 24.2% of the population), Kabardino-Balkaria (498,702, 55.3% of the population) and Karachay-Cherkessia (169,198; 38.5% of the population) where the total number of Circassians is about 776,000. Thus, the Circassians perceive the decrease in the size of their ethnic community as a political threat. Therefore, they manipulate the media by overestimating the number of Circassians in diaspora. The best example of this is presented on the UNPO Circassia website (2008) which calls the Russian Federation to acknowledge the genocide against Circassians. It claims that more than 4 million people lived in Circassia in 1830, and that 1.5 million Circassians were deported from the Caucasus, and currently there are over 3 million Circassians living outside of the Russian Federation, with over 2 million residing in Turkey, and 150,000 in Syria, Jordan and Israel. However, according to many authors, the total number of emigrants from the various nationalities in the Caucasus is estimated to have reached 1.5 million people, of whom approximately 600,000 were Circassians (Haghandouqa 1985: 29). According to the official Russian statistics the number of Caucasian emigrants amounted to 380,000 in the first half of 1864, and before that since 1958 altogether ca 80,000 people were resettled, thus their total number was 460,000 (Mufti 1972: 269). Currently, there are 3,000 Circassians in Israel, 25,000 in Syria, and 277,900 in Turkey (Gordon 2005). Zeynel Besleney (2004) claims that there are around one million Circassians in Turkey. However, the fact that there are over 2 million Circassians in Turkey was mentioned already by Mufti (1972:

270). As many databases and news agencies rely on the data presented by the community members themselves, Circassian websites manipulate public opinion by manipulating the data.

Conclusion

Considering more reliable data provided by Grubser (1991:28) and Scheck (1997:21) as well as data provided by the Department of Statistics (March 2011) we may conclude that there are approximately 20,000 to 40,000 ethnic Circassians residing currently in Jordan which, however, does not correspond to the considerably smaller number of Circassian language speakers (Adyghe, Kabardian a.o. dialects). As long as the official data concerning ethnic affiliation is not made public by the Department of Statistics there is ample room for possible manipulation, which serves the interests of Circassians in Jordan. The main reasons for manipulation in presenting the size of the Circassian community in Jordan appear to be the fear loss of privileges, like the loss of two seats in Parliament, as well as the desire for greater public attention and support for their political activities to maintain their language and culture. As Circassians are dispersed among the mainstream population even in their own homeland in Russia, they are at risk of being assimilated, to the point of losing their native language and identity. However, in the long run, such kinds of manipulation with numbers in the media will precipitate more harm than profit to this community, as this renders their other claims concerning their history and circumstances equally unreliable.

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2. Ethno-linguistic self-identification and factors affecting intergenerational language transmission of Circassians in Jordan

The aim of this paper is to examine the factors that influence ethnic and linguistic self-identification and intergenerational language loss among Circassians in Jordan. Accommodation theory in social psychological research suggests that ingroup identification and positive language attitudes are important precursors of language maintenance, learning and revitalisation (Giles and Coupland 1991). Ethnic and linguistic self-identification represents linguistic attitudes and behaviour as well as the extent to which one identifies with a particular ethnic and linguistic group (Phinney 1996; Giles and Johnson 1987). The more the linguistic marker is emphasised in self-identification, the more predictable the practices that lead to language maintenance. However, strong linguistic self-identification does not necessarily mean that a community has maintained its language and that it is used as a means of communication within the community. Because the transmission of a language from one generation to the next is the most commonly used factor in evaluating the vitality of a language (among UNESCO's nine language vitality factors (2003), I have focused my research on factors that affect intergenerational language transmission. The study of ethno-linguistic self-identification and intergenerational language transmission was based on interviews with 22 community members and a survey of 362 Circassian students in Jordan. Current research reveals significant information which helps us to better understand the reasons for language shifts in several other Circassian diasporas in the Middle East as well.

2.1. Ethnic and linguistic self-identification

The term “Circassian” denotes the people of the North-West Caucasus: Adigas, Kabardians, Abkhazians, Abazinians, and Ubykhs. There are five recognized languages in the Northwest Caucasian family: Kabardian or East Circassian, Adyghe or West Circassian, Abkhaz, Abaza and Ubykh. Circassian includes the literary languages of Adyghe and Kabardian, as well as several dialects: Shapsugh, Bzhedugh, Abzakh, Adamey, Hatukuay, Kemirgoy, Makhosh, Natekuay, Zhane, Yegerikuay (Hewitt 2001; Jaimoukha 2001).

According to Amjad Jaimoukha, (personal interview in Amman, January 2007), four dialects are spoken in Jordan. There are Kabardians and Shapsugs in Amman, Bzhedughs and Abzakhs in Wadi Sseer and Naur, mainly Kabardians and a few Shapsugh families in Russaife, and only Kabardians in Sweileh. In Jerash, the overwhelming majority are Kabardians.

Ethno-linguistic identity describes the extent to which one identifies with a particular ethnic and linguistic group. It refers to one’s sense of belonging to an ethnic group and that element of one’s thoughts, perceptions, feelings, and behavior that is derived from ethnic group membership. Ethno-linguistic identity is characterised by the recognition of common [cultural](#), [linguistic](#), [religious](#), and [behavioral](#) traits – real or presumed – as indicators of contrast to other groups, where linguistic self-identification and distinction forms a crucial component (Phinney 1996; Giles and Johnson 1987). This article is based on ethnic and linguistic self-identification (labels for one’s own ethnic and linguistic group), linguistic attitudes (feelings about one’s ethnic language), and linguistic behavior (language use and intergenerational language transmission).

Questions about ethnic and linguistic self-identification (the label for one's own group) based on the studies of Howard Giles and Patricia Johnson (1987) were used to gauge the ethno-linguistic identity of young Circassians. The survey revealed that all students of Circassian ethnic origin (92%) identified themselves as Circassians, and 5% of students identified their ethnic affiliation as Chechen (Figure 1). Jaimoukha explained (personal interview in Amman, April 2011) that assimilation in Jordan can be cultural and linguistic, but not ethnic: a Circassian cannot claim to be an Arab, since no tribe would "adopt" him. Tribal affiliation in Jordan is supported by unwritten tribal law.

Students did not avail themselves of the opportunity to define their ethnic affiliation more precisely (Adyghe, Kabardian, Shapsugh, Bzhedugh, etc.), although many people did so in personal interviews. For example, Amjad Jaimoukha said (personal interview in Amman, February 2007) that he is Circassian. "My father is Kabardian and my mother is from the Ahbaza ethnic group, so strictly speaking, they are not Adyghe nor Circassian, but, rather, very closely allied to Circassians linguistically and ethnically." Yanal Hatk described himself as a mixture of ethnic and linguistic affiliation: "I am Shapsug by origin, but we spoke Bzhedugh at home." Survey results revealed, however, that students' linguistic self-identification was much more precise (Figure 2). As expected, more students (18%) identified themselves as Arabic language speakers, as that is the first language for most children. However, 69 percent of students identified themselves as Circassian language speakers, divided into five different groups of dialects: Circassian/Adyghe, Bzhedugh, Kabardian, Abzakh, and Abaza-Abkhaz. This confirms that linguistic affiliation is still a strong indicator of self-identification. Remarkably, the share of Chechen language speakers was larger (8%) than their ethnic identification (5%), which indicates mixed marriages and the ethnic integration of other Caucasian groups into Circassian (Figure 2).

5% of students who identified themselves ethnically as Circassians reported their linguistic affiliation as Russian; they represent new immigrants from the Caucasus whose home language tends to be Russian. According to the interviews, there are currently around 30 Circassian women from the Caucasus in Jordan, as well as some ethnic Russians who are married to Circassians and integrated into the Circassian community. This accounts for the children whose native language is Russian. Emma Hadagatel, a Circassian teacher from the Caucasus, said that she met her husband at the university in Kabardino Balkaria; their son was born in the Caucasus and they lived there for ten years before moving to Jordan (personal interview in Amman, February 2007). For similar reasons, some of the students whose first language is Russian consider themselves ethnic Circassians.

Figure 1. Self-reported ethnic affiliation of students at the International Circassian Cultural Academy (ICCA)

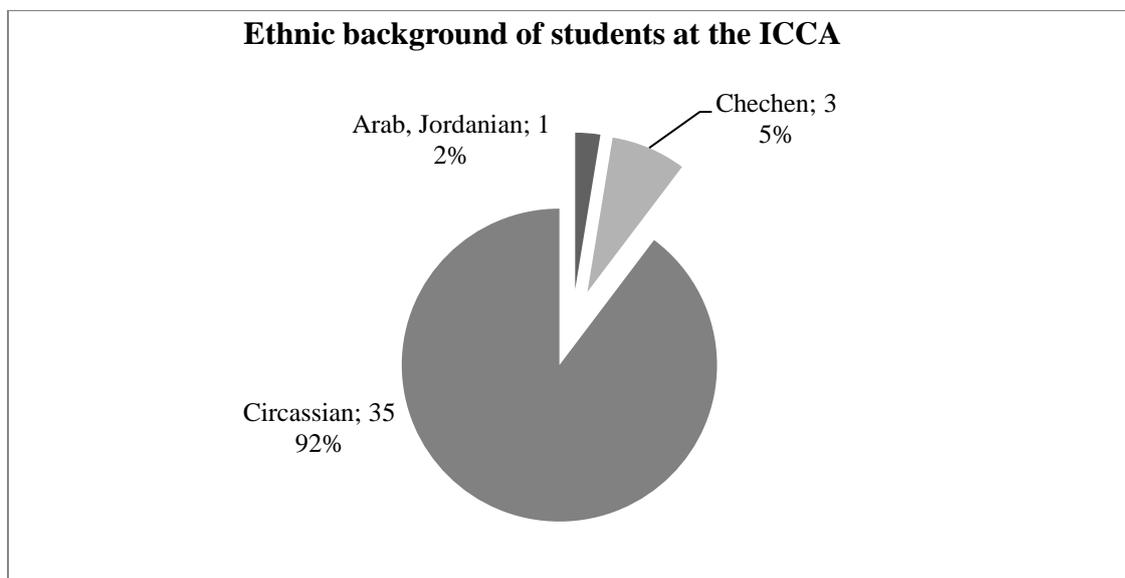
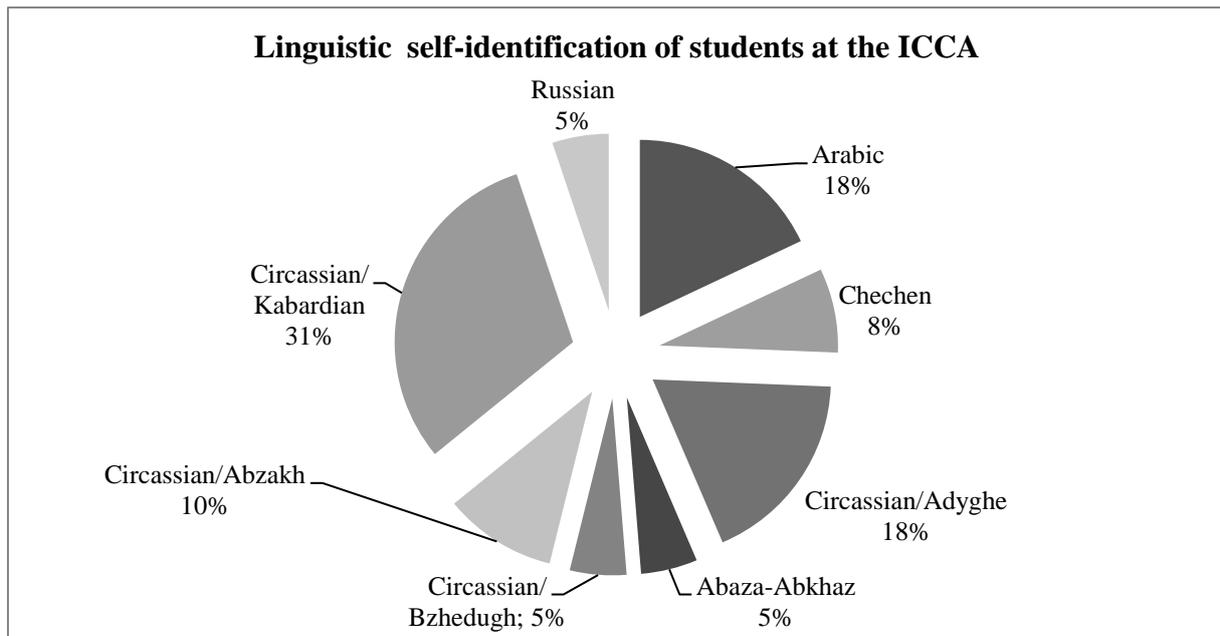
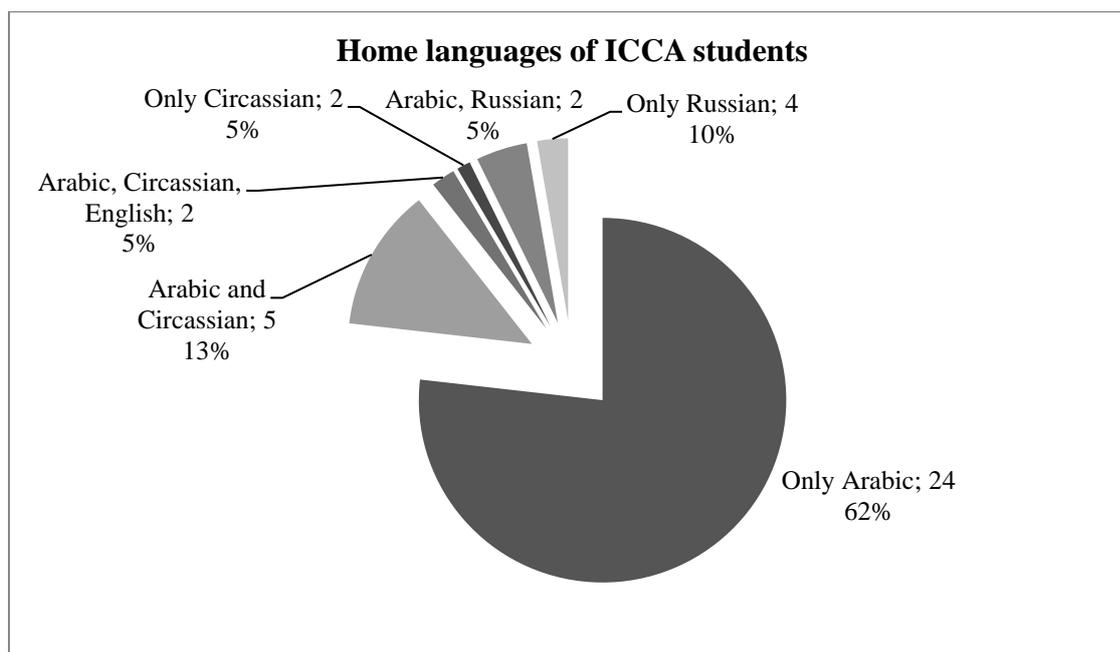


Figure 2. Self-reported linguistic affiliation of students at the ICCA



The survey results (Figure 2) and interviews conducted in 2011 confirmed that the Circassian language is seen as a key symbol of self-identification. Circassians say that one who does not have a language does not have a nation. This proverb was constantly repeated during the interviews. However, linguistic self-identification does not mean that people can actually speak these languages or use them in daily life. John Edwards (1996, 227) claims that among minority groups in which a language shift has occurred in the recent past, the symbolic value of language may be maintained in the absence of a communicative function. Language may be connected with group identity even if it is not used regularly or, indeed, known at all. The survey results (presented in Figure 2 and 3) demonstrate that the Circassian language is primarily a symbolic marker and that linguistic affiliation is based on self-identification rather than on actual language proficiency and use. 62% of students surveyed use Arabic exclusively when communicating at home, and the total proportion of Arabic speakers was 85%. Nine students (23%) use Circassian at home and only two of them use it as their sole language of communication (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Home languages of ICCA students



Language choices, intergenerational language transmission and linguistic assimilation factors

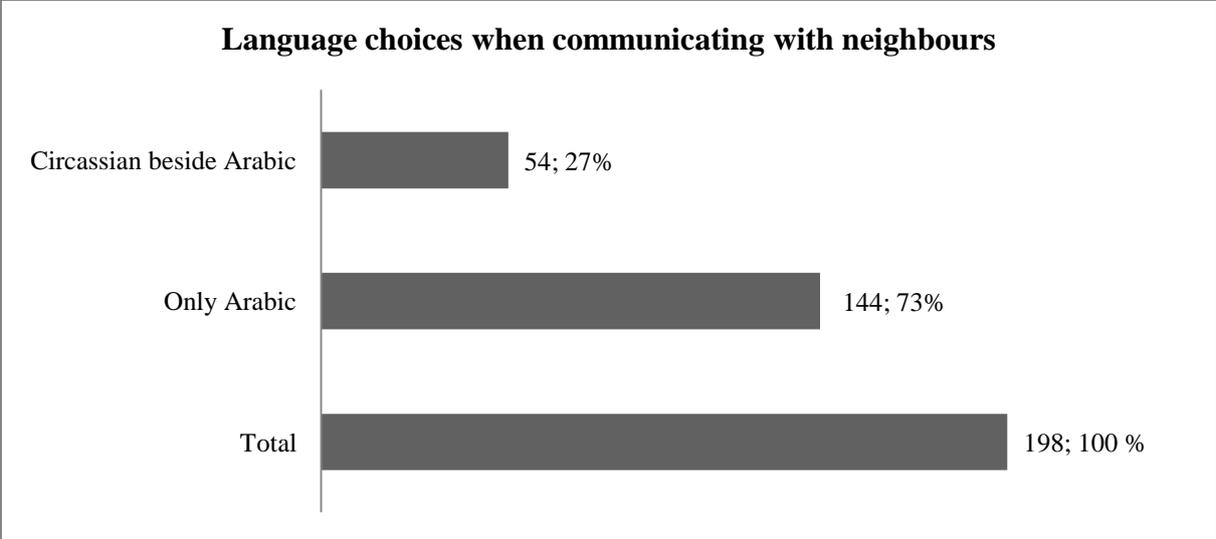
The most frequently cited causes for language shifts are migration, urbanisation (as opposed to living in separate villages) and language of instruction in schools (Hoffmann 1991; Rannut 2003, 2005).

The first Circassian settlements in Jordan were Wadi-Sseer, Jerash, Naur, Russaife, Sweileh and Amman (Shamy 1996, 307; Haghandoouqa 1985, 31). The first immigrants were of Shapsugh origin. They were followed by Kabardians who settled in Amman, Jerash, Sweileh and Russaife, and by Abzakh and Bzhedugh tribes who established settlements in Wadi-Sseer and Naur (Amjad Jaimoukha, personal interview in Amman, February 2007). At that time, Amman was a village and the Circassians were mainly farmers. Circassian was the principal language of communication in all of the Circassian villages (personal interviews with community members in Amman, in February 2007 and in March 2011). The arrival of the railway in Amman in the early 1900s constituted a crucial turning point, and elevated the

status of the settlement. The construction of the railway attracted immigrants from Syria and other countries. Amman became an urban centre and the Circassians were dispersed among the Arabic population (Shami 1996). Due to urbanisation and dispersion, the relative number of Circassians gradually declined and they became a minority in their original settlements (personal interviews with community members in Amman, March - April 2011). Urbanisation is always linked to transportation and immigration. Immigration leads to dispersion amongst and interaction with different social groups with high-prestige languages.

The survey results and interviews confirmed that Circassians are dispersed amongst the mainstream. The majority (73%) of respondents communicate with their neighbours only in Arabic, and of the total number of respondents (198), only 27% use Circassian, and most of them use it sporadically. Only one respondent claimed that she communicated with her neighbours only in Circassian (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Circassians’ language choices for communicating with neighbours



Omar Janbek, who is a member of the Circassian Charity Association, said (personal interview in Amman, March 2011) that in his childhood, Circassian was spoken in his family and in the village of Naur, where they lived. It was a purely Circassian village at that time.

"My native language was Bzhedugh, but I could speak Kabardian as well. I could not speak Arabic when I went to school, I just knew some words. I talked to my neighbours in Circassian as they were all Circassians. But now it is absolutely different," says Janbek. "Now the kids don't know the Circassian language. Some of them know Circassian, but the majority of them cannot speak it. As we are now a minority, we live in a flat in Amman and the majority of people around us are not Circassians."

This was confirmed by Dalal Kabarday, who also learned Circassian at home. She lived in Sweileh, which was then a Circassian village, and all her neighbours spoke Circassian (Adyghe or Kabardian). Both her parents used only Circassian when talking to each other and to their children. "When I went to school I did not know the Arabic language. In the first grade I almost failed all my subjects due to the language barrier," she says. "Then my father decided that we should speak more Arabic at home." That was the beginning of the loss of her language. After her marriage, she moved to Amman, where the main language of communication was Arabic. In the new environment, she spoke her former language only occasionally, when she visited with her mother. "I am not able to speak the language at the same level as before," says Dalal Kabarday. "I couldn't pass it on to my children, except for some phrases."

I have recorded similar stories of how the language of instruction in school and concern about their children's performance influenced German minority families' home language choices in Russia (Rannut 2003, 2005). Concern about their children's future is the main reason minorities switch to the majority language at home, and the supportive environment for language maintenance is lost.

The most common factor for evaluating the vitality of a language is whether or not it is being transmitted from one generation to the next (Fishman 1991; UNESCO - 2003). According to

Language Vitality Factor 1 (UNESCO 2003, 7-8), endangerment can be ranked on a continuum from stability to extinction. Safe (5) means that the language is spoken by all generations. A language is considered definitively endangered (3) when it is no longer used as the children’s mother tongue at home. A severely endangered (2) language is spoken only by grandparents and older generations; the younger generation typically does not speak it with their children.

A survey of 362 students from Emir Hamza School (a Circassian school) and the ICCA revealed that the vast majority (92%) of children use Arabic at home and 70% use it as the only means of communication within the family. Only 21% reported using Circassian at home and 6% use it as the sole language of communication. (Figure 5, table 1).

Figure 5 . Circassian students’ language use at home (Emir Hamza and ICCA students)

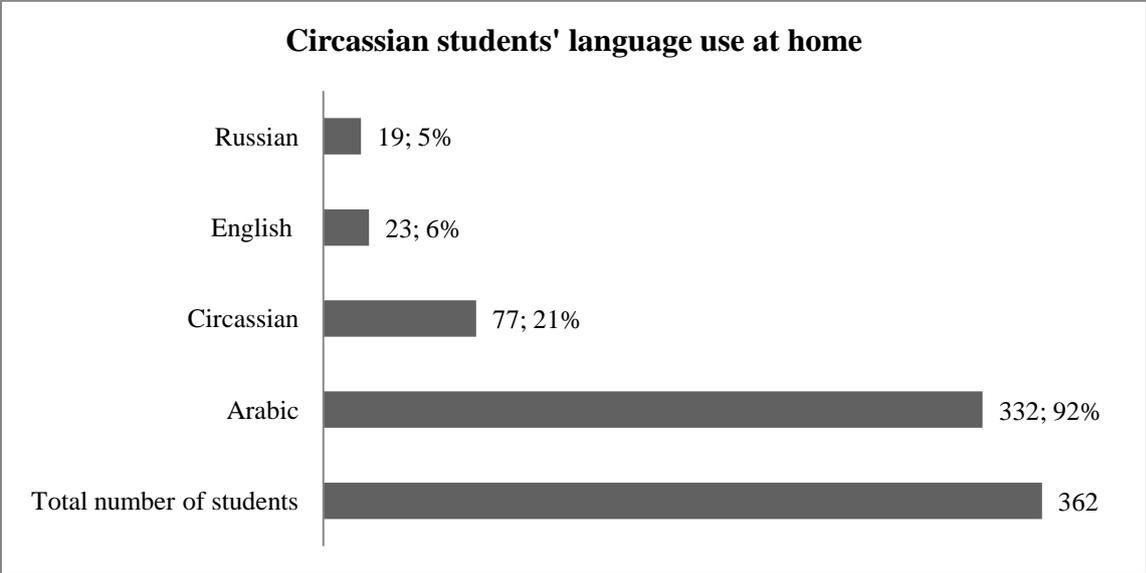


Table 1. Students’ language use at home

Language use at home	No of students	% of students
Arabic	255	70%

Arabic, Circassian	42	12%
Arabic, Circassian, English	7	2%
Arabic, Circassian, Russian	4	1%
Arabic, English	15	4%
Arabic, Russian	9	2%
Circassian	23	6%
Circassian, Russian	1	0%
English	1	0%
Russian	5	1%
Grand Total	362	100%

According to a 2007 survey of 323 students from Emir Hamza School, Circassian was mainly used when communicating with grandparents (Figure 6; Rannut 2009). 39% of the children used Circassian in addition to Arabic when speaking with their grandparents; however, 55% used only Arabic even in that situation. It became obvious from the interviews that the language shift had already occurred in the previous generation. A total of 60 students (22%) were recorded as speakers of Circassian as a first or second language; 6% of the children used it as the sole language when speaking with their fathers, and 7% when speaking with their mothers. Even when Circassian was spoken at home, Arabic was still the dominant language (Figure 6; Rannut 2009). A survey of 162 parents revealed that 80% used only or mainly Arabic when communicating at home, and a very small number of parents used only or mainly Circassian (10%, see Figure 7).

Figure 6. Children's language use when speaking with their parents, grandparents and siblings (323 students at Emir Hamza School)

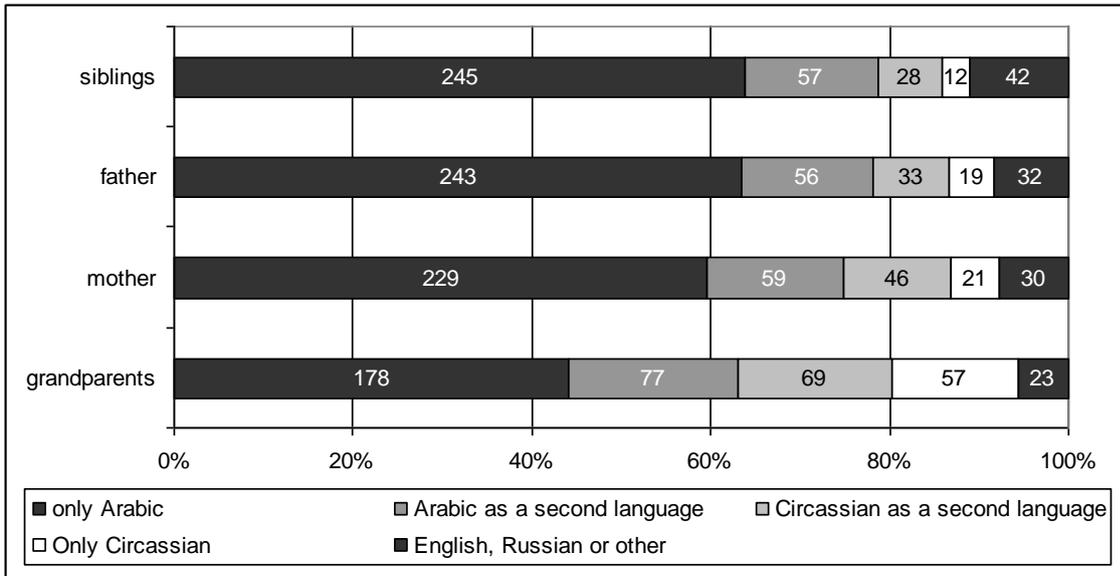
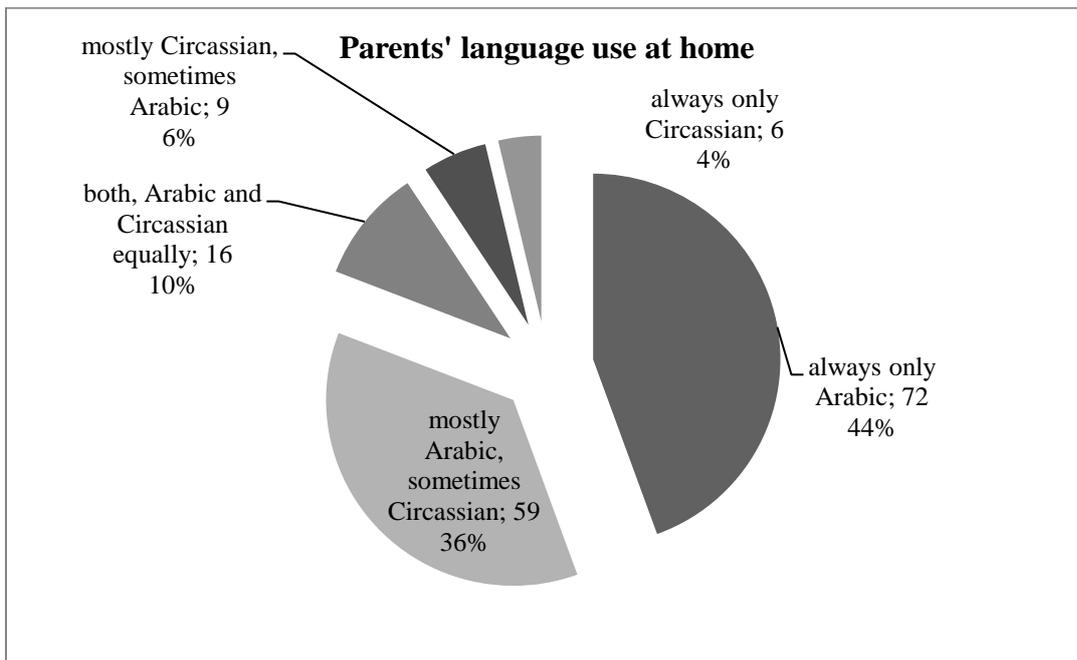


Figure 7. Parents' language use at home (162 parents whose children attended Emir Hamza School)



Mohammed Hameed Dohjoka, who is currently teaching Circassian on NART TV, said in his interview (in Amman, April 2011) that he uses Circassian only when communicating with his mother and elderly people who speak Circassian better than Arabic.

Even when the Circassian language is used at home, it does not necessarily mean that it is the dominant language. A 2007 survey of 162 parents whose children attended Emir Hamza School revealed that 72% of parents used only or mainly Arabic when communicating with their children at home. Intergenerational language loss was obvious among siblings, as 94% of children spoke to their sisters and brothers only or mainly in Arabic, and only 13% used Circassian in addition to Arabic (Rannut 2009).

Children's Circassian language use depends to a great extent on the willingness and motivation of their parents. In most interviews, people said that they do not speak Circassian at home even if they know the language, because the children constantly switch to Arabic (personal interviews with community members in Amman, March 2011). Mohydeen Quandour, who has managed to maintain the Circassian language in his family, said that they have a tradition of speaking only Circassian. "Even though we were living in the Arab community, at home we were not allowed to speak any language but Circassian. When I went to Kabardino-Balkaria, I became familiar with the Cyrillic alphabet and started learning to read. My six year-old son speaks fluent Circassian. His mother tongue is Circassian, and every other language he learns is a secondary language for him. This is not a tradition that persists today. I think the younger generation understands the language, but very few of them speak it. There is a lot of interest in reviving it now, and they are teaching it at the Circassian school (Emir Hamza School). But I learned it at home."

Interviews with community members confirmed that the elderly can speak more fluently and conduct longer conversations than young people; however, this is rare even among the older generation. Ghazi Bisheh (an elderly community member) said: "You still find people of my generation who speak the language beautifully, but among the younger generation there are

fewer and fewer people speaking the Circassian language. I was surprised when NART TV interviewed elderly people, older couples and former government officials, and they were able to carry on a conversation in Circassian. This is impressive, because I can't carry on a long conversation in Circassian. I understand it, but I don't speak the language very well. Sometimes I don't remember words in Circassian and have to borrow the corresponding words from Arabic."

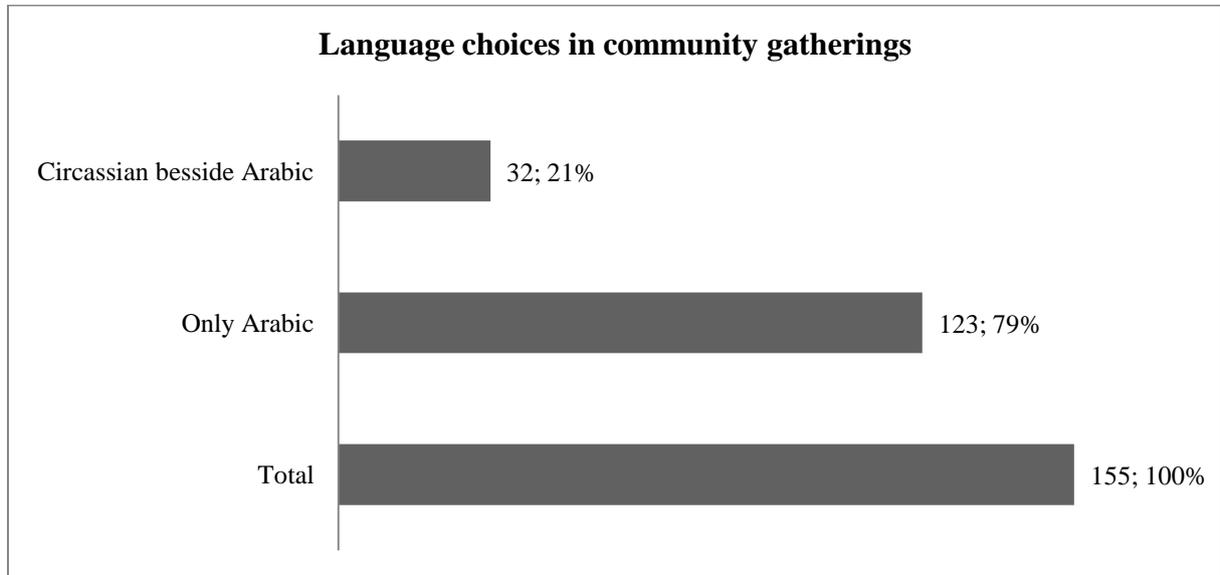
This was corroborated by other elderly community members, who said that they often have to switch to Arabic, as they can no longer remember the correct words in Circassian. Omar Janbek (personal interview in Amman, March 2011) said that when the Circassian Charity Association meets, they try to speak Circassian. But they sometimes have problems finding the words to express themselves in Circassian. According to his observations, the Charity Association language of communication is usually Arabic. During the celebration of Circassian Language and Literacy Day at the Al-Ahli club, many speakers, including the President of the Circassian Charity Association, emphasized the need to maintain the Circassian language. After the event, however, they did not use Circassian to communicate with each other. One of the community members commented, "We talk about maintaining the Circassian language, but then we speak with each other in Arabic instead."

A survey of 155 respondents also revealed that the main part of conversations is conducted in Arabic; 21% of Circassians used Circassian and Arabic in community gatherings, but only two of them said that they always use Circassian exclusively (Figure 8). Dalal Kabarday of the International Circassian Cultural Academy explained in his interview (Amman, March 2011) that "people communicate in Arabic in meetings, except when there is an elderly person present who persists in speaking Circassian."

Mohammeed Hameed Dohjoka, who currently teaches Circassian on NART TV, claims that even elderly people who know the Circassian language tend to speak Arabic among

themselves. He says that he speaks Arabic with his friends because "we can express ourselves better in Arabic" (personal interview in Amman, April 2011).

Figure 8. Circassians' language choices in community gatherings



Catherine Miller (2003) argues that minority languages in Arab States are best accepted in their folkloric forms, in songs and dances. Once a minority has been assimilated into the mainstream, only symbolic markers of ethnic backgrounds such as costumes, ornaments, dances, songs, etc. are maintained. John Edwards (1996: 228) states that their appearance is often limited to special festivals, and may be linked to commercial interests. Amjad Jaimoukha claimed in his interview (in Amman, February 2007) that dance is the only cultural aspect that remains. "Although, like any other culture or civilisation, we have our proverbs, sayings, history, customs and traditions, all of these have been sacrificed and dance is our sole cultural manifestation." According to Yanal Hatk, dance is a key symbol of Circassian cultural identity, and it occupies a special place in Circassian culture. "Dance is a component of all Circassian ceremonies; it is part of the Circassian character," says Hatk (personal interview in Amman, March 2011).

There are currently several folkloric dance groups comprising a few hundred members at the Al-Jeel Al-Jadeed Club in Jordan, and at the ICCA, which was established in October 2010. Both organizations were launched for the specific purpose of protecting the Circassian language and culture. No one in the Al-Jadeed club currently speaks or teaches Circassian. The ICCA was founded to preserve and promote all aspects of Circassian culture and heritage in Jordan, to conduct courses in the Circassian language, lectures on its history and traditions, as well as specialized courses in Circassian music and costume making (personal interviews with Laila Khwagh, President of the Academy, in Amman, March 2011). Tareq Yazaw, who joined the ICCA dance group, expressed the opinion in Jordan Times (Namrouqa) that "young people now believe that dance is not the only expression of Circassian culture. You can't call yourself Circassian unless you learn your language and history." Dalal Kabarday commented in a interview (in Amman, March 2011), "If you want to maintain your culture, you have to know the language. Circassians in Jordan feel that losing their language will lead to the loss of their identity. Most Circassians are totally aware that losing their language means losing the core of their identity. Although Circassians in Egypt identify themselves as Circassians, they have lost their traditions, music and culture because they do not practice their language."

According to the UNESCO Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger (Moseley 2010) Adyghe and Abkhaz are vulnerable languages in the Caucasus. The Circassian demand for an autonomous region in the Caucasus on June 7, 2010 heralds an increase in Causasian Circassians' ethnic awareness and may be an influential factor for language maintenance. Based on my own experience in Estonia, when the country regained its independence, the demand for sovereignty raised ethno-linguistic awareness and mobilized Estonians not only within the country but in the expatriate community as well. I therefore asked questions about the effects of the situation in the Caucasus on the ethno-linguistic awareness of Circassians in

Jordan. Most respondents had no idea of the events in the Caucasus and did not believe that they would influence young Circassians in Jordan. However, Circassian language teachers who originated from the Caucasus visit that region with their students every year, and were therefore aware of the effects on young people. Apaghich, a teacher, explained that there are people in the Caucasus who can no longer speak or write their ethnic language. When someone from Jordan travels there and sees that people can no longer speak Circassian in their ethnic homeland, he comes back and tells others that people there are not maintaining their ethnic language, so there is no reason to learn it. "It is a pity," says Apagich, "but I think that we should not take people who have lost their language as an example. Everyone should be responsible for himself. Our language must be maintained. Without its language, a nation will perish. If someone wants to be identified as an Adyghe, then he must try to maintain his language, at least to some extent.

"I would really emphasise that they should use the language at home by simply talking to each other," said Israeli Professor Emeritus Bernard Spolsky (in an interview in Jerusalem, January 2007) when asked about the conditions needed to maintain the Circassian language in Israel and Jordan. "Within the village it is all right, but once they leave the village, it is all gone. It is the main problem for all immigrant groups. Immigrant languages are essentially the languages you speak at home." This statement was corroborated by Circassian language teachers. Maya Apagich (personal interview in Amman, March 2011) said that Circassian language maintenance depends mainly on the family. "If the family is interested in maintaining the language and monitors the child's language development, then the child will know Circassian. However, I can't say that the majority of those sending their children to Emir Hamza School are interested in their children's language development. And I would say that the situation is getting worse, not better." "I do not see a promising future for the Circassian language in the current situation," agrees Dohjoka, "because the family is the place where children usually

acquire their native language, and there are no more families where young people can learn the Circassian language in Jordan. The old people who know the language speak Arabic when they meet." (personal interview in Amman, April 2011). My preliminary interviews in 2007 (Rannut 2007, 2009) showed that the Circassian language is mainly acquired at home and that the role of the school had diminished and was not valued in the language learning process. Professor Majdi Eddin Khamash said in a personal interview (February 2007), "They do not learn Circassian at school. They learn the language at home. At Emir Hamza School, they teach Kabardian, but it is very superficial. But if the students learn Adyghe, they learn it at home by listening to their parents, and by using it with their peers. At Emir Hamza School, they do not use Adyghe, they use Arabic." Even in Jaradat's survey (1997, 91), people did not perceive the value of language courses and schools in Circassian language maintenance, but rather emphasized the use of the language at home and in daily life. However, my later interviews as well as current research (Rannut 2009, 2011) demonstrated the contrary: that the contribution of the home to Circassian language maintenance is extremely modest, and that at the moment, instruction at school holds the only possibility of reviving and maintaining the language for the next generation.

2.2.Circassian language instruction, proficiency and motivation among the younger generation

The prestige of a majority language and the use of this language as a medium of instruction at school is another powerful factor in language shifts (Hoffmann 1991; Rannut 2005, 2009). As a result, minority children do not have the opportunity to learn to read and write the language of their ancestors. They have to adapt to the dominant mainstream language and culture, and their own language loses its attraction for them. Although an Armenian school had existed in Jordan since 1928, no Circassian schools were established (Derderian 2003; Mackey 1979),

and Circassian literacy was therefore not acquired. When Circassians wrote to each other, they used Arabic – not even Circassian using Arabic letters. According to Mackey (1979, 102), a few Circassian intellectuals embarked on an unsuccessful campaign to teach the written Circassian language using the Latin alphabet in the 1960s. Professor Majdi Eddin Khamash (personal interview at the University of Jordan, February 2007) commented, "The Adyghe language is spoken, but not written, in Jordan. Some Circassians know how to read and write, but most Circassians do not know how to write." This was confirmed by interviews with community members and a survey of 323 students at Emir Hamza School (Rannut 2009).

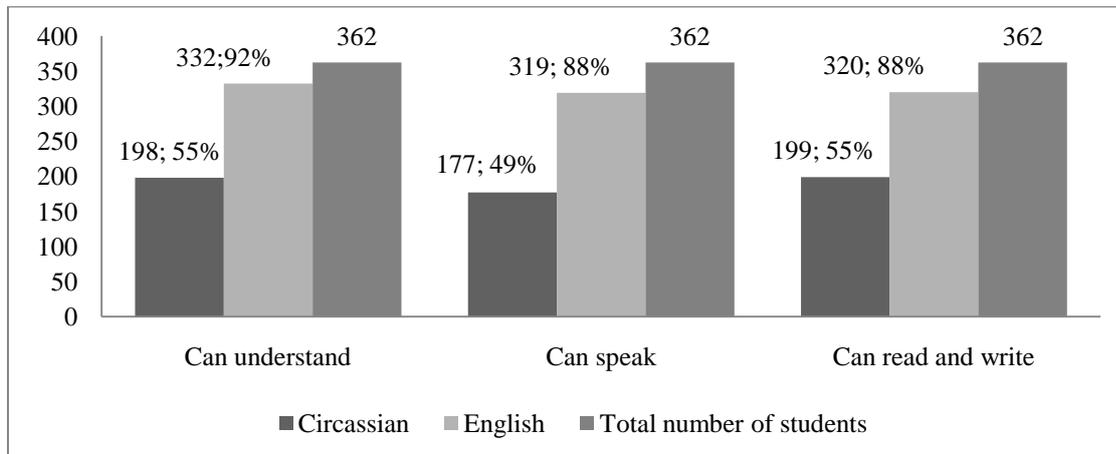
Quandour said in a personal interview (in Amman, February 2007) that he learned Kabardian at home and when he went to Kabardino-Balkaria, he became familiar with the Cyrillic alphabet and learned to read. When I asked Jaimoukha whether he can read and write Circassian, he said, "Yes, because I taught myself. There were no schools at which to learn in my time" (personal interview in Amman, February 2007). Dohjoka also said that he acquired the Circassian language at home. However, he learned the alphabet by himself because, like most Circassians living in Jordan, he did not know how to read and write (personal interview in Amman, April 2011).

There are now several possibilities for learning the language for those who do not speak it at home: there are two kindergartens and a private school, language courses are offered by Circassian NART TV and by the Circassian Charity Association, and a half hour weekly Circassian language lesson is provided for young dancers at the International Circassian Cultural Association. The main support for language maintenance is Emir Hamza School, where Circassian is taught for one hour a day from kindergarten to the fourth grade, and for four hours a week thereafter, diminishing until the lessons are stopped at the end of the tenth grade. The majority of the 700-800 students are Circassians; however, not all Circassian children attend the school.

Yanal Hatk, who is the Vice President of the Academy and the trainer and language teacher for the main dance group “Highlanders”, said that the majority of his students do not understand Circassian and that the number of Circassian language speakers is steadily decreasing; he estimates that it is currently about 20%.

In order to find out how well the younger generation understands, speaks, reads and writes Circassian, students at the ICCA and Emir Hamza School were asked to evaluate their language skills in Circassian and English. The results indicated that more than half (55%) of the children could understand, read and write Circassian. Considering the fact that only 21% of the students used Circassian at home, the actual language proficiency was surprisingly high, because of Circassian language instruction at school. Although almost half (45%) of the respondents could not understand, speak, read or write Circassian, the percentage of Circassian language proficiency was nevertheless remarkable. It demonstrates that language instruction at school is having a positive impact on language maintenance in Jordan. However, students evaluated their skill in English as much better than in Circassian, although the majority of these students attended Emir Hamza School and many of them had started learning Circassian in kindergarten (Figure 9). Speaking Circassian was the least developed skill (49%) because the majority of students did not use it as a language of communication, even at school (see Figure 9, Table 2). This was confirmed by Circassian language teachers. For example, Emma Hadagatel said that "reading and writing is not difficult, but the colloquial language poses problems." (personal interview in Amman, February 2007).

Figure 9. Children's language skills (362 students at the ICCA and Emir Hamza School)



Although students claim to understand or speak the language, this does not mean that they are able to do it well. There may actually be only a few phrases that they can say or understand. Therefore, the language proficiency of 39 ICCA students was evaluated more precisely. The results revealed that 46% of the students could understand, 44% could speak and 33% could read and write Circassian well or very well (Table 2). This was surprising, given that Yanal Hatk, their teacher, said in his interview that he cannot use Circassian during their dance lessons (not even numbers, the names of the parts of the body or basic movements) because the students do not understand Circassian. He was teaching Circassian using Arabic letters because he felt that students could not read and write Cyrillic (personal interview with Yanal Hatk in Amman, March 2011). However, students' self-evaluations indicated that more than one third could read and write well or very well using Cyrillic letters. Students nevertheless evaluated their proficiency in English as much higher than in Circassian. 100% of the students claimed that they understand English well or very well, but only 46% of the students understand Circassian at the same level. The same tendency held true for the other skills, especially reading and writing (Table 2).

Table 2. ICCA students' self-reported language proficiency

Can understand	very well	well	not very well	not at all	Total number of respondents	% of students who can do it well or very well
Circassian	6	12	5	16	39	46%
English	32	7	0	0	39	100%
Can speak				0		
Circassian	3	14	1	21	39	44%
English	28	9	0	2	39	95%
Can read and write				0		
Circassian	7	6	4	22	39	33%
English	30	5	1	3	39	90%

Some motivated young people learned the Circassian language even without attending Emir Hamza School. For example, one young actor introduced to us at the Day of the Circassian Language and Literacy celebrations told us that he took private lessons and had acquired Circassian in two years. He is now able to speak and read the language quite fluently.

Dalal Kabarday said that "after the performance, I went to talk to this young man and a lot of young people gathered around me to ask for and write down the name of his teacher. I understood that they were really eager to learn the language." She said that both of her children take private Circassian language lessons from an Emir Hamza School teacher. They know how to read and write but are weak in oral communication. "I remember how proud my son was when he showed me that he can write Circassian. I think that our youth are proud of being Circassian and that they are eager to learn the language," says Kabarday.

"There are opportunities to learn the language, if one is interested. I also think that it is possible for those who want to maintain their language to do so at school and elsewhere," says Apagich (personal interview in Amman, March 2011). However, Dohjoka commented that whereas young people are interested in learning the language, they do not devote enough time

or effort to it because, unlike Arabic or English, there is no urgent need. "I do not see a promising future for the Circassian language in the current situation," says Dohjoka, "because the family is the place where children usually acquire their native language, and there are no families left where young people can learn the Circassian language in Jordan. The old people who know the language speak Arabic instead" (personal interview in Amman, April 2011).

Conclusion

The results of the research revealed that assimilation in Jordan can be cultural and linguistic, but not ethnic, because of the firm boundaries between ethnic tribes. Tribal affiliation in Jordan is supported by unwritten tribal law. Circassians cannot claim to be Arabs, as no tribe would "adopt" them. A survey of 39 students at the International Circassian Cultural Academy revealed that ethnic Circassians in Jordan usually identify themselves as Circassians, but without distinguishing their ethnic affiliation (e.g., Kabardian, Adyghe, Bzhedugh, Shapsugh, etc.) According to the survey, they specified their linguistic affiliation much more precisely. Students who identified themselves as Circassian language speakers did so according to five language groups: Adyghe, Bzhedugh, Kabardian, Abzakh, and Abaza-Abkhaz. The results of the survey as well as interviews conducted in 2011 confirmed that the Circassian language is perceived as a key symbol of self-identification. Circassians say that "one who does not have a language does not have a nation."

However, linguistic self-identification does not mean that people can actually speak the language or use it in daily life. Interviews with several community members as well as the survey results show that the Circassian language is mainly a symbolic marker and that linguistic affiliation is based more on self-identification than on actual language proficiency and use. The symbolic value of language is maintained, but its communicative function is

diminishing. The language is linked to group identity, but it is no longer used at home. A survey of 362 students from Emir Hamza school and the ICCA revealed that the vast majority (92%) of children use Arabic at home and 70% of them use it as the only means of communication within the family. 21% of children reported that they use Circassian at home, but only 6% use it exclusively. The language is not being transmitted to the next generation, parents typically do not speak it to their children, and it is no longer the mother tongue used by children at home. We may therefore assert that, based on Language Vitality Factor 1 (UNESCO 2003, 7-8), intergenerational language loss is continuous and the Circassian language in Jordan is severely endangered. The research results revealed an obvious language shift even in community gatherings, at which 79% of Circassians always use Arabic when communicating with each other and even the elderly who know the Circassian language tend to speak Arabic among themselves.

Children's use of the Circassian language depends to a great extent on the willingness and motivation of their parents. The main support for language maintenance is currently Emir Hamza School, where Circassian is taught for one hour a day from kindergarten to the fourth grade, and for four hours a week thereafter, diminishing until the lessons conclude at the end of the tenth grade. The majority of its students are Circassian, but not all Circassian children attend the school. Considering the fact that only 21% of the students used Circassian at home, actual language proficiency (55%) was surprisingly high, because of Circassian language instruction at Emir Hamza School. Although almost half (45%) of the respondents could not understand, speak, read or write Circassian, this is still a remarkable increase in Circassian language proficiency. This confirms that language instruction at school has a positive impact on language maintenance in Jordan. Therefore, school instruction and language courses currently provide the sole opportunity for the next generation to revive and maintain the

Circassian language. According to interviews with Circassian language teachers, there are sufficient opportunities to learn the language, if one is interested. However, although young people express a desire to learn the language, they do not devote enough time and effort to it, because, unlike Arabic or English, there is no urgent need.

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3. The Main Challenges of Circassian Language Instruction in Jordan

Education in a minority language and minority language instruction both in and out of school are powerful factors that influence language shift or maintenance and are essential for language vitality (UNESCO Factors 4–6, 2003). My current research focuses on Circassians living in Jordan. Circassians came to Jordan starting in 1868 with immigration to Amman. The first immigrants were of Shapsugh origin, and they were followed by Kabardians and Bzhedughs (Haghandouqa 1985; Shamy 1996). There are four Circassian dialects currently spoken in Jordan: Kabardian, Bzhedugh, Shapsug and Abzakh. However, the Circassian language is now rarely spoken in the Jordanian Circassian community. As Circassian is not widely spoken at home, school instruction and language courses provide the only options for reviving and maintaining the language. However, there are many challenges associated with planning the acquisition of a minority language. My aim in this article is to analyze the challenges related to teaching the Circassian language in Jordan and to discuss the obstacles that have been standing in its way. The study is based on interviews with 22 community members and a survey of 323 Circassian students at Emir Hamza school, 39 students at ICCA and 162 parents in Jordan.

3.1. Circassian language learning opportunities in Jordan

Immigrant and minority languages are essentially languages spoken at home. Community members (personal interviews in Amman, January-February 2007, March-April 2011) emphasized that the Circassian language is and should mainly be acquired at home, and that the role of the school was not significant or valued in the language learning process. Professor

Majdi Eddin Khamash claimed (personal interview in Amman, February 2007) that children "do not learn Circassian in school. They learn the language at home by listening to their parents and by using it with their peers. They do teach Kabardian at Emir Hamza School, but it is very superficial." However, the results of my survey of 162 parents and 362 students (Rannut 2009, 2011) revealed that the role of the Circassian language at home is extremely minor: only 21% of students and 56% of parents claimed that they use Circassian at home, in addition to Arabic. School instruction and language courses currently provide the only possibilities for reviving and maintaining the Circassian language.

The Jordanian Ministry of Education does not have policies with respect to minorities or immigrants, so there is no government support for minority languages in public schools. However, there are also no restrictions on minority language instruction in private schools or other institutions. There have been no Circassian schools in Jordan until recently. However, the first Armenian school was established at Al Karak in 1928, which implies that there were no restrictions on such schools in Jordan (Derderian 2003). The lack of a school precluded literacy in Circassian. Amjad Jaimoukha, the former Vice President of the Royal Scientific Association, said that he can read and write Circassian because he taught himself. "There were no schools where I could learn Circassian in my time." (personal interview in Amman, February 2007) Mohammed Hameed Dohjoka, the Circassian teacher at NART TV, also said that he learned Circassian at home. However, he taught himself the alphabet because, like most Circassians living in Jordan, he did not know how to read and write the language (personal interview in Amman, April 2011).

Several opportunities to learn Circassian are currently available in Jordan. There is a private school and two kindergartens in Amman where Circassian is taught. Occasional language courses are organized by the Circassian Charity Association. Since 2007, when the Circassian

satellite television and radio station NART was established in Amman, Circassian language courses in Kabardian and Bzhedugh have been broadcast three times a day. In May 2010, the International Circassian Cultural Academy (ICCA) was launched under the auspices of the Ministry of Culture with the aim of preserving and promoting Circassian culture and heritage in Jordan.

Emir Hamza School

The Women's Auxiliary of the Circassian Charity Association established a private school more than thirty years ago to teach the Circassian language. Circassian language teaching has also been conducted at the kindergarten and primary levels for eleven years. There is a kindergarten at Emir Hamza School in Amman and the Emir Ali kindergarten in Wadi Sseer. Kabardian is taught in the Emir Hamza kindergarten, Bzhedugh and Abzakh in Wadi Sseer. The language of instruction at Emir Hamza School is Arabic, and Circassian (the Kabardian language) is a subject taught for one hour a day from kindergarten to the fourth grade, and for four hours a week thereafter, diminishing until the lessons conclude at the end of the tenth grade. Even at the sole Circassian school in Jordan, Circassian is not used as the language of instruction. According to the headmaster, Normi Batt (personal interview in Amman, February 2007), there are approximately eight hundred students at Emir Hamza School, ninety percent of whom are of Circassian origin. The Circassian language teacher, Emma Hadagatel, claims that three percent of the students are Arabic, but some students also come from Circassian families who do not know the language. The tuition is not expensive, which also allows children from lower-income families to attend.

Language courses offered by NART TV and the Circassian Charity Association

There are currently two language courses on NART TV – one in Kabardian and the other in Bzhedugh – which are broadcast three times a day. NART TV says that these courses are not very popular because they are continually repeated. Circassian language teachers, however, are pleased that language programs for beginners are available, and believe that they support Circassian language acquisition and maintenance. Mohammed Hameed Dohjoka, who is one of the Circassian language teachers at NART TV, began as a volunteer, since the channel did not initially have financial resources. He did not know how many people watched the program, but wherever he went, members of the Circassian community told him that they enjoyed it (personal interview in Amman, April 2011).

Language courses for adult learners are also provided by the Circassian Charity Association. Dr. Omar Janbek, a member of the Committee of the Circassian Charity Association says (personal interview in Amman, March 2011) that the general goal of the Association is to serve Circassians and the entire Jordanian community, but it specifically aims to maintain Circassian culture and language. Janbek says that they offer occasional language courses through their clubs and branches. However, he was not satisfied with the quality of the courses they provide. "We offer courses on demand for adults," he says, "but we do not have courses for different language levels that learners could attend after finishing the beginners course." According to Janbek, the reason is not just a lack of motivation on the part of learners, but also a dearth of professional teachers and resources.

The establishment of the ICCA

The International Circassian Cultural Academy (ICCA) was launched in May 2010 under the auspices of the Ministry of Culture, with the aim of preserving and promoting Circassian

culture and heritage in Jordan. Laila Khwaj, President of the Academy, said that the aim of the ICCA is to provide Circassian language courses, lectures on the history and traditions, and specialized courses in Circassian music and costume making. However, the main focus is currently on dance (personal interview in Amman, March 2007). Yanal Hatk, Vice President of the Academy as well as the trainer and language teacher of the main dance group the “Highlanders”, says that they have begun by focusing on the approximately one hundred dancers at the Academy (personal interview in Amman, March 2007). Although the ICCA was established in May 2010, the first Circassian lesson was not conducted until March 2011, the time of my arrival and visit to the Academy. The Circassian language was not used during the dance lessons because, according to Hatk, the children do not understand Circassian. A three-hour dance rehearsal was followed by a half-hour Circassian language lesson. Hatk explained that "since most of our students are not able to communicate in Circassian, our aim is to teach it as a second language. As they do not know how to read and write Circassian, we have to use familiar letters and sounds, which is why we use Arabic letters at the outset." (personal interview in Amman, March 2011) Although the use of Arabic letters for Circassian words and sounds is a novel and reasonable idea, he obviously was not aware that most of his students could understand, speak, read and write Circassian using the Cyrillic alphabet. According to the results of my survey of 39 ICCA students, 46% could understand Circassian well or very well, 46% could speak well or very well, and 33% could read and write well or very well (see Table 1). I am therefore led to believe that the ICCA is not overly motivated to teach Circassian.

Table 1. ICCA students’ self-reported language proficiency in Circassian

	very well	well	not very well	not at all	Total number of respondents	% of students who can do it well or very well
Can understand	6	12	5	16	39	46%
Can speak	3	14	1	21	39	44%
Can read and write	7	6	4	22	39	33%

Circassian university level language instruction and Caucasian scholarships

The main activity of the Circassian Charity Association, according to Omar Janbek (personal interview in Amman, March 2011), is to serve the members of the Circassian community. The Association sponsors Circassian social and cultural activities and supports young Circassians through various types of scholarships. There are about fifteen scholarships to Circassian universities and colleges in Kabardino-Balkaria and the Republic of Adygea in the Caucasus offered every year.

Amjad Jaimoukha said (personal interview in Amman, March 2011) that since the 1970s, Circassian universities and colleges in the Caucasus have been offering scholarships for expatriates; however, during the thirty or forty years that students have been graduating from Emir Hamza School, he could not recall a single incidence of a student studying the Circassian language, linguistics, literature or culture in the Caucasus, so that he or she could return and become a Circassian teacher or cultural worker at the institutional level. "These scholarships do not cost Circassians anything", said Jaimoukha. "We could send students to the Caucasus to study the Circassian language and culture, and after four years of university, we could guarantee them employment in the Circassian community." With regard to the scholarships, Janbek commented, "We have not yet had a candidate who wanted to study the Circassian language and literature in the Caucasus. They all want to study medicine or engineering, but not language or history, because they are looking to the future and questioning what they will do after they have graduated, and whether they would get a job in Jordan. If they graduate as Circassian language teachers, what would they do with this qualification in Jordan?" So they use volunteers as teachers and do not send students to the Caucasus because they do not want to have to pay Circassian language teachers.

Although there are many opportunities to learn and maintain the Circassian language, and some community members have proved that it is possible, it seems that there are always excuses for not teaching or learning Circassian. I have therefore devoted part of my research to studying the challenges and excuses that were advanced by Circassian language teachers and community members.

3.2. The main challenges of Circassian language instruction in Jordan

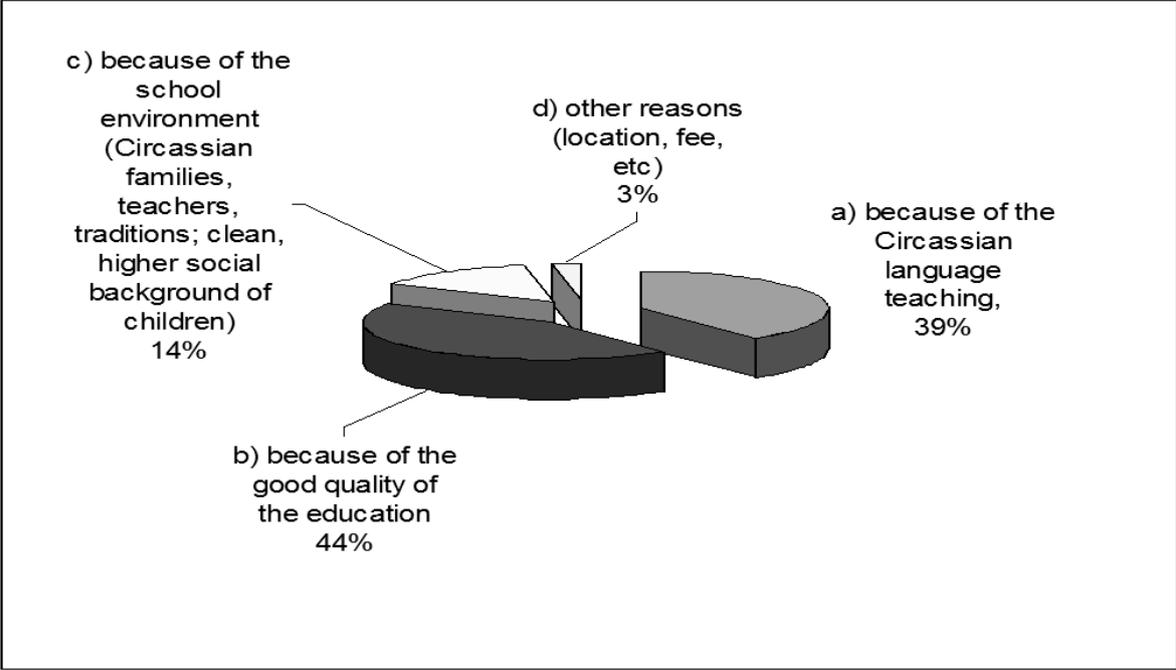
The main challenges associated with Circassian language instruction, according to Circassian language teachers and community members, are student motivation, the Cyrillic alphabet, different dialects, teachers' qualifications, the curriculum, language resources and the environment. In this chapter, I will analyze these challenges, based on interviews and surveys conducted in 2007 and 2011 (Rannut 2007, 2009, 2011), explore the reasons for and propose solutions to these challenges.

Parents' and children's motivation

Although it could be presumed that the main reason for choosing Emir Hamza School is Circassian language instruction, this is not the case. The majority (44%) of the 162 parents surveyed cited the high quality of education, 39% Circassian language instruction, and 14% the school environment, where Circassian customs and traditions are valued (Rannut 2009). The survey results revealed that only about a third of the parents were primarily interested in Circassian language instruction. Maya Apagich (personal interview in Amman, March 2011) said that maintaining the Circassian language depends mainly on the family. "If the family is interested in maintaining the language and monitors the child's language development, then the child knows Circassian. However, I can't say that the majority of parents who send their

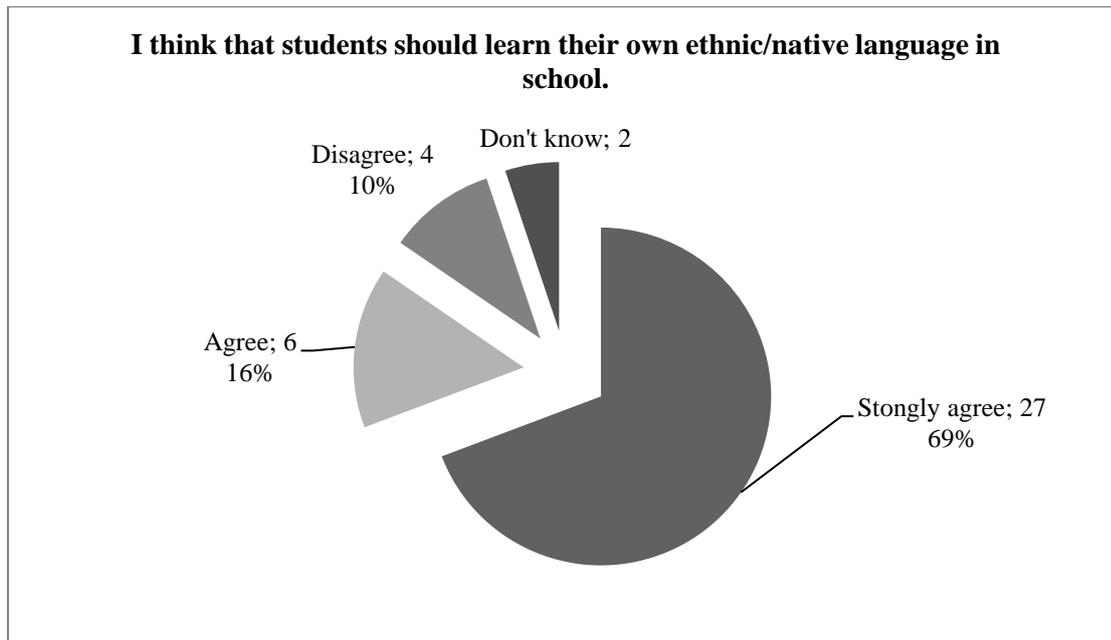
children to Emir Hamza School are interested in their children's language development. And I would say that the situation is getting worse, not better."

Figure 1. Parent’s motivation when choosing Emir Hamza school (162 parents whose children attended Emir Hamza school)



39 students from the ICCA were also asked whether they believed that students should learn their ethnic or native language in school (Figure 2). The vast majority (85%) of students agreed, and 69% strongly agreed. These responses indicate a high level of motivation and a positive attitude. The contradiction between words and actions is well described by Amjad Jaimoukha, who said, "We all emphasize the need to learn the Circassian language, but that is as far as we go." (personal interview in Amman, March 2011)

Figure 2. Students' attitudes toward the Circassian language instruction in school



Symbolic attitudes in favor of a general need for language maintenance are often confused with motivation, which requires action and commitment. ICCA students who were not learning Circassian appeared to be highly motivated, but in actual learning situations, the lack of motivation was obvious. This lack of motivation to learn Circassian is a definite problem at Emir Hamza School, confirmed by my personal observations and acknowledged by teachers and other community members. Jaimoukha, for example, claims (personal interview in Amman, March 2011) that even at Emir Hamza School, most of the students don't take the language seriously, because it is not part of the curriculum. They know that they will not be penalized for skipping that class. The Circassian class is not graded, nor is it included in the curriculum. A young community member commented, "Circassian language instruction at Emir Hamza School is ineffectual. It is an elective subject that is not included in the curriculum, graded or tested. It is not regarded as an important language, but merely as an option." (personal interview in Amman, February 2007)

Maya Apagich, who teaches Circassian at Emir Hamza School, said that as a rule, unmotivated students also perform poorly in other subjects; however, there are some students who achieve good results but do not attend Circassian lessons. Conversely, some students who are performing modestly in other subjects, but who are good at acquiring languages, would like to learn Circassian. "I think that it would be better if only those who are motivated attend," says Apagich. "We currently have too many unmotivated students attending compulsory lessons in Circassian." She says that advanced students, slower learners and beginners are all in the same class. Those who are motivated to learn cannot do so because those who are not interested distract them and the weaker students hinder them. I confirmed through video-recorded classroom observations this year and in 2007 that there were some students with an obvious lack of motivation who did not participate in the lesson at all and were distracting others, and there were also students who were enthusiastic about learning Circassian and acquiring new knowledge. The children's attitudes were mainly dependent on their age – younger students were more interested in learning the language. In recent years, trips and camps to the Caucasus were used as incentives, but this did not address the problem of children with different levels of motivation and proficiency being taught in the same class.

There are also people of all ages who do not attend Emir Hamza School, but would like to learn Circassian. For example, at the celebration of the Day of Circassian Language and Literacy, one young actor who was introduced to us said that he took private lessons and had acquired Circassian in two years, and that he is already able to speak and read it quite fluently. Dalal Kabarday commented, "After the performance, I talked to this young man, and a lot of young people gathered around me to find out and write down his teacher's name, and I saw that they were really eager to learn the language." Kabarday said that both of her children take private Circassian lessons from a teacher at Emir Hamza school. According to Dohjoka, "Young people like to learn the Circassian language, but they do not devote enough time or

effort to it, because, unlike Arabic or English, there is no urgent need. There are opportunities to learn the language if one is interested, but motivation is low.”

Teacher qualifications:

Community members cited teacher qualifications as one of the main challenges. According to Omar Janbek of the Circassian Charity Association, the problem is not just a lack of motivation on the part of students, but unqualified teachers as well: "People like Mohammed Hameed Dohjoka at NART TV try to provide language courses, and we are grateful for his efforts, but he is a volunteer, not a professional teacher." (personal interview in Amman, March 2011) The same is true of Yanal Hatk at the ICCA, who trains the main dance group, the “Highlanders” and also teaches the Circassian language to the young dancers. He learned Circassian traditional dances at Emir Hamza School when he was 8-10 years old, and he continued his studies with private teachers from Turkey and in the Caucasus. He became a teacher of dance at the Al-Jeel Al-Jadeed Club and now teaches at the ICCA as well. Hatk learned the Circassian language at home. "I am Shapsug by origin, but we spoke Bzhedugh at home. I learned Kabardian at Emir Hamza School." He has no qualifications as a language teacher.

There are currently four professional Circassian language teachers from the Caucasus working at Emir Hamza School, all of them native speakers. They graduated from the Kabardino-Balkarian State University at Nalchik. They came to Jordan after marrying Jordanians, took distance-learning courses from the University of Nalchik, and graduated as Circassian language teachers. Since the 1970s, Circassian universities in the Caucasus have offered scholarships for expatriates to study at Caucasian universities and colleges; however, in the intervening forty years, there has not been a single student except for these four Circassian language teachers who went to the Caucasus to study the Circassian language and literature,

in order to return to Jordan and become a Circassian language teacher. These scholarships do not cost the Circassian community anything, except to guarantee the graduates employment. However, neither the Circassian Charity Association nor the ICCA is willing to hire qualified teachers and pay them a salary. The problem is not a lack of financial resources, because the ICCA is able to pay 70,000 JOD for costumes for the "Highlanders" (interview with Laila Kwaj, President of the Academy, in Amman, March 2011). This was also confirmed by community members who claimed that while there are people who are willing to support linguistic and cultural activities, it is necessary to write a good proposal (personal interview with Ghazi Bisheh in Amman, March 2011). According to my interviews, cultural workers and language teachers have never asked for funding from international foundations such as the Endangered Language Fund. Because the community does not have professional educators who know how to teach Circassian as a second language and would be able to design a curriculum, they invent excuses why it is difficult, impossible, or undesirable to teach the language.

The alphabet and other corpus planning issues

Several issues related to corpus planning are regarded as major obstacles to teaching the Circassian language in Jordan. It was constantly emphasized that the language should not be taught before these complicated problems were solved.

The Cyrillic alphabet is considered to be the main challenge for expatriates and it was cited by many community members as the chief impediment to Circassian language acquisition. Like many other community members I interviewed, Mohydeen Quandour views the imposition of the Cyrillic alphabet as the way Russians discouraged young children from learning Circassian. The Cyrillic alphabet – established by “Moscow professors” – is being taught at Emir Hamza School (personal interview in Amman, January 2007). "When Russian

professors came from Moscow to establish the alphabet, they put four or five Cyrillic letters together to make one sound, and this made it very difficult for students and discouraged young children from wanting to learn Circassian," said Quandour (personal interview in Amman, January 2007).

The same problem was mentioned by Dohjoka, who is currently teaching Kabardian on NART TV. "The language has about 60 sounds," he says. "Some sounds are made by combining 2-3 letters. Many of the sounds are hard to pronounce and it is difficult to explain how to pronounce them. And the language uses the Cyrillic alphabet, which is unfamiliar to those who do not speak Russian and only know Arabic. Furthermore, the grammar is difficult." (personal interview in Amman, April 2011)

These issues, which reflect the ideologies and attitudes of the society, are related to language corpus planning. Corpus planning, a dimension of language policy, denotes active intervention in a language. It develops the resources of a language so that it can become an effective medium of communication, equipped with the terminology needed for education and other domains. Corpus planning is often related to the standardization of a language, and it can involve spelling reform, the introduction of a writing system, the development of a normative orthography, grammar, and the compilation of dictionaries and textbooks for language learners.

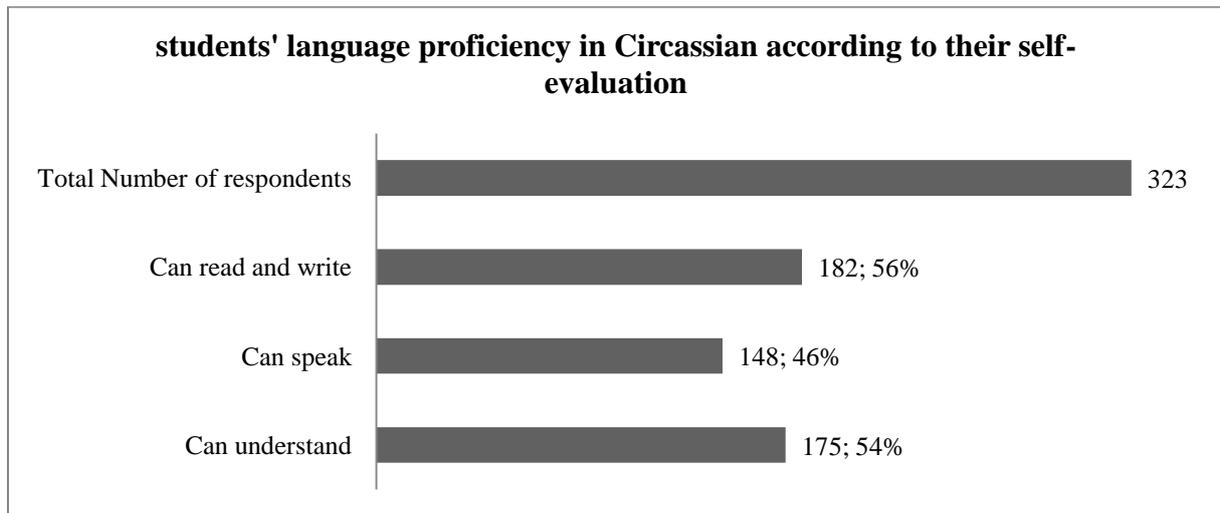
For example, the Kabardian language, which is taught at Emir Hamza School, was written in Arabic script until 1923, when a Latin script was adopted. Although a school textbook on the Circassian language and literature had been published in Arabic script in 1885 and the Kabardian language was written in that script until 1923, Circassians in Jordan did not use Arabic letters to write Circassian, but wrote to each other in Arabic instead (Mackey 1979, 102). In 1931-1932, most Circassian schools in the Caucasus had textbooks that used the new

version of the Latin alphabet. By the end of the 1930s, due to a policy of “Russification”, both Kabardian and Adighean had replaced the Latin with the Cyrillic alphabet (Jaimoukha 2001, 249). In the 1960s, a few Circassian intellectuals in Jordan, such as Csaban Kube, launched an unsuccessful campaign to teach written Circassian using the Latin alphabet (Jaimoukha 2001; Mackey 1979). According to Professor Majdi Eddin Khamash (personal interview in Amman, January 2007, University of Jordan), the Adyghe language is not written in Jordan to this date.

In the late 1970s, during Brezhnev’s term of office, a law was passed that made Russian the official language and sole language of instruction in Adygea. A dominant group typically attributes various inadequacies to a minority language which is trying to acquire official status or is being used as a language of instruction: an undeveloped grammar and vocabulary, a paucity of textbooks, the unsuitability of the language for use in technical domains, and its general inferiority to the majority or dominant language (Horowitz, 1996, 288). Therefore, the use of the Cyrillic alphabet and the lack of suitable textbooks could also be credible reasons for not learning Circassian in Jordan.

The qualified teachers at Emir Hamza School and other community members approached the issue differently. The teachers have been using a methodology that they had learned at Nalchik. Cyrillic letters were introduced at the kindergarten level by putting Circassian words on the walls. According to the teachers at Emir Hamza School, the alphabet is not a major problem for children. "Cyrillic is not difficult for them. They write well, although there are many letters, 60 in all. We use a special teaching method," said Hadagatel (personal interview in Amman, February 2007). This was confirmed by my observations as well as the results of a survey conducted at Emir Hamza School, which indicated that the Cyrillic alphabet did not pose problems. According to self-evaluations, more than half (56%) of the students said that they were able to read and write Circassian, although less than half (46%) reported that they are able to speak the language (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Emir Hamza School students' self-reported Circassian language proficiency



Quandour proposes simplifying the alphabet and postponing reading and writing instruction until the new alphabet is ready: "There is currently a movement to simplify the alphabet. We are trying to assemble experts for this task. It is not intended to depart from Cyrillic, because this would be difficult for Circassians in Russia, but rather to simplify it to make it easier to learn. It will take years, but it can be done. After it is finished, it must be approved by Kabardino Balkaria." While simplifying the alphabet is probably a good idea, if language instruction is curtailed, another generation will grow up without knowing how to read and write Circassian, which diminishes the possibility that the language will survive.

We may therefore conclude that qualified Circassian language teachers do not consider the Cyrillic alphabet to be a problem because they are equipped with appropriate teaching methods. Other teachers and community members regard it as a major problem and believe that Circassian is an extremely difficult language to learn. They underestimate their students and, although they are only trying to simplify it, they are hindering the acquisition of Circassian literacy.

Another problem concerns dialects. Dohjoka explained (personal interview in Amman, April 2011) that there are several Circassian dialects spoken in Jordan and that it is difficult to decide which dialect to learn or teach, since most of the families no longer speak the language at home (Figure 4). In the Caucasus, the term Circassian encompasses the literary languages Adyghe and Kabardian, and includes several Adyghe dialects spoken in Jordan (Shapsugh, Bzhedugh and Abzakh). According to Jaimoukha (personal interview in Amman, February 2007), there are four Circassian dialects spoken in Jordan. There are Kabardians and Shapsugs in Amman, Bzhedughs and Abzakhs in Wadi Sseer and Naur, Kabardians and a few Shapsugh families in Russaife, and Kabardians in Sweileh and Jerash. Hadagatel (personal interview in Amman, February 2007) says that the children at Emir Hamza School speak Bzhedugh, Shapsugh and Abzakh, but that these dialects are very similar. However, Kabardian, which is taught in school, differs from Shapsugh and Bzhedugh. "For small children who are accustomed to hearing a specific dialect at home, even a small deviation in pronunciation may seem like an entirely different word that they don't understand," said Hadagatel (personal interview in Amman, February 2007). This problem was also mentioned by Janbek of the Circassian Charity Association (personal interview in Amman, March 2011) who proposed developing a common blended language as a solution. However, because linguists would be required to do this, he proposes postponing teaching the language until experts can be found who could address the issue of standardization.

As a matter of fact, two standardized languages are already used in the Caucasus: Adyghe in the Republic of Adygea, and Kabardian in Kabardino Balkaria and Karachay Cherkessia. Bzhedugh, Shapsugh and Abzakh are very similar dialects of Adyghe, so there is no need for standardization, because a standardized version is already available. Therefore, the only question is whether it is more feasible to teach Kabardian or Adyghe. According to a survey of 162 parents whose children attended Emir Hamza School, 12% of them used Kabardian as

the main language at home, and 10% used Bzhedugh. However, Arabic was used predominantly in all of the other families: 80% used Arabic mainly or exclusively when communicating at home, and 91% of the families used Arabic as their only or secondary language of communication (Figure 4 and 5).

Figure 4. The use of Circassian dialects as a home language according to the parent’s questionnaire

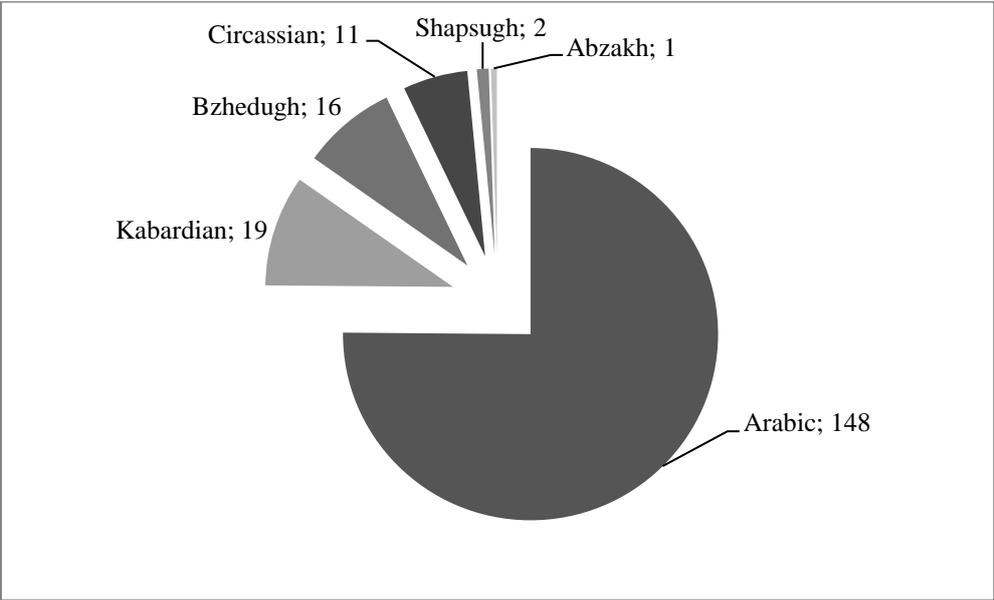
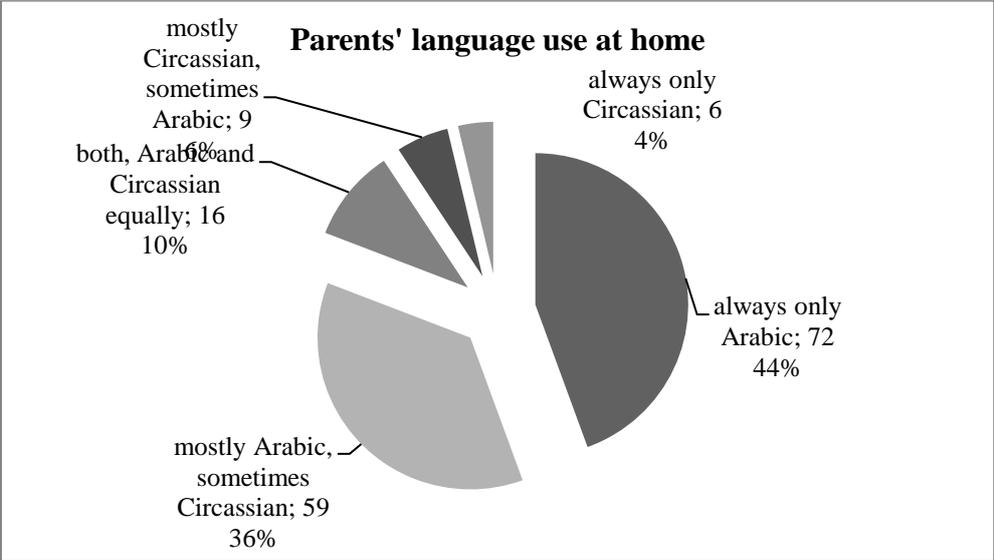


Figure 5. Parents’ language use at home



The decision to teach a minority language is usually based on three principles: possibility, feasibility, and suitability. It therefore depends on the number and proportion of language speakers in a certain area who are motivated to learn their language, and on whether appropriate resources are available for specific language programs. The decision to teach the Kabardian language instead of Shapsug or Bzhedgh at Emir Hamza School was made for practical reasons. According to Apagich (interview in Amman, February 2007), when Emir Hamza School was initially established and the first textbooks arrived, the Adyghe Republic did not yet exist, so they began with textbooks from Kabardino-Balkaria, which provided the first assistance. The first teachers also came from Nalchik in Kabardai-Balkaria, and spoke Kabardian. Of the four teachers at Emir Hamza School, three teach Kabardian and one teaches Adyghe. Two language courses are broadcast by NART TV: one in Kabardian and the other in Bzhedugh. The ICCA has not yet decided which language to teach, as they do not have a curriculum or information on the ethno-linguistic background of their students. Should they consider this option, I have included some data on the students' linguistic background: although 85% use Arabic and only 9 students use Circassian in addition to Arabic, their linguistic affiliation was reported as 31% Kabardian, 18% Adyghe, 10% Abzakh, 8% Chechen, 5% Bzhedugh, 5% Abkhaz-Abaza, 5% Russian and 18% Arabic. Therefore, the majority are Kabardian, and there are also students who are not Circassian by ethnic or linguistic affiliation (e.g., Abkhaz-Abazas and Chechens). Instead of trying to blend these languages and dialects, I would suggest choosing one of the standardized versions of the Circassian language (Kabardian or Adyghe) and make a choice based on practicality and feasibility.

Language environment, curriculum and teaching materials

One of the conditions for language learning and maintenance is a social environment in which children hear and are motivated to use the target language in different contexts. If a

supporting language environment does not exist at home, it should be provided by the school or through language courses in which learners are exposed to the language.

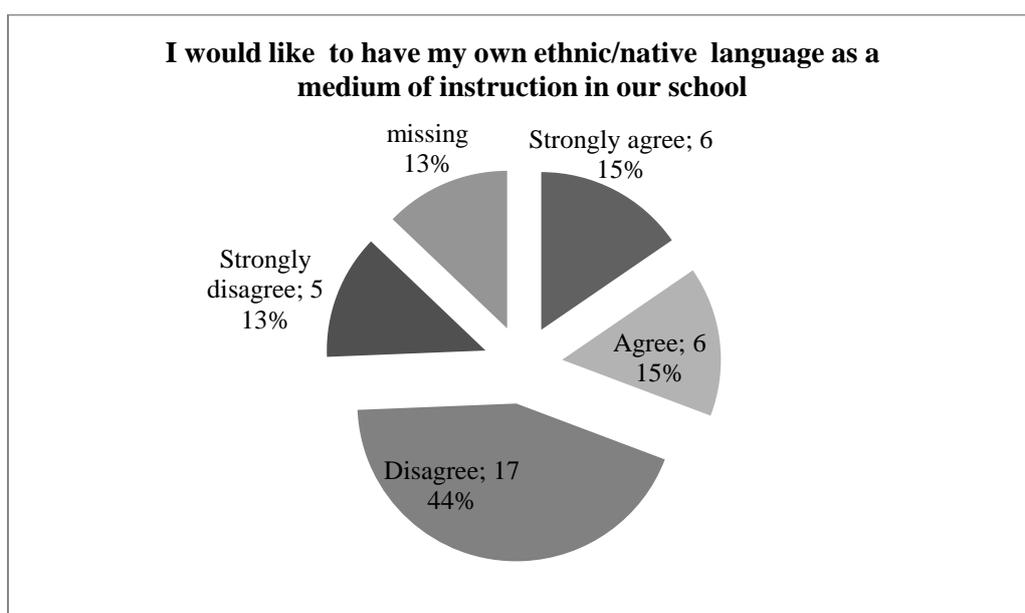
Minority language instruction is typically conducted in one of three ways: as the medium of instruction for all subjects in the curriculum, as a bilingual program where it is the medium of instruction for some of the subjects, or taught as a subject. The most common scholastic model for teaching minority children uses the locally or nationally dominant language as the media of instruction. Minority language education often consists solely of teaching the language as a subject. However, using a minority language as a medium of instruction supports minority language maintenance without detracting from majority language acquisition. Bilingual education is effective in promoting functional proficiency in second, and even third language at no cost to the participating students' native language development or academic achievement in a second language (Genesee 1987).

Proficiency and school performance in the majority language is a significant concern for many schools which offer minority language instruction. The minority language is often ousted from the home by the majority language for the same reason. Dalal Kabarday said that she lived in Sweileh when it was a Circassian village, and all her neighbours spoke Circassian (Adyghe or Kabardian). She did not know the Arabic language when she entered school. She nearly failed all her subjects in the first grade due to the language barrier, as the needs of Circassian language speakers were not considered in Arabic schools. Her father therefore decided that they should speak more Arabic at home, and that precipitated the loss of her native language. Circassians began to lose their mother tongue because they did not have their own schools, and the language of instruction at school was Arabic. Several European minority language school networks offer a curriculum in which the minority language is the main language of instruction and the majority language is taught as a subject (e.g., Slovene

language schools in Italy, Basque and Catalan schools in Spain, Russian schools in Estonia). Interviews with teachers at minority schools in Estonia, Kazakhstan, Italy and Spain (personal interviews, 2009-2010) support the claim that teaching the minority language as a subject is insufficient for minority language survival. The minority language could be offered as one of the subjects in the curriculum only when it is the prevailing language of the environment, spoken at home and supported by use in the community (e.g., schools in the Circassian villages of Kfar Kama and Reihania in Israel). Curriculum decisions seem to be based on attitudes that favor the majority language as the best path to opportunities for higher education, social advancement, and a brighter future in general. This was confirmed by interviews with Circassians in Jordan (personal interviews in Amman, March 2011).

A survey of 39 Circassian students revealed that more than half (58%) did not think that it would be a good idea to use Circassian as a language of instruction in school; however, one third (30%) agreed and 15% strongly agreed that their native language should be used as a medium of instruction, at least in some subjects.

Figure 6. Students' opinions concerning language of instruction in Emir Hamza school



The Emir Hamza School curriculum, which is currently the only curriculum designed for Circassian language instruction in Jordan, appears to be one of the main problems. It does not include Circassian language lessons, which are small in number and neither tested nor graded. Circassian language teachers explained that the reason for the limited number of lessons and lack of grading is that "marks received for the study of the Circassian language are not put on the diploma on purpose, due to a peculiarity of the national curriculum. Circassian is the third language taught at the school, after Arabic and English. In other schools, French is the third language, but at Emir Hamza School, it is Circassian. Exams are not conducted in the third language, proficiency is not tested, and the students' performance does not influence their overall standing. Physical education and art are also not graded. When students realize that performance in a subject does not influence their overall standing, they consider it unnecessary to apply themselves to that subject. Such subjects do not affect the standing of Jordanian students." (personal interview with Hagadel in Amman, March 2011)

Parents were asked if they were satisfied with Circassian language instruction at Emir Hamza School. The majority of parents were satisfied, but 38% of them (61 parents) were not, partly because of the curriculum. Deficiencies in the curriculum and teaching materials, as well as a perceived lack of interest in Circassian language instruction on the part of school administrators were cited (Rannut 2007, 2009):

- 1) Circassian is not a compulsory subject in the curriculum; students' performance is not graded or noted on the diploma;
- 2) Although the teachers are good, the number of Circassian lessons is not sufficient;
- 3) The curriculum does not meet the needs of Circassians in Jordan; the language instruction is not interesting or suited to the level of proficiency of the children;
- 4) More emphasis should be placed on resources, books and other teaching materials;

- 5) The school does not focus on teaching the Circassian language; consequently, the instruction is not effective.

Although this survey was conducted in 2007 and the results of the research were presented to the school administrators, the only change has been an increase in the number of English language lessons. We must therefore conclude that the curriculum is the main problem, even at Emir Hamza School, and that it has a significant influence on the students' motivation.

“Another problem related to the curriculum is that students at different levels of proficiency are in the same class,” said Apagich, who teaches Circassian at Emir Hamza School (personal interview in Amman, March 2011). Advanced students, slower learners and beginners are taught together. Those who are motivated to learn cannot, because they are distracted by those who are not interested and hindered by those who are weaker. Apagich said, "If Circassian lessons could be provided only to those who want to learn the language, the level of proficiency would be much higher and students could communicate more effectively in Circassian." She commented on the seventh grade Circassian lesson that I had just visited by saying that the materials and the questions they dealt with are at the second grade level. "Some students have joined the class later or are less motivated, and thus can't differentiate between questions such as ‘what is it?’ and ‘who is it?’, and I have to repeat the same things all over again. Some of them are not even capable of elementary writing."

The lack of teaching materials was definitely a problem. According to interviews with Circassian language teachers, the textbooks mainly come from Nalchik, but there are not enough of them. They have therefore made copies for the children or compiled textbooks themselves. Workbooks containing pictures of children in national costumes and descriptions of traditional customs and everyday life were designed as colouring books for children in the

first and second grades. Topics related to Circassian culture were integrated with subjects in the curriculum, such as math and science. When children start learning to read and write Circassian in the third grade, they use textbooks that are published in the Caucasus. When I visited Emir Hamza School in 2011, I saw attractive, colorful new textbooks which had been printed in Syria. "We only received 15 copies from the Circassian Charity Association, so we had to make additional copies for our students," explained Apagich (personal interview in Amman, March 2011). Hadagatel said, "These are the same textbooks that used to be published in Kabardino Balkaria, but they are now in colour and produced in Syria. We'll use them from grade three to grade six. They contain topics for reading, writing and conversation. There are also fairy tales, poems and proverbs." (personal interview in Amman, March 2011) Dohjoka and the Emir Hamza School Circassian language teachers had lots of plans for a curriculum and teaching materials. Dohjoka said that he has a small project in mind for overcoming the lack of suitable books and other teaching materials for different language levels (personal interview in Amman, April 2011).

Many interviewees, with the exception of the qualified language teachers, thought that language laboratories would be more effective than native language speakers for creating a language environment (personal interviews with Yanal Hatk and Dalala Kabarday at the ICCA in Amman, March 2011). However, I suspect that no one would ever get around to creating such a laboratory, and it seemed to be just another excuse to postpone teaching the language indefinitely. There are ways a language environment could be created in the school or community facilities at little or no cost, such as installing Circassian doorplates and labelling objects in Emir Hamza School and the kindergarten. This would help children learn the relevant Circassian words, become familiar with Cyrillic letters, and elevate the status of the language. Dance lessons and sewing clubs would provide good environments for teaching

the language as well, but Circassian should be used in these classes and integrated into those activities.

Conclusion

There are several ways to learn Circassian in Jordan. There is a private school and two kindergartens in Amman where Circassian is taught as a subject. The Circassian satellite television and radio station NART was established in 2007, and it broadcasts language courses in Kabardian and Bzhedugh three times a day. Occasional language courses are organized by the Circassian Charity Association. The International Circassian Cultural Academy was launched in May 2010, and will hopefully begin to support Circassian language maintenance as well.

About fifteen scholarships are offered every year to Circassian universities and colleges in Kabardino-Balkaria and the Republic of Adygea in the Caucasus. However, no student has yet gone to the Caucasus to study the Circassian language and literature, in order to return and become a Circassian teacher. The lack of qualified teachers was cited as a major obstacle to Circassian language teaching in Jordan. There are four qualified, salaried teachers at Emir Hamza School and kindergarten, but all of the other courses are taught by volunteers because qualified language teachers are not hired. A lack of money does not seem to be the problem because funding is available for some fairly expensive projects. Problems associated with the curriculum, methodology and teaching materials all stem from the lack of qualified teachers.

The other significant challenges are motivation on the part of parents and students, and the Circassian language curriculum at Emir Hamza School (the only language course that has a curriculum). Although the attitude toward the Circassian language seems to be very positive, motivation is low in actual language learning situations. Maintenance of the Circassian language depends mainly on the family. If the family is interested in maintaining the language and monitors the child's language development, the child will acquire Circassian. However,

teachers feel that the majority of parents who send their children to Emir Hamza School are not interested in their children's Circassian language development.

One reason for a lack of motivation is that students are not graded in Circassian, nor is it used as a language of instruction in any subject, including physical education and art, which are also not graded. Although the deficiencies of the curriculum were described in my 2007 report (Rannut 2007) and by Maya Apagich at the First International Circassian Language Conference in 2008, no changes have yet been implemented by the school board.

Because most of the decision makers are not conversant with the issues related to language teaching, many excuses are advanced for not teaching the Circassian language, such as the Cyrillic alphabet or the number of dialects or the lack of a language laboratory. The major problem is that volunteers are used to teach Circassian instead of hiring qualified language teachers. Dance lessons and sewing clubs would be good environments for language teaching, but Circassian is not used during these activities because this would require qualified teachers. One important reason for these problems seems to be that the ICCA is not actually serious about teaching Circassian. The contradiction between words and actions is well described by Amjad Jaimoukha, who said, "We all emphasize the need to learn the Circassian language, but that is as far as we go." (personal interview in Amman, March 2011).

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4. The Impact of NART TV on Circassian Language Maintenance in Jordan

The influence of the media on minority language maintenance has been noted by many researchers. Information is typically disseminated in the language of the majority, and minorities often have limited access to media in their mother tongue (Cormack, Hourigan 2007). Little research has been conducted concerning the impact of minority media on minority language maintenance, or the influence of minority language speakers on minority language broadcasting. This article focuses on the influence of the media on the maintenance of the Circassian language in Jordan, based on surveys and interviews conducted before and after the establishment of National Adiga Radio and Television (NART), the local Circassian television and radio channel. The goal of NART TV is to promote the Circassian language and culture and to help revive the Circassian cultural heritage in Jordan as well as in other expatriate communities. My aim in conducting this research is to show the impact of the media on minority language maintenance and cultural awareness, and also to determine how the attitudes of community members influence the language policy of the television channel.

4.1. The rationale for establishing NART TV in Jordan

It is commonly believed that the media has a crucial role in maintaining and developing minority languages. Professor Emeritus Bernard Spolsky stated, (personal interview in Israel, January 2007) "A common problem for immigrant minority languages is that once they turn on the radio or the television, it is all over." Some observers include globalization and new media technologies among the factors that contribute to minority language extinction. Others, however, view new media such as satellite television and the Internet as the salvation of

minority languages (Cormack et al 2007). Members of the Circassian expatriate community in Jordan attest that it is difficult to maintain their language in the absence of a supportive language environment. They consider satellite television to be a supportive environment that makes teaching the language easier for parents.

Article 15 of the Jordanian Constitution guarantees freedom of expression, for the press in particular. It stipulates that the state shall guarantee freedom of opinion. Jordanians are legally entitled to freely express their opinions in words, writing, pictures, or other means of expression. Article 15 does not explicitly protect freedom of expression on broadcast media such as television or radio; it is limited to written media – “press and publications”. Article 15 also specifies that freedom of the press is not absolute, but rather, that it must operate “within the law”. This was further clarified in the 1973 Press and Publications Act, which placed several restrictions on freedom of the press and on freedom of expression (Al-Qudah 1996, Rannut 2007, 2009). For example, Jordanian law prohibits privately-owned radio stations, but allows non-Jordanian stations to broadcast and produce programs in Jordan. According to Ayman Masanat, (1996, 240-241) there is a system of state oversight for radio and television by which the government makes decisions on the content of programs and purports to speak on behalf of viewers. The new government has not introduced major changes with regard to the media since parliamentary elections in November 2007, and self-censorship is still in effect (Farawati 2008). The government owns most of the shares in media enterprises according to the provisions of a press and publications law enacted in 2000 (Al-Qudah, 1996: 236). Although this legislation provides for the possibility of privately owned media, and a number of Jordanian entrepreneurs have submitted applications for satellite television broadcasting permits, only a few have obtained licenses, including NART.

When I was interviewing members of the Circassian community in connection with my initial research in Jordan in 2007, Amjad Jaimoukha, the former Vice President of the Royal

Scientific Society, voiced the opinion that community members were not aware of the importance of the media and did not value Circassian radio and television broadcasts as highly as publications (Rannut 2007, 2009). The results of a survey of 162 parents revealed that, in general, the Circassian media was not popular. 86% watched TV and listened to radio only in Arabic, and 94% read newspapers and magazines only in Arabic (see Table 1). This was understandable under the circumstances, because access to Circassian media was the exception rather than the rule (Rannut 2009).

Table 1. Circassians' media language choices

Parents' choice of language	When watching TV or listening to the radio	When reading newspapers and magazines
Always Arabic	136 (86 %)	152 (94%)
Mostly Arabic, occasionally Circassian	14	7
Arabic and Circassian equally	6	2
Mostly Circassian, occasionally Arabic	2	0
Always Circassian	1	0
Total responses	159	161

There were no Jordanian television or radio channels in Circassian at that time, so the only broadcasts were in Kabardian from Radio Liberty, sponsored by the United States. The daily transmission was fifteen minutes long, and it dealt mainly with the situation in the Caucasus and expatriation. Jaimoukha considered this channel very important, because its overview of the Circassian situation was not influenced by Russia. There were also broadcasts from Nalchik and Maikop, but these were not easily accessible. However, he emphasized in his interview how difficult it is to maintain a language without a supportive language

environment, such as that provided by television. "We don't have television channels in Circassian, we don't have books, we don't have cartoons." (personal interview with Amjad Jaimoukha in Amman, February 2007; Rannut 2009)

Jaimoukha believes that the media is crucial to the preservation of the Circassian language and culture. He expressed the hope that Circassians will eventually realize the power of the media, because it signifies to the younger generation that the language is important. "If you see it on TV and hear it on the radio, then you say to yourself that there is something in this language that is important, but if you only hear it from your father and mother, then you are more likely to think that this is not very useful to you, so why bother to learn it." (personal interview in Amman, March 2007; Rannut 2009)

Shortly after the interview, the first Circassian satellite television channel – NART – was launched in Amman. Farah Bazadough from NART TV explained that it is a privately owned television and radio station which was initiated by a group of young people who voluntarily decided to produce high quality programs for the benefit of all Circassians. The creation of NART TV was prompted by fears of the loss of the language among Circassians in Jordan, as well as in other expatriate communities, and even in the Caucasus. The goal of NART TV is to promote the Circassian language and culture and to help revive the Circassian cultural heritage within these communities. It is primarily financed by subscribers from within the community and the sale of advertizing. It is not financially supported by the Circassian Charity Association, although they occasionally advertize on the channel (personal interview at NART TV in Amman, March 2011).

Interviews used in promotional programs for NART TV indicate that many Circassians are in favor of Circassian television, because "As Circassians, we do not have anything especially for us, so it's a very good idea to have a channel that showcases our culture and traditions."

(NART TV promotional interviews, program 2, <http://www.narttv.com>) However, they emphasized the need to promote the Circassian language to young children via the channel.

Interviewee 6: "My only request of this channel is to show programs for children. Our main concern is that the children should learn our traditions, so it is of the utmost importance that we start by showing cartoons and entertainment programs so we can teach them the Circassian language."

Interviewee 4: "I'd like to see programs that teach people how to speak Circassian, and special Circassian programs designed for children that they can watch every day."

Interviews with community members (March 2011) revealed that NART TV airs programs about the state of the Circassian culture and language in Syria, Turkey and other expatriate communities, talk shows, language courses and programs for children. Ghazi Bisheh, an elderly member of the community, said (personal interview in Amman, March 2011) that NART TV mostly broadcasts interviews and programs about music and dancing. Cultural events are extensively reported as well.

Farah Bazadough says (personal interview in Amman, March 2011) that news from the Caucasus and local daily news are not currently reported by NART TV because of a shortage of staff and money. However, they always cover community news, such as Circassian Language and Literacy Day, which was celebrated March 14 at the Al-Ahli club.

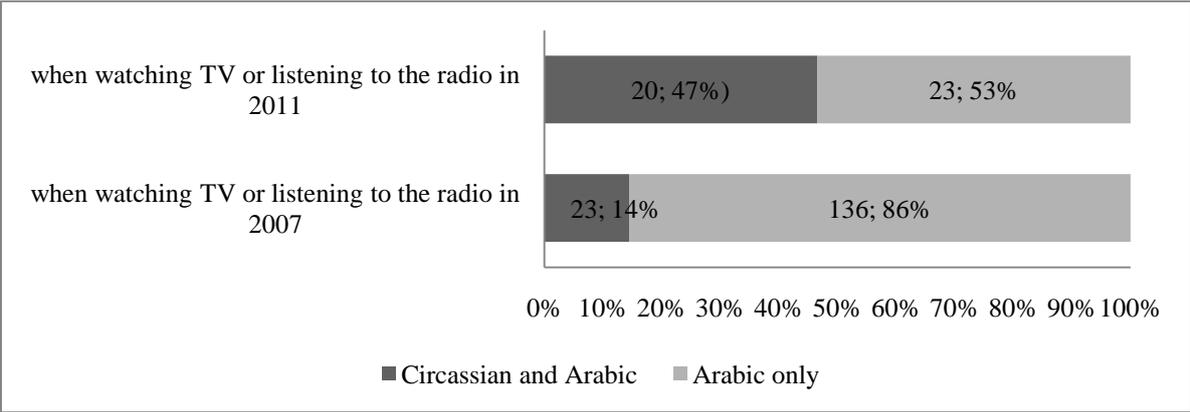
The community's expectations of the new TV channel were very high: they hoped that it would raise the status of the Circassian language among the younger generation and promote Circassian heritage globally.

4.2. The impact of NART TV on the status of the Circassian language in Jordan

According to interviews I recently conducted with community members, the establishment of NART TV regenerated their pride in being Circassian (personal interview with Amjad Jaimoukha in Amman, March 2011). Most of the interviewees watched the channel almost every day, and some of them watched it occasionally. Ghazi Bisheh, an elderly member of the community, told us (personal interview in Amman, March 2011) that he watches NART TV once in a while. He usually hears about NART TV programs from his relatives. "My relatives watch NART TV quite often. They seem to like it very much and are willing to support the station financially. The station has good programs and they are attracting more and more viewers."

The survey also revealed a significant increase in the number of people who watch Circassian TV programs. Almost half (47%) of the respondents watched NART TV in 2011 (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Comparison of Circassian language use when watching television or listening to the radio, 2007 and 2011



Circassian language teachers at Emir Hamza School confirmed that NART TV is popular among the younger generation. Emma Hadagatel, a Circassian language teacher, said (personal interview in Amman, March 2011) that children enjoy watching NART TV

programs and talk about films or programs that feature themselves or their acquaintances (e.g., a documentary which was made by the author in 2007).

Most of the regular Circassian language teaching programs are imported from the Caucasus, but some are produced locally as well. Farah Bazadough from NART TV said that the channel currently broadcasts two language courses three times a day: one in Kabardian and the other in Bzhedugh. However, she says that these courses are not very popular because they are continually repeated (personal interview in Amman, March 2011).

Mohammeed Hameed Dohjoka, who has developed local Circassian language courses, explained how these programs came to be aired: "When NART TV was established, the director of the channel at that time, an active young student coincidentally named Nart, asked me to provide televised lessons even though I had no experience in that regard. He had been a student in one of my language courses." Dohjoka accepted this request and began volunteering his services, since the channel did not have financial resources at that time. The program was filmed at his home because the station did not yet have its own studio. "We had to stop filming every time someone opened the door or the doorbell rang," Dohjoka recalls. He began with lessons in simple communication, and later developed a program to teach the Cyrillic alphabet, which is used by Circassians in the Caucasus. "I had to do everything myself," he said. Since the producers did not know Circassian, he even had to create the video montage. There are two lessons a week, and every lesson is repeated three times a day. He does not know how many people watch the program, but wherever he goes, members of the Circassian community tell him that they watch the program and enjoy it. Circassian teachers at Emir Hamza School are pleased that these kinds of language teaching programs for beginners are available, and find that they support language acquisition and maintenance (interviews in Amman, March 2011).

According to Bazadough, (personal interview at the NART TV station in Amman, March 2011) the most popular program on NART TV is currently a talk show on which Circassian celebrities and community members talk about their lives. However, these shows are usually in Arabic. Bazadough said that it is difficult to find people who are able to carry on a conversation in Circassian and are willing to do so on television. However, they do sometimes manage to find such people, and there are interviews with community members in Circassian as well. Bisheh, who is an elderly member of the community, said (personal interview in Amman, March 2011) that he was surprised that elderly people and former government officials interviewed on NART TV often used Circassian and that they could carry on a conversation in the language. To him, this was impressive because even elderly people who know Circassian tend to speak Arabic among themselves.

Jaimoukha said, "Every Circassian who appears on NART TV says that Circassians in Jordan should revive and maintain their language, but that is as far as it goes. Some of the younger people try to keep the language alive, but NART TV policy reflects the fact that the majority has already lost it and does not view it as essential to their ethnic identity. Instead of producing locally generated programs in Circassian with Arabic subtitles, they are aired exclusively in Arabic." (personal interview in Amman, March 2011) He argues that this policy is a result of pressure from people who don't understand the language – they want a Circassian channel, but in a language they understand. When I questioned Farah Bazadough about subtitles, she explained that they try to achieve a balance between Arabic and Circassian, and that they use subtitles for songs, but cannot currently subtitle programs because of a shortage of staff.

It was also obvious from other interviews that people did not view Circassian television as an opportunity to watch programs or listen to the news in Circassian, but rather as a means of showcasing Circassian culture and traditions. "As Circassians, we do not have anything specifically for us, so it's a good idea to have a channel for showing our culture and traditions to others." (NART TV promotional interviews, program 2, <http://www.narttv.com>). Circassians therefore seem to be more interested in introducing their culture and language to others than in learning and using it themselves.

According to language teachers, NART TV has a positive influence on the younger generation's ethnic pride and cultural awareness, but they could not say whether it increases acquisition of the language or the motivation to learn it (personal interviews in Emir Hamza school in Amman, March 2011). Jaimoukha believes that it has come to the point where the local situation is determining what happens on NART TV. Therefore, it is not NART TV that is influencing language maintenance in the community, but rather the community that is dictating language use and policy at NART TV.

Conclusion

We may conclude that the establishment of NART TV led to a significant increase in the number of people who avail themselves of Circassian media, as compared to the survey conducted in 2007. In 2011, almost half (47%) of the respondents claimed to watch programs on NART TV, whereas in 2007, only 14% of the respondents reported watching television or listening to the radio in Circassian. According to the interviews, most of the elderly watch NART TV quite often, like it very much, and are willing to support the station financially.

The members of the community had high expectations of NART TV as a means of promoting the Circassian language and culture, and helping to revive Circassian cultural heritage within

expatriate communities. Many Circassians thought that having the channel was a very good idea, because it enables them to showcase their culture and traditions. The need for the channel to promote the Circassian language to young children was also emphasized. The main focus is therefore on presenting Circassian culture, rather than on maintaining the Circassian language.

There are currently two language courses on NART TV – one in Kabardian and the other in Bzhedugh – which are broadcast three times a day. However, NART TV reports that these courses are not very popular because they are continually repeated. Circassian language teachers, however, are pleased that this kind of language teaching program for beginners is available, and find that it supports language acquisition and maintenance.

Talk shows are the most popular programs, but they are mainly in Arabic because it is difficult to find people who are able to carry on a conversation in Circassian. However, they sometimes manage to find elderly people or former government officials who can converse in Circassian. As most Circassians in Jordan no longer understand the language, local programs are usually produced in Arabic. Songs are subtitled, but not programs, due to a shortage of NART TV staff. Community members want to have a Circassian channel, but they want it to be in Arabic – a language they understand.

Teachers and other community members believe that NART TV has a positive influence on the younger generation's ethnic pride and cultural awareness, but they could not say whether it increases acquisition of the language or the motivation to learn it. Although the channel broadcasts language-teaching programs and Circassian is sometimes used on talk shows, which definitely supports maintenance of the language, Arabic is clearly dominant. Therefore, the local situation seems to be determining what happens on NART TV: it is not

NART TV that is influencing language maintenance in the community, but rather the community that is dictating the channel's language use and policy.

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5. Attitudes and Beliefs as Indicators of Circassian Language Maintenance in Jordan

According to UNESCO Language Vitality and Endangerment Factor 8, attitudes and beliefs are key factors in assessing ethno-linguistic identity and language maintenance. Social psychological research suggests that beliefs and attitudes are important precursors of language maintenance, learning and revitalization (Allard and Landry 1986). Attitudes are assumed to be relatively enduring, and once established, they are usually quite stable over time (Baron *et al.* 1991, 1996). Attitudes can change, but this does not happen at random: something causes the change. Attitudes may also be symbolic and thus, based not on specific information or experience, but rather on important ideological values. Symbolic attitudes reflect broad, heavily affect-laden moral judgments which are often inherited from parents or elder community members and are not based on personal belief (Kinder & Sears 1981; Baron *et al.* 1991). Therefore, people may vehemently express the need for language maintenance, but in reality, they may see it as a nuisance and actively avoid using it. Research reveals that although symbolic attitudes seem to reflect strong convictions, they usually do not influence behavior, which helps to explain why emotional statements about the importance of maintaining the language within minority communities do not lead to actual language maintenance practices.

The aim of this article is to analyze Circassian community members' attitudes and beliefs related to maintenance of the Circassian language in Jordan, and to explain the impact of symbolic attitudes, personal beliefs and official language policies on minority language practices. This topic is relevant because it helps to elucidate why Circassians in Jordan fail to

teach and maintain their language, although they repeatedly claim that it is their intention to do so. The research is based primarily on 21 video-recorded interviews; additional information was collected from personal conversations with 16 community members, observations, media (articles and NART TV programs), and surveys of 39 students and 162 parents. The survey questionnaire was based on the Beliefs on Ethnolinguistic Vitality Questionnaire (BEVQ) developed by Allard and Landry (1986) and Bourhis and Bédard (1988), and on Lickert's technique, which remains one of the most popular methods of attitude assessment (Baron *et al* 1991).

5.1. Attitudes toward the official and minority languages in Jordan

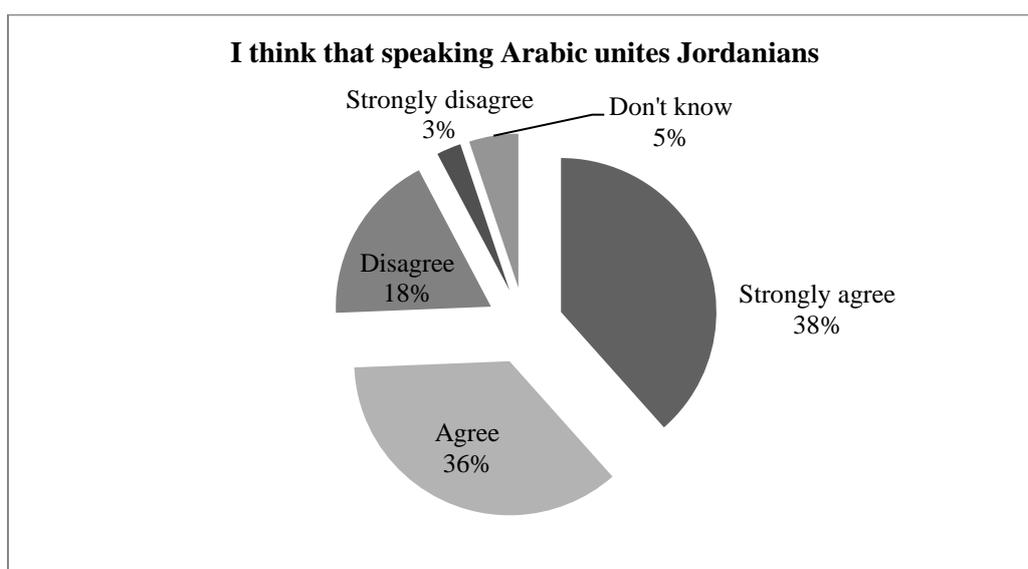
The beliefs of minorities are influenced by external circumstances and by the attitudes of the majority. Attitudes toward minority languages interact with government policies and societal pressures, which result in increased or decreased language use in different situations. UNESCO Language Vitality Factor 7 deals with attitudes and language policies on the part of governments and institutions, including the official status and use of languages (UNESCO, 2003). The Circassian language has been spoken in the area for more than 100 years, and was already widespread by the time the state of Jordan was founded. It qualifies as a minority language according to international criteria, and should therefore be recognized by the state.

The constitutions of modern Islamic Arab states typically proclaim Islam as the national religion and standard Arabic as the official language (Miller 2003, 6-7). The constitution of Jordan, adopted in 1952, follows this pattern and declares that "Arabic shall be the official language." There is no mention of other languages, or any guarantee of minority language rights. There is no legal document defining linguistic minorities in Jordan, and the topic of minority languages has been avoided. Majdi Eddin Khamash from the University of Jordan

says, "There is no such thing as a linguistic minority in Jordan. We don't say 'minority'. We consider all citizens as Jordanians: we have Jordanians of Palestinian origin, and Jordanians of Circassian origin." (personal interview in Amman, University of Jordan, January 2007) According to Seteney Shami, (1996, 321) the term "minority" has negative connotations in the Arab world. Shami says that Circassians have always rejected being labelled as a minority: "We have participated fully in building this *balad* (city/state), so we are not a minority." This sentiment was also confirmed in my interviews with community members, and shows how deeply the term is misunderstood in the Arab world and among expatriate Circassians. "I consider myself as Jordanian," says Omar Janbek in personal interview (in Amman, March 2011) when identifying himself.

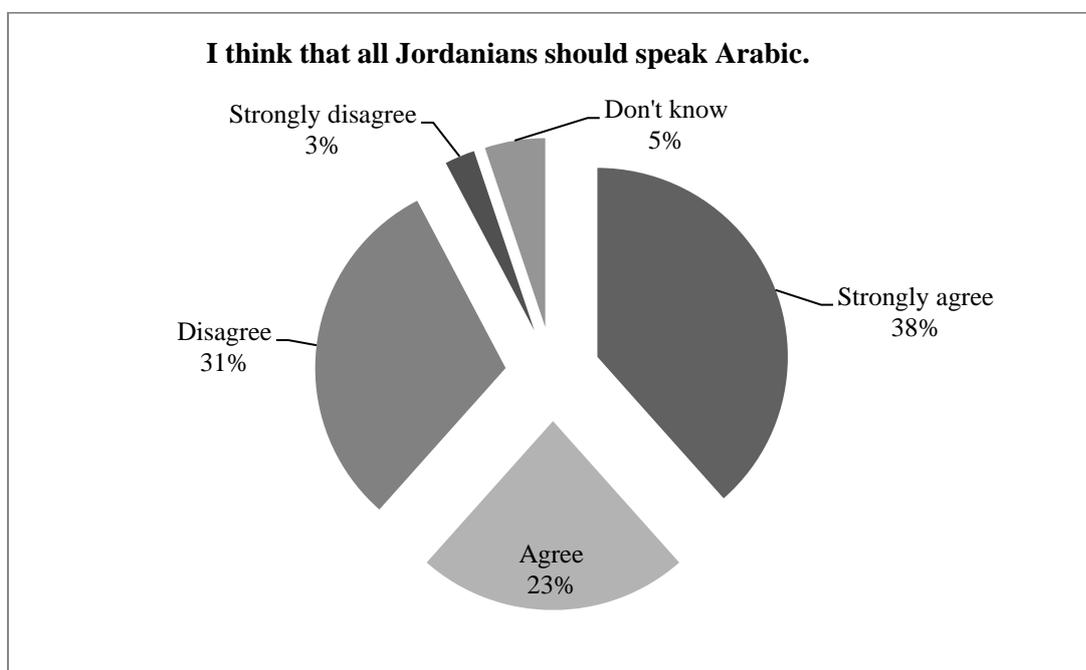
The Arabic language is also perceived by the Circassian community as a symbol of identity that unites people in Jordan: 72% of students agreed and 38% strongly agreed with this statement (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Students' attitudes toward Arabic: Do you agree that speaking Arabic unites Jordanians?



61% of respondents believe that everyone in Jordan should speak Arabic (Figure 2). Arabs in Jordan are not always aware that Circassians have a language that differs from Arabic. For example, when I told my Arabic language teacher that I am studying Circassian language maintenance in Jordan, she replied that she has Circassian friends, none of whom speaks any language but Arabic (personal conversation in Amman, February 2007).

Figure 2. Students' attitudes toward Arabic: Do you agree that all Jordanians should speak Arabic?



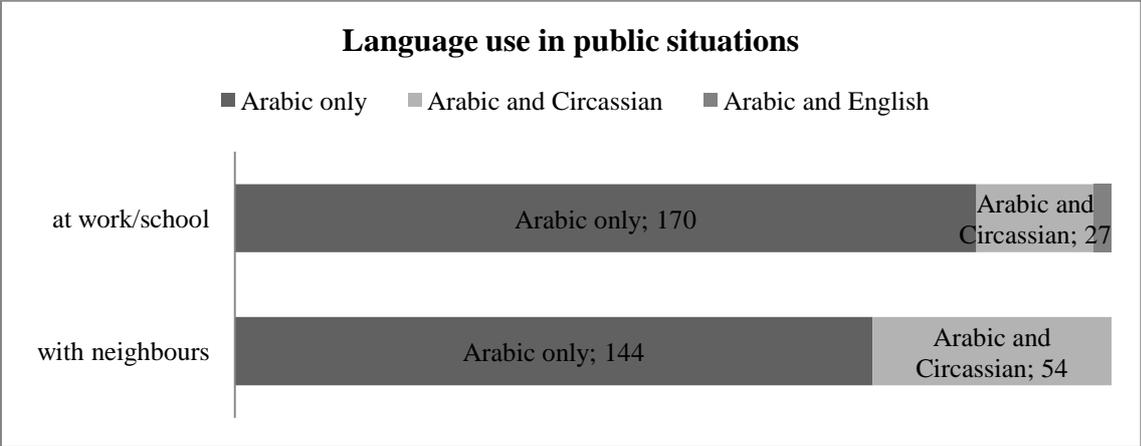
Dalal Kabarday said (personal interview in Amman, March 2011) that when she entered school, she did not know the Arabic language. "I almost failed all my first grade subjects because of the language barrier," she says. "My father then decided that we would speak more Arabic at home." That was the beginning of the loss of her language. After her marriage, she moved to Amman, where the main language of communication was Arabic. In the new environment, she no longer spoke Circassian, except during occasional visits with her mother. "I am not able to speak the language at the same level as before," says Kabarday. "I couldn't teach it to my children, except for a few phrases." Although there is now a Circassian private

school, the language is taught as a subject, but not used as a language of instruction. Circassian parents believed that if they began to speak Arabic instead of Circassian, their childrens’ performance at school would improve. Therefore, Circassian was seen as a disadvantage. All the members of the community emphasized that the knowledge of Arabic and English is essential to building a career in Jordan. This is the reason why the number of English, but not Circassian, language lessons has increased.

According to the nine UNESCO language vitality factors, Jordan’s language policy would be classified as active assimilation (2) because, by providing education only in the dominant language, the government encourages minority groups to abandon their own languages. Although there are no official restrictions on the use of minority languages, the implicit language policy favors Arabic, the dominant language.

A survey of 162 parents and 39 students was conducted to investigate the language preferences of Jordanian Circassians in public situations. The research results revealed that 73% of respondents used only Arabic in public and 27% used Circassian as well as Arabic (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Parents’ and students’ language choices for communicating in public situations



Interviews with community members did not reveal any signs of discrimination resulting from using Circassian in public – the language could be spoken in the street or other public situations. According to Mohammad al Arabi, (interviewed in Jan 2007) Circassian speakers do not feel discriminated against, because "we are proud to have all these minorities in Jordan." Not one respondent could recall an instance of negative attitude or behavior from Arab speakers toward the Circassian language. However, noting that there are no public signs in Circassian even in districts with higher concentrations of the population (e.g., Naur, Wadi Sseer), I asked why such signs are not used if there is no reason to be afraid of using them. Dina Bermament (personal interview in Amman, February 2007) replied that people are cautious and do not want to offend their neighbors. Amjad Jaimoukha said, "There is no threat. I don't think that this deep fear that we have about promoting our language and culture has anything to do with the attitudes of other Jordanians." (personal interview in Amman, March 2011) We may therefore conclude that the Circassians themselves are restricting the use of their language in the absence of any pressure from the Jordanian government.

Although there is no official regulation of language use on public signs in Jordan, the status of the languages is clearly reflected in the doorplates of Circassian cultural organizations. Public signs are usually in Arabic and English. Kabarday, from the International Circassian Cultural Academy, said that English instead of Circassian is used on the doorplate of the International Circassian Cultural Academy because "English is a universal language with which you can communicate internationally." (personal interview in Amman, March 2011). The same practice is followed in the other community facilities as well. The fact that Circassian is not used on doorplates reflects the prevailing attitude toward Circassian and signals that the language is not important. The only organization where the Circassian language is used on the doorplate is the Circassian Charity Association; the top language is Arabic, the middle one is English and the bottom one is Circassian – in very small print. The doorplate of Emir Hamza

School is only in Arabic; however, the Arabic doorplates inside the school have been replaced with Circassian ones in recent years, which elevates the status of the Circassian language and conveys the message that the language is important.

5.2.How symbolic attitudes are reflected in language practices

Social psychological research suggests that group identification and positive language attitudes are important precursors of language learning, maintenance and revitalization (e.g., Gardner, 1985; Giles & Coupland, 1991). According to UNESCO Language Vitality and Endangerment Factor 8, "Community members' attitudes toward their own language", members of a community may consider their language as essential to their community, identity with and promote it; they may use it without promoting it; they may be ashamed of it and, therefore, not promote it; or they may see it as a nuisance and actively avoid using it. When members' attitudes toward their language are very positive, the language may be viewed as a key symbol of group identity. However, according to Baron *et al.* (1991, 205) the value of objects is not always based on a rational analysis of their attributes, but rather on ideological grounds, which helps to explain why positive attitudes and emotional statements about the importance of maintaining the language within a minority community do not actually lead to language maintenance practices. To explain this phenomenon, symbolic attitudes must be differentiated from other types of negative and positive attitudes.

Symbolic attitudes are not based on explicit information or experience, but rather reflect heavily affect-laden moral judgments which are often inherited from parents or elder community members. For example, I often heard members of the Circassian community say, "One who does not have a language does not have a nation", or "Forgetting one's language means to forget one's traditions and mythology." (e.g., personal interview with Yanal Hatk in

Amman, March 2011; personal conversation with Bibert and Janet Koghadu in Amman, March 2011)

However, such ideological slogans do not necessarily influence behavior. I asked several community members whether Circassians are interested in maintaining their language. Amjad Jaimoukha replied, "The will is there! Every Circassian who appears on NART TV says that we have to reestablish and maintain and use our language, but that is as far as we go." This statement aptly describes the relationship between symbolic attitudes and actual practices. I would go even further and say that there is a lack of volition. Bruce Lipton (2008) states that just because we have a thought in our conscious mind, it doesn't necessarily change our subconscious beliefs or behavior. Although people express the need and desire to learn and maintain the language, they do not devote the time and effort to do it, because, unlike Arabic or English, there is no urgent need for Circassian.

My interviews and observations revealed that people, especially in public speeches, often stress the need to maintain their native language. For example, when Circassian Language and Literacy Day was celebrated at the Al-Ahli club, many speakers, including the President of the Circassian Charity Association, emphasized the need to maintain the Circassian language. After the event, however, they did not even use Circassian when communicating with each other. One of the community members commented, "We talk about maintaining the Circassian language, and then we talk to each other in Arabic instead."

During interviews shown on promotional programs for NART TV, many Circassians stressed the need to promote the Circassian language, especially to young children (NART TV promotional interviews, program 2, <http://www.narttv.com>).

Interviewee 6: "My only request of this channel is to broadcast programs for children. Our main concern is that the children should learn our traditions, so if we can begin by showing

cartoons and entertainment programs, we can teach them the Circassian language, which is of the utmost importance. "

Interviewee 4: "I'd like to see programs that teach people how to speak Circassian, and special Circassian programs designed for children that they can watch every day."

Despite the expressed need to promote the Circassian language, the majority of programs are broadcast in Arabic. Instead of producing locally generated programs in Circassian with Arabic subtitles, these programs are aired exclusively in Arabic. The language policy of NART TV is being determined by community members who no longer understand Circassian. They want a Circassian channel, but in a language they understand. Thus, the use of the minority language is being constrained by the community itself. Jaimoukha said, (personal interview in Amman, March 2011) "Every Circassian who appears on NART TV says that Circassians in Jordan should maintain and revive their language, but that is as far as it goes. Some of the younger generation try to keep the language alive, but the fact that the majority has already lost it and does not see it as essential to their ethnic identity is now reflected in the policies of NART TV."

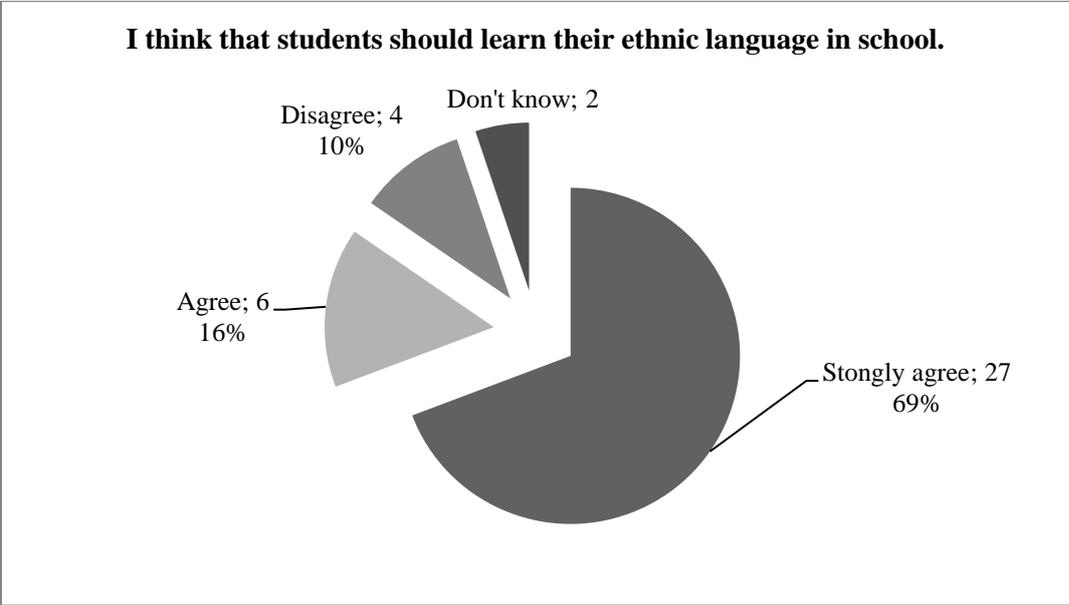
Community members do not view Circassian television as an opportunity to watch programs or listen to the news in Circassian, but rather, as "a channel for showcasing our culture and traditions ." They are more concerned about showing their culture and language to others than in learning and using it themselves. Catherine Miller (2003) wrote that minority languages in Arab States are most acceptable in their folkloric forms, in songs and dances. A minority that has been assimilated into the mainstream maintains only symbolic markers, such as its costumes, ornaments, dances and songs. John Edwards (1996, 228) observed that the appearance of such markers is often limited to special festivals, and may be linked to commercial interests.

Amjad Jaimoukha claims (interview in Amman, February 2007) that the only remaining Circassian cultural artifact is dance. "Although, like any other culture or civilization, we have our proverbs, sayings, history, customs and traditions, all of these have been sacrificed, and dance is the principal manifestation of our culture." Dance is a key symbol of Circassian identity and it definitely has a special place in Circassian culture. Yanal Hatk said, "Dance is part of all Circassian ceremonies, it is part of the Circassian character." (personal interview in Amman, March 2011) Several traditional Circassian dance groups, comprising a few hundred members, are currently active in Jordan at the Al-Jeel Al-Jadeed Club and the International Circassian Cultural Academy (ICCA), which was established in October 2010. Both organizations were launched with the express purpose of protecting the Circassian language and culture. However, no one at the Al-Jadeed club uses or teaches Circassian. Laila Khwaj, President of the ICCA, said in an interview with the *Jordan Times* (Namrouqa, 2010) and in a personal interview in Amman (March 2011) that the ICCA was established to preserve and promote all aspects of Circassian culture and heritage in Jordan, to provide courses in the Circassian language, lectures on the history and traditions, as well as specialized courses in Circassian music and costume making. Tareq Yazaw, who joined the ICCA dance group, voiced the opinion on Ammannews.net that "young people believe that dancing is not the only element of Circassian culture. You can't call yourself Circassian unless you learn your language and history." Kabarday commented, (personal interview in Amman, March 2011) "If you want to maintain your culture, you have to know the language. Circassians in Jordan feel that losing their language will lead to the loss of their identity." She believes that most Circassians are completely aware that losing their language means losing their core identity.

39 students were asked for their attitudes concerning Circassian language instruction at Emir Hamza School. 85% of students agreed and 69% strongly agreed that students should learn

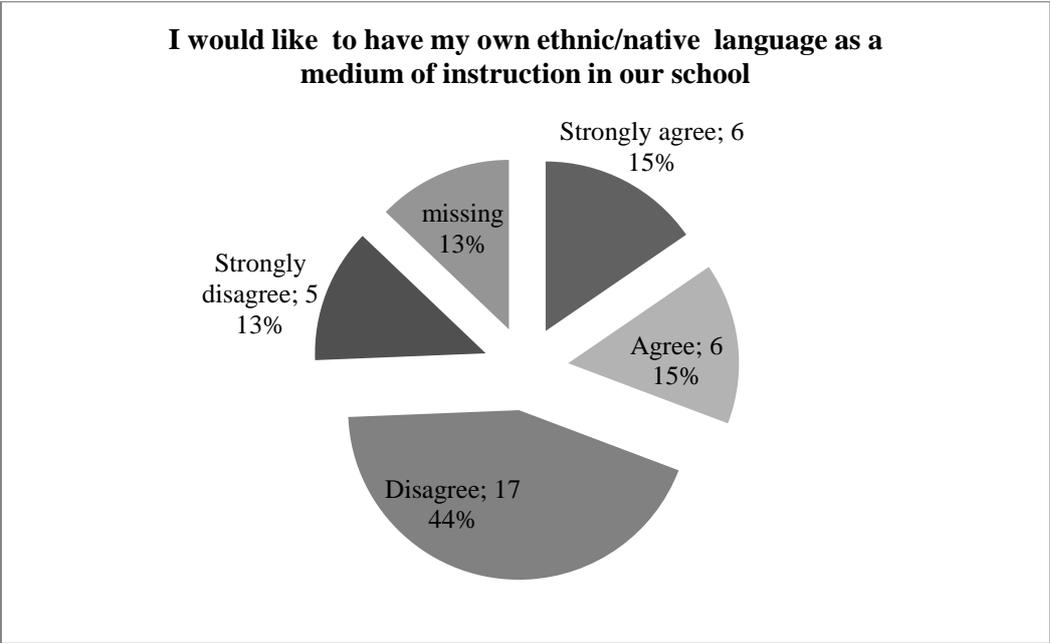
their ethnic language in school (Figure 4). This indicates that the students have a positive attitude toward Circassian language instruction.

Figure 4. Students' attitudes toward Circassian language instruction in school



Replacing Arabic with Circassian as a language of instruction in school, at least in some subjects, was less favorably viewed: 57% of students disagreed and 44% strongly disagreed.

Figure 5. Students' attitudes toward the language of instruction in school

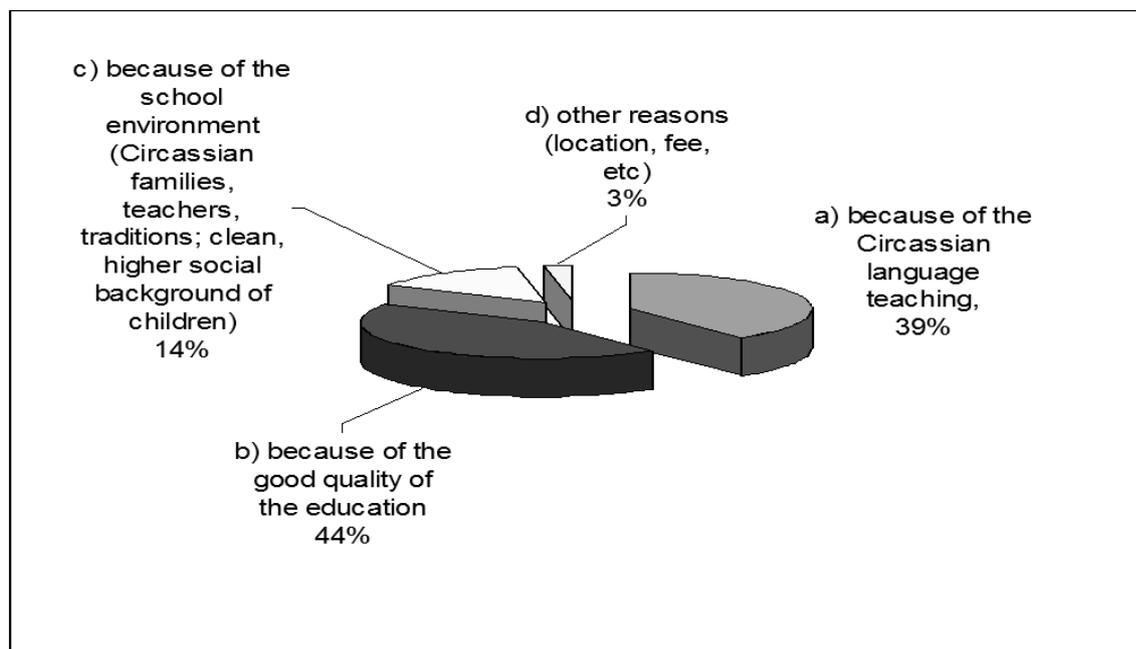


This indicates that Arabic is seen as an extremely important language. Students have apparently acquired the belief from their parents and the community that Arabic is more important than Circassian. However, 30% of students did agree that Circassian should be used as a language of instruction at Emir Hamza School (Figure 5).

The Emir Hamza School curriculum, which is currently the only curriculum designed for Circassian language instruction in Jordan, appears to be one of the main problems. It does not include Circassian language lessons, which are small in number and neither tested nor graded. Circassian language teachers explained that the reason for the limited number of lessons and lack of grading is that "marks received for the study of the Circassian language are not put on the diploma on purpose, due to a peculiarity of the national curriculum. Circassian is the third language taught at the school, after Arabic and English. In other schools, French is the third language, but at Emir Hamza School, it is Circassian. Exams are not conducted in the third language, proficiency is not tested, and the students' performance does not influence their overall standing. Physical education and art are also not graded. When students realize that performance in a subject does not influence their overall standing, they consider it unnecessary to apply themselves to that subject. Such subjects do not affect the standing of Jordanian students." (personal interview with Hagadel in Amman, March 2011)

The survey results revealed that only about a third of the parents whose children attended Emir Hamza school were primarily interested in Circassian language instruction (Figure 6; Rannut 2009).

Figure 6. Parent's motivation for choosing Emir Hamza School



Maya Apagich (personal interview in Amman, March 2011) said that maintaining the Circassian language depends mainly on the family. "If the family is interested in maintaining the language and monitors the child's language development, then the child knows Circassian. However, I can't say that the majority of parents who send their children to Emir Hamza School are interested in their children's language development. And I would say that the situation is getting worse, not better."

Although symbolic attitudes are very powerful and affect-laden, they have no impact on community members' behavior or minority language maintenance. John Edwards (1996: 227) claimed that among minority groups in which a language shift has occurred in the recent past, the symbolic value of a language may be maintained in the absence of its communicative function, which applies to Circassian in Jordan. A language may be emotionally associated with a group's identity even if it is not used regularly or known at all.

5.3. Community members' beliefs and concerns with regard to Circassian language maintenance

The concept of belief is related to symbolic attitudes. Beliefs are personal estimates of probability that objects have certain attributes. According to Fishbein and Ajzen, (1975) beliefs can determine attitudes and behavior. The theory of reasoned action holds that attitudes toward objects, issues or persons can be predicted by calculating the sum of salient beliefs about the entity, weighting them by the strength of the belief, and evaluating the attributes of each belief. Therefore, community members' attitudes toward minority languages are positive when positive beliefs outweigh the negative. Allard and Landry (1986) proposed that the "predictive power of 'subjective' vitality would be greatly increased were it considered a belief system that reflects individual predispositions and orientations about vitality." Our beliefs ultimately determine our future. According to personal interviews with community members, (in Amman, 2007, 2011) most people's beliefs concerning Circassian language maintenance were quite pessimistic, and the negative statements, which were often based on conjecture and devoid of scientific proof, outnumbered the positive (February 2007, March-April 2011).

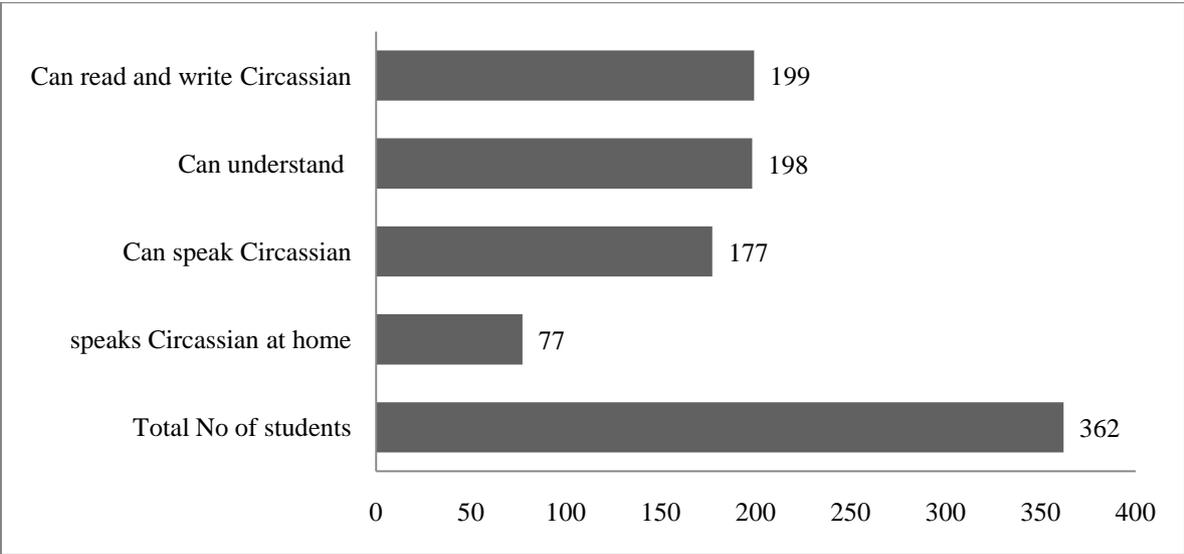
- M.Q.: I think the younger generation understands the language, but very few of them are using it.
- Y.H.: The number of Circassian language speakers is decreasing all the time. According to my current estimates, it is probably about 20%.
- G. B.: You still find people of my generation who speak the language beautifully, but among the younger generation, there are fewer and fewer who speak Circassian.
- A.J.: (2011) It has become clear that we have reached the point of no return with regard to the Circassian language in Jordan. We will eventually lose the language completely. The majority of Circassian speakers are elderly. Some of the younger

generation try to keep the language alive, but most of them have already lost it. We don't have the capacity to regenerate the language.

- A.J.: (2007) I think that most Circassians have already been linguistically assimilated. I would say that 60 or 70% are not able to speak their mother language, and that only the elderly tend to use it. The language question is somewhat delicate in Jordan. I think that within fifty years, we may lose the language.
- D.K.: Circassians in Jordan are afraid of losing their language, and that this will lead to the loss of their identity.
- M.H.D.: There is no urgent need to learn the language. I can live without it.
- O.J.: The majority of kids today cannot speak the Circassian language. Some of them do, but the majority of them cannot speak it.
- A.J.: We are frustrated, and we don't have the leadership to take us to the next level.
- M.A.: I can't say that the majority of parents who send their children to Emir Hamza School are interested in their children's language development, and I would say that the situation is getting worse, not better.

The pessimism of these expectations is obvious. Most people believe that the number of Circassian language speakers is decreasing because only some of the elderly and a few members of the younger generation are able to speak the language. However, the results of a survey of 362 students (Figure 7) revealed that due to Circassian language instruction at Emir Hamza School, the number of young people who are able to understand, speak, read and write Circassian well or very well is increasing and is more than twice the number of those who speak the language at home. (55%) compared to those who actually use the language at home (21%).

Figure 7. Emir Hamza and ICCA students’ self-reported Circassian language proficiency and language use at home



Our impressions and experience affect our beliefs, which over time will have a significant impact on our behavior, and, in this case, maintenance of the minority language. Our beliefs form our reality – what we personally know to be true. If minorities believe that their native language is going to be lost within a generation, despite contradictory findings of scientific surveys and any measures that are currently being taken, they will consciously or subconsciously sabotage every effort to maintain the language.

Conclusion

The situation in Jordan is interesting: all of the members of the Circassian community value their language and express the desire to promote it, but most of the parents and students are not actively motivated to maintain it, and they prefer to use the dominant language. Although the majority of the students and one third of the parents expressed support for teaching and maintaining the language, this sentiment is not widely reflected in their motivation to learn it.

The status of the dominant language, Arabic, which has been the exclusive language of instruction in public and private schools for many generations, is reflected in students' attitudes and language choices. Arabic is a symbol of identity which unites the people of Jordan. Only a small number of students prefer their ethnic language as a language of instruction in school. Because their grandparents switched to Arabic long ago due to concern for their children's progress in school, they have acquired the attitude that Arabic is the most important language in Jordan and have accepted it as an essential aspect of their identity. Although the general attitude toward Circassian language maintenance is positive, Circassians are more interested in promoting their language and culture internationally in English than in learning it themselves. The status of languages in Jordan is clearly reflected in the doorplates of Circassian cultural organizations. Public signs are typically in Arabic and English. Community members said that this is because "English is a universal language with which you can communicate internationally."

Although community members constantly cite slogans such as "One who does not have a language does not have a nation" or "Forgetting one's language means to forget one's traditions and mythology," these are symbolic attitudes that reflect heavily affect-laden moral judgments inherited from parents or elder members of the community, but do not have any impact on behavior and maintenance of their language. Among minority groups in which a language shift has occurred in the recent past, the symbolic value of a language may be retained in the absence of its communicative function. This applies to Circassian in Jordan. Language may be emotionally linked to group identity whether or not it is used regularly or at all. Every Circassian who appears on NART TV says that the language must be reestablished and made usable, but that is as far as they go. There are ideological statements, but a lack of volition. Thoughts that enter the conscious mind do not necessarily change subconscious beliefs and behavior. Although Circassians express the need and desire to learn and maintain

their language, they do not devote enough time and effort to it, because, unlike Arabic or English, there is no obvious benefit for doing so to do so. The research revealed that Circassians' beliefs concerning the maintenance of their language are quite pessimistic, and that most of the negative statements were based on conjecture rather than any scientific proof. Most believe that the number of language users is decreasing because only some of the elderly and a few young people can speak Circassian. However, a survey of 362 students revealed that as a result of Circassian language instruction at Emir Hamza School, the number of young people who are able to understand, speak, read and write Circassian well or very well has increased, and is more than twice (55%) the number who use the language at home (21%). The thoughts that we hold in our minds have an impact on our beliefs, and over time, form our reality. If minorities believe that their native language will be lost within a generation, despite findings of scientific surveys to the contrary and ongoing efforts to revive the language, they will consciously or subconsciously sabotage every attempt to maintain the language.

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