

**The Language Situation among the Assyrians of  
Jordan: A Sociolinguistic Study**

الوضع اللغوي لدى السريان الأردنيين:

دراسة لغوية اجتماعية

Prepared by

**Tareq Jamal Al-Refa'i**

Supervised by

**Professor Bader S. Dweik**

**A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Master of Arts Degree in English  
Language**

**Department of English Language and Literature**

**Faculty of Arts and Sciences**

**Middle East University**

**June, 2013**

## **Authorization**

I, **Tareq Al-Refa'i**, authorize **Middle East University** to provide libraries, organizations and even individuals with copies of my thesis upon request.

- **Name:** Tareq Jamal Al-Refa'i

- **Signature:** *Tareq Jamal Al-Refa'i*

- **Date:** 10/ 6/ 2013

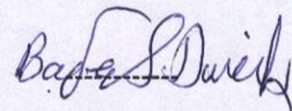
# *Thesis Committee Decision*

This thesis " The Language Situation among the Assyrians of Jordan: A Sociolinguistic Study" was discussed and certified on June, 10<sup>th</sup>, 2013.

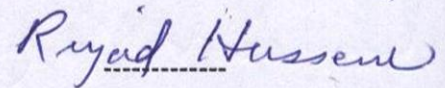
## **Thesis Committee**

## **Signature**

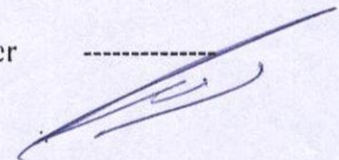
Prof. Bader Saed Dweik: Supervisor and Chairman



Prof. Riyad Fayeze Hussein: Member



Dr. Ibrahim Mohammad Abu Shihab : External Examiner



## **Acknowledgements**

First and foremost, all the praises and thanks be to Allah, Almighty, Who has taught man that he knew not and gave me the strength to complete this work.

I am honored to express my sincere gratitude to my honorable supervisor, Professor Bader S. Dweik, for his limitless support and guidance not only during the time of this research but also during the courses he taught me. Without his help this thesis would not be completed.

I also would like to express my gratitude to Professor Riyad F. Hussein for his unconditional guidance and support during the courses he taught me.

I would like, also, to extend my gratitude and sincere thanks to my friends, Ghassan Hazza, Saleh Abwini, Ismael Ashubbak and Mohammad Nofal whose support and assistance paved my way to success.

Finally, I extend my deep gratitude to the members of the Assyrian community for their help in completing this work.

## **Dedication**

I dedicate this work to the wise, the patient, and the ones, who are  
always with me,

***My parents, brothers and sisters***

## Table of Contents

	Title	I
	Authorization	II
	Thesis Committee Decision	III
	Acknowledgements	IV
	Dedication	V
	Table of Contents	VI
	List of Appendices	IX
	English Abstract	X
	Arabic Abstract	XII

Chapter One: Introduction		1
1.0	Introduction	1
1.1	Background of the Study	1
1.2	A Brief Background of the Assyrians of Jordan	2
1.3	Statement of the Problem	7
1.4	Objectives of the Study	8
1.5	Questions of the Study	8
1.6	Significance of the Study	8
1.7	Limitations and Limits of the Study	9

1.8	Definition of Terms	9
Chapter Two: Review of Literature		11
2.0	Introduction	11
2.1	Review of Theoretical Literature Related to the Terms "Assyrian" "Syrian" "Aramaic" and "Syriac"	11
2.1.1	Literature Related to Language Shift and Maintenance	15
2.1.2	Literature Related to Attitudes and Factors that Support Language Maintenance and Shift	18
2.2	Review of Local and Regional Empirical Studies Related to Language Shift and Maintenance	21
2.2.1	International Empirical Studies Related to Language Shift and Maintenance	27
2.3	Summary	33
Chapter Three: Method and Procedures		34
3.0	Introduction	34
3.1	Population and Sample of the Study	34
3.2	Instruments of the Study	38
3.2.1	The Community Profile	38
3.2.2	Interviews	40
3.2.3	The Sociolinguistic Questionnaire	41
3.3	Validity of the Questionnaire	44
3.4	Reliability of the Questionnaire	44

3.5	Data Analysis and Statistical Treatment	45
3.6	Procedures of the Study	45
Chapter Four: Results of the Study		
4.0	Introduction	48
4.1	Results of the First Question	48
4.2	Results of the Second Question	56
4.3	Results of the Third Question	61
4.4	Analysis of the Interviews	66
Chapter Five: Discussion, Conclusions and Recommendations		
5.0	Introduction	70
5.1	Discussion of the Findings Related to the Domains of Language Use	70
5.2	Discussion of the Findings Related to Language Attitudes	74
5.3	Discussion of the Findings Related to the Factors that Support the Use of Syriac and Arabic	78
5.4	Conclusions	83
5.5	Recommendations for Future Research	84
References		86



## List of Appendices

<b>Appendix</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Page No.</b>
A	English Pilot Questionnaire	93
B	Arabic Pilot Questionnaire	98
C	English Sociolinguistic Questionnaire	102
D	Arabic Sociolinguistic Questionnaire	110
E	Map of Tur Abdin	116
F	The Assyrian Flag	117
G	The Syriac Alphabet	118
H	Panel of Experts	119

# **The Language Situation among the Assyrians of Jordan: A Sociolinguistic Study**

**Prepared by**

**Tareq Jamal Al-Refa'i**

**Supervised by**

**Professor Bader S. Dweik**

## **Abstract**

This study aimed at investigating the language situation among the Assyrians of Jordan. The study attempted to explore the domains of use of Syriac and Arabic. It also probed the attitudes of the Assyrians of Jordan towards both languages and it investigated the factors that supported the use of Syriac and Arabic.

In order to achieve the objectives of the study, a purposive sample of 56 respondents, covering different age ranges, gender and educational backgrounds, was chosen to fill out the linguistic questionnaire. The instruments of the study were; a community profile, open-ended interviews and a sociolinguistic questionnaire.

Results showed that the Assyrians of Jordan are witnessing a shift towards the majority language "Arabic". They use Arabic in almost all domains. Syriac is still minimally used in the church and home domains. The results also revealed that the Assyrians of Jordan have positive attitudes towards Syriac and Arabic. However, these attitudes towards Syriac do not play a role in preserving it. The study proved that social, political and economic factors played a major role in shifting from Syriac into Arabic. The study suggested several ideas for further research like conducting similar studies on the Assyrians in different regions such as Palestine and Syria.

## الوضع اللغوي لدى السريان الأرمنيين:

### دراسة لغوية اجتماعية

إعداد

طارق جمال الرفاعي

بإشراف

أ.د. بدر سعيد دويك

الملخص

تناولت هذه الدراسة الوضع اللغوي لدى السريان الأرمنيين وحاولت استكشاف المجالات التي يستخدم فيها السريان الأرمنيون كل من اللغة السريانية والعربية وهدفت الدراسة أيضا إلى الكشف عن اتجاهاتهم نحو اللغتين ومعرفة العوامل التي تدعم استخدام العربية والسريانية.

ومن أجل تحقيق أهداف هذه الدراسة اختار الباحث عينة قصدية مكونة من 56 سرياني من مختلف الأعمار والأجناس والمستوى التعليمي واستخدم الباحث ثلاث أدوات لجمع المعلومات وهي: بناء صورة جانبية عن مجتمع الدراسة وإجراء مقابلات واستبانة لغوية اجتماعية. أظهرت نتائج الدراسة أن السريان الأرمنيون يواجهون تحولا لغويا نحو اللغة العربية وأنهم يستخدمون اللغة العربية في كل المجالات لكن السريانية لا تزال تستخدم بشكل بسيط في الكنيسة والمنزل.

وخلصت الدراسة أيضا إلى أن اتجاهاتهم كانت إيجابية تجاه كلتا اللغتين السريانية والعربية ولكن هذه الاتجاهات الإيجابية تجاه اللغة السريانية لم يكن لها دور في المحافظة عليها. ومن ناحية أخرى أشارت الدراسة إلى أن العوامل الاجتماعية والاقتصادية والسياسية لعبت دورا مهما في التحول اللغوي باتجاه اللغة العربية. وفي النهاية قدم الباحث عدة توصيات منها إجراء دراسات مماثلة على السريان في مناطق أخرى مثل فلسطين وسوريا.

# **Chapter One**

## **Introduction**

### **1.0 Introduction**

This chapter starts with a background of the study followed by detailed information about the Assyrian community in Jordan. After that, it sheds light on the statement of the problem, objectives, questions, significance, limitations and limits of the study and it ends with the definition of some terms.

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

Recently, indigenous languages have been in the center of interest by many sociolinguists as many of these indigenous languages became ethnic languages and are endangered. Languages are generally not stable; they are always in a state of constant change and development.

Nowadays, thousands of indigenous languages are spoken by ethnic groups who are usually of a limited number. These ethnic groups are either living in their own homeland where the majority speak another language as the case of the Palestinian Arabs of the 1948, Native Americans in the USA and Berbers in North Africa, or migrated voluntarily or involuntarily for many reasons to other countries where the majority speak another

language. This multilingual situation usually leads to conflict which in turn results in either language maintenance or language shift and loss.

Positive language attitudes may lead to language maintenance, and language loyalty is closely correlated with language maintenance. On the other hand, language shift occurs when ethnic groups are no more concerned about their native language because in many cases they feel attached to the host language tempted by many motives and rewards.

## **1.2 A Brief Background of the Assyrians of Jordan**

The number of the Assyrians in Jordan is not accurately determined, but it is reported that there are approximately 2,000 Assyrians living permanently in Jordan. All of them came originally from the upper Mesopotamia (TurAbdin region south-east of Turkey and the surrounding villages such as Azach, Midyat, Maserte, Mardin and nearby areas). The Assyrian population of that area was forcibly dislocated and massacred by Ottoman and Kurdish forces during World War I. It was reported that these massacres were part of the Ottoman campaign against the Christian minorities of the Empire (E, Anz, personal communication, February 19, 2013). As a result, they left their villages and arrived in Jordan in two waves:

During the first wave (1915 - 1918), few families arrived in Jordan and settled in different cities such as Madaba, Ajloun, Amman and Zarqa. Those families lived a simple life in very simple houses and practiced their religion in other Christian churches such as the Roman Orthodox church.

The second wave (1948) happened when large number of Assyrian families left Jerusalem and Bethlehem as a result of the mass displacement of all non-Jewish people in Palestine under pressure by the Israelis in 1948 (E,Anz, personal communication,February19, 2013). The Assyrians sought living in peaceful areas near holy places. They found their destination in Palestine because it embraced several holy places such as the Church of Resurrection in Jerusalem and the Church of Nativity in Bethlehem. So, large number of the families headed towards Palestine. Some of them went directly and others stopped in Syria, Lebanon or Iraq for several years and finally they all gathered in Jerusalem and Bethlehem. Then, after the Israeli occupation of Palestine in 1948, they were oppressed and displaced as the Israelis treated all the non -Jewish people in Palestine as their enemies (M,Bursheh, personal communication, February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2013). As a result, they moved to Jordan as is the case of all the Palestinians at that time. At the beginning, the Assyrians lived together in Al- Muhajerren area in Amman( literary translated as immigrants ). Then, when the "Syrian School" and the "Syrian Church" (as they were called at that time) were

established in Al-Ashrafiah area in Amman, large number of the families moved to live in the neighboring area. But after their economic status improved, they moved to live in several western neighborhoods in Amman (E, Anz, personal communication, February 19, 2013).

The Assyrians of Jordan are all Christians; the majority are Orthodox who follow the "Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate" in Syria. The "Syrian Orthodox Church" in Amman was built in 1959. Until that time, the Assyrians lived in Jordan without a church; instead they followed the "Monastery of St. Mark for Syrian Orthodox" in Jerusalem to which they sent their children in order to learn religion and Syriac. A priest used to come to Jordan from Jerusalem on Sundays to hold prayers and to take care of the civil and religious affairs of the Assyrians in Jordan. The situation remained unchanged until they were able to build their own church in Al-Ashrafieh area in Amman and the first head of the church was father Botros Toma. In 2010, a new large church was built in Al-Sweifieh neighborhood (B, Toma, personal communication, February 28, 2013).

All the Assyrians of Jordan speak Arabic fluently as they all receive their education in public and private schools and universities where Arabic is the first and official language. In addition, they speak a Neo- Aramaic dialect. There are two relatively different varieties of Syriac; the standard written language and the colloquial one (Dweik, 1986). Nowadays,



Assyrians mainly speak two Neo- Aramaic dialects namely Western and Eastern. The Eastern dialect which they call "Madenkhaya" or Swadaya is mainly spoken by the Eastern Assyrians especially the Chaldeans and Nestorians while the Western dialect which they call "Toroyo" or "Ma'reboyo" (Toroyo means the mountainous and Ma'reboyo means the western in the Aramaic Language) is mainly spoken by the Orthodox and the Catholic Syrians and the Maronites (M, Bursheh, personal communication, February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2013).

At church, prayers and ceremonies can be read in one of three different forms of language (this process is called "Gersony"); Syriac, Arabized Syriac (Syriac words written in Arabic alphabets) and the last one is translation of the ceremonies into Arabic (A, Jeries, personal communication, March 9, 2013).

The Assyrians of Jordan are known for honesty and integrity and are devoted to work. They usually achieve great success in most fields they work in. As soon as they reached Jordan as refugees escaping from oppression and displacement, they started to work in every possible field to support their families. They worked in agriculture, handicrafts, and in construction and painting. After that, they joined hands with the Jordanians and became an integral part of the community and ran various kinds of businesses. To name some of the successful figures; Michelle Marto served

as the Minister of Finance in 1999. Currently, the Major General Michelle Hanna serves as the Director of the Department of Finance in the Arab Jordanian Army. It is also worth mentioning that there are many well-known Assyrian businessmen in Jordan; for example, one of the biggest auto glass factories in the region is owned by Mr. Edmond Anz. Similarly, a leading car- radiator factory in the Middle East is owned by Mr. Jamil Estefan. Dr. Anwar Jeries, the hydrogeology professor at Mu'tah University is an Assyrian educated figure. Religiously, the Head of the Council of Churches in the Middle East is George Jamil Haso.

The Assyrians, like other ethnic communities in Jordan, have established their own cultural and social associations. The Syrian Orthodox School was established in Al-Ashrafieh region in Amman in 1950 where they sent their children to learn, in addition to the public curricula, the Syriac language and religion. Before the establishment of the Church in Amman, the prayers were held in the school which later, in 1990, was closed due to financial problems.

In 1950, "The Syrian Orthodox Charity Association" was established. It was a charity concerned with observing the school, taking care of the church and helping the poor either Assyrians or others. The administrative body of the Association consisted of ten members elected by the Assyrians of Jordan for a two-years period and then these ten members

elect the Association Head (W, Nemeh, personal communication, March 12, 2013).

Internationally, some organizations and magazines concerned with the Assyrian affairs were established in several places. For example, the World Council of Arameans (WCA) is an international organization situated in the Netherlands which is dedicated to serve the interest of the Aramean (Syriacs) all over the world. Additionally, there are two religious and social magazines; The Patriarchate Magazine which is a monthly magazine issued by the Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate in Damascus and Al-Hikma which is issued in Jerusalem. Those magazines contain articles and essays in Arabic and Syriac. Moreover, the Assyrians watch mainly two Assyrian TV Channels namely Suryoya and Suryoyo.

### **1.3 Statement of the Problem**

Assyrians have long faced suspicion and discrimination in their own homeland which forced many of them to migrate to safer areas taking their language with them. And as the ethnic Assyrian minority in Jordan came into contact with the majority Arabic-speaking population, many linguistic challenges evolved which became of interest to the researcher. Thus, the present study sought to investigate this phenomenon and its various manifestations.

## **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

This study aimed to investigate the domains and situations in which the Assyrians of Jordan use both Syriac and Arabic and explored their attitudes towards each language. Moreover, it investigated the factors that either help them to maintain their language or shift to Arabic.

## **1.5 Questions of the Study**

In order to achieve the aforementioned objectives, this study attempted to answer the following questions:

1. In what domains do the Assyrians of Jordan use Syriac and Arabic?
2. What are the attitudes of the Assyrians of Jordan towards Syriac and Arabic?
3. What are the factors that either help the Assyrians of Jordan maintain or lose their ethnic language?

## **1.6 Significance of the Study**

Although many studies were conducted on ethnic minorities and their language situation in the Middle East and Jordan by scholars such as Dweik (1999), Al-Khatib (2010) , Kittaneh( 2009 ), and Nofal(2012), there is shortage of research conducted on the Assyrian language situation in

Jordan. So this study may generally enrich the sociolinguistic studies in Jordan, the Middle East and the world at large.

In addition, this study may help other researchers understand the major conceptual themes of sociolinguistic studies and language situations among ethnic minorities.

### **1.7 Limitations and Limits of the Study**

The findings of this study cannot be generalized to the whole population due to the relatively small number of the sample and the instruments which have not been standardized. The study was conducted in Amman, Jordan during the academic year 2012/2013.

### **1.8 Definition of Terms:**

**Syriac:** is the language used by the Assyrians and it will also be referred to as Neo- Aramaic language.

**Language situation** can be defined as: how many and what kinds of languages are used in an area? What are the domains of each language? , what are the attitudes towards each language? and what are the factors that support the use of each language?

**Language maintenance** refers to a situation where members of an ethnic community try to preserve their mother tongue by different means

especially when they immigrate to another country which has its own language.

**Language shift** happens when a minority group replaces the habitual use of one language by the habitual use of another. This shift to the second language often, but not always, involves the gradual disappearance of the first.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Review of Literature**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

Much research has been done on language situation among ethnic minorities across the world. This chapter covers some theoretical and empirical literature. The theoretical literature elaborates on the different terms used to describe the Assyrians and their language, and also addresses literature related to language maintenance and shift. The empirical part describes studies that dealt with the language situation among several other ethnic minorities not only in Jordan and the Middle East but also in the world at large.

#### **2.1 Review of Theoretical Literature Related to the Terms "Assyrian" "Syrian" "Aramaic" and "Syriac"**

Yildiz (1999) presents the various names of the Assyrians and the reasons that lead to the current controversial terminology. They are called Assyrian or Chaldean and also began to be called by various different names such as Nestorians, Syrians, Syriac Jacobites, and Arameans. However, "many of these terms are relatively recent; in ancient times the expression generally used was the Church of the East. These recent names evolved as a result of

religious and ethnographical problems". (p.22). He also argues that the term "Syriac" derives its origin from Syria. This term was applied by the Greeks to those countries of Assyrian origin situated to the East of the Euphrates.

In my opinion, this confusion is mainly due to one specific historical fact: Antioch was the capital of Syria and at the same time an important center for the propagation of Christianity, where for the first time the baptized received the name of Christians. (p. 23)

He defends the historical and linguistic origin of the term Syriac and Syriac people saying that nowadays, the term "Syrians" describes the inhabitants of Syria, a country with which the Christian community in question had no ethnic links whatsoever. However, the two terms Syriac and Syrian were used interchangeably to express the same concept. The reasons were that after the schism of the 5th century, the conflicts that led to their separation began to characterize the differences between the so-called Syriac Churches: Eastern and Western. Be that as it may, as far as the Orientals themselves were concerned, only the Jacobites (Monophysites) acquired the title of Syriac Church.

Likewise, Younan (2000) defines Aramaic as the ancient language of the Semitic family group, which includes the Assyrians, Babylonians, Chaldeans, Arameans, Hebrews, and Arabs .The Greeks called Aramaic by a word they coined, 'Syriac', and this artificial term was used in the West, but not in the East. Modern Eastern Aramaic has sixteen dialects, spoken



by Christians and Jews, and a widely spoken western dialect. Modern Western Aramaic is spoken in three small villages north of Damascus, but mixed with words borrowed from Arabic and Turkish. He reports that

nowadays, Modern Aramaic, in its various dialects, is spoken in Iraq, Iran, Syria, Palestine, Lebanon, and the various Western countries to which the native speakers have emigrated, including Russia, Europe, Australia and the United States.(p.4)

Finally, he mentions that the churches which still use Aramaic as their liturgical language include the Church of the East, the Chaldean Catholic Church, the Syriac Orthodox Church, the Syriac Catholic Church, and the Maronite Catholic Church.

Yildiz (2000) explains that the Western and Eastern Syriac is the Aramaic language of the church. Syriac which was called Oriental in the old days, can be divided into three main groups such as " Nestorian, Chaldean and Jacobite (Which are all Assyrians).This is the most documented Aramaic dialects in history." (p.39).

In his answer to the question "what is the Syriac language and culture, and what are its origins?" Kiraz (2001) assumes that the term Syriac does not reflect a linguistic difference between the several speakers of the language instead, the different names of the speakers have to do with ethnic and religious issues. He defines Syriac as :

a form of the Aramaic language which includes many dialects that have been used since the 11<sup>th</sup> century B.C. the Aramaic language is originally the language of the Aramean people, but it became the lingua franca of the Near East in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC. Aramaic continued to be the language in Palestine until after the Islamic conquest in the seventh century.(p.6)

About the difference between Assyrian and Syriac, kiraz (2001) says that the term Assyrian has been used by the members of the Assyrian Church of the East as an ethnic designation since the 19th century, and more so after 1900. The term became formally part of the name of that Church in the 1970s. The term is also used by some Chaldeans as an ethnic designation, and by some Syriac Orthodox, especially in the Diaspora, as a national or political affiliation. The term "Syriac" (its native form is suryoyo, in Arabic suryani) is used by the Syriac Orthodox, Maronites, Syriac Catholics, Syro-Malabarese, Syro-Malankarese and the Mar Thoma Christians to designate their ecclesiastical tradition, and by some as an ethnic designation as well.

The term Syriac is also used by Western scholars to refer to all the Churches mentioned above that employ Syriac as a liturgical language. As the native term suryoyo/suryani also translates into the English word, "Syrian." Some used to opt for mistranslating the former terms into "Assyrian" to avoid confusion with a reference to the Arab Republic of Syria. The terms "Assyrian" and "Syriac" are sometimes misused

interchangeably, intentionally or unintentionally, the result which has caused confusion and unfortunately friction to some extent. In conclusion he says that the mentioned communities share common language and heritage which bond them together, despite their different formal names.

Abdo (1997) pointed out that the term Assyrians is the synonym of the Arameans who are Semitic people originally lived in the Arabian Peninsula and moved northwards due to draught and settled in Palestine and Syria. He also mentions that the Aramaic migration was one of the oldest migrations from the Arabian Peninsula. Then, they were centered in northern Mesopotamia when the Assyrian Empire ruled the area. He also notes that most of the Assyrians in Jordan migrated from Palestine after the Israeli occupation in the 1948 and 1967.

### **2.1.1 Literature Related to Language Shift and Maintenance**

The terms language shift and maintenance refer to a choice made by a society as to which language will be used for certain functions. This choice may lead to the death of another language, leaving no speakers of the language, or death of the language in a specific community only. If this shift does not occur, or if it occurs only in certain domains of a society, then some degree of language maintenance occurs. (Dunlap,1995)

Tsitsipis (2009) defines language shift and maintenance as

the replacement of one or more languages in community's repertoire by language which is socially more powerful..... Language shift is the outcome of both outside forces stemming from regional, national and global conditions as well as locally determined agencies. Although the linguistic codes of the communities are in constant process of change in general, language shift includes socio-historical conditions in order to take place. (p.1)

Yeldiz (2000) states that most Aramaic speaking groups are losing their native languages gradually in struggle with Arabic. This language is most preserved in the region of north Mesopotamia while the majority of the Assyrians are struggling " to maintain their identity in exile, which does not always permit them to organize themselves and thus promote their culture, history and, above all, their language."(p.26).

Fishman (1966) defines language maintenance and language shift as a field that is concerned with language change and language stability. He points out when there is a language contact between different speakers, their language may be changed or maintained according to many factors as social, cultural or psychological ones. He sets three major topical subdivisions in discussing language maintenance and shift. These subdivisions are:

1. habitual language use at more than one point in time or space under conditions of intergroup control;

2. psychological, social or cultural processes related to stability or change in habitual language use under conditions of intergroup contact;
3. behavior towards language in contact settings. (p.424)

Fishman (1972) presents one of the most common definitions of language shift. It takes place when the younger members of a minority speech community no longer speak the language of their parents, but speak a dominant majority language instead. The language of the parents is therefore not passed on to the next generation. Conversely, language maintenance occurs when a language continues to be used across generations despite the presence of other languages also being used by a community – the kind of stable diglossia.

In addition, Ferguson (1981) defines language shift as "the change in regular use or mother-tongue status of one language to another in a speech community."(p.530) while language maintenance is defined as "preservation of the use of a language by a speech community under conditions where there is a possibility of shift to another language."(p.530)

Fishman (1985) discusses three resolutions that can be considered the outcome of languages in contact. He discusses the status of immigrant languages when they are in contact with the host languages. He gives three possibilities for the fate of languages in contact. The first possibility happens when the indigenous language (e.g. English in England) interacts

with an intrusive immigrating language (e.g. Arabic); here the intrusive language is lost. The second resolution occurs when an indigenous language (e.g. American Indian language) interacts with an intrusive immigrating language (e.g. English); here the indigenous language is lost. The third and final possibility occurs when an indigenous language (e.g. Arabic in Jordan) interacts with an intrusive immigrating language (e.g. Chechen in Jordan); the result is that both languages are maintained.

### **2.1.2 Literature Related to Attitudes and Factors that Support Language Maintenance and Shift.**

Giles, Bourhis and Taylor (1977) divide the social factors affecting language maintenance and shift into three categories:

Status factors: that include ethnolinguistic group's economic, social and socio-historical status as the internal and external status of the group's language;

Demographic factors: which refer to the population of the group including the distribution and concentration of the speakers in their local, regional or national areas, as well as other variables such as birth rates and marriage patterns.

Institutional support factors refer to any formal or informal support available for the group to gain from organized institutions of the local, regional or national society.

Holmes (2001) argues that the intermarriage highly leads to language shift; similarly, when people seek to improve their economic conditions in another place as a result of adopting the host language, and the negative attitudes towards the ethnic language also speed up the process of language shift. Moreover, when a host language is used in most of the domains, immigrants are forced to use the host language. Add to this, the demographic factors that play a role in language shift. Finally, when people live in an urban place, they use the host language but when they live in their ethnic community isolated from the majority, they may maintain their ethnic language like Ukrainians in Canada.

In addition, one of the factors that helps to maintain a language is the attitudes that a speaker has towards his language. Baker (1988) defines attitudes as

hypothetical constructs that are interfered, conceptual inventions hopefully aiding the description and explanation of behavior; attitudes are learned predispositions, not inherited or generically endowed and are likely to be relatively stable over time. (p. 114)

Wolck (2004) lists the determining factors of language maintenance among several minority language groups in the United States, especially among the three 'official' language minorities, viz., Asian Americans, Hispanic Americans and Native Americans. These factors are: National policy, religious isolation, popular political attitudes, societal isolation, political divisions, population concentration, generational divisions, population size, linguistic divisions, education (quality of), language standardization, linguistic/cultural distance, minority type, settlement age, and migration continuity.

In addition, Myers-Scotton (2006) identifies the following societal, in-group and individual factors that are central to language maintenance (p.90):

- demographic factors – large numbers of speakers of the same ethnic language living together;
- occupational factors – working with fellow speakers of the ethnic language, with restrictive socio-economic mobility;
- educational factors – e.g. official provision of the ethnic language as a medium of instruction;
- social networks and group attitudes about the ethnic language as an ethnic symbol;
- psychological attachment to the ethnic language for self-identity.



Moreover, Saarikivi and Marten (2012) divide the factors that affect language maintenance into two categories:

those which are straight forwardly determined by legal, or societal action (such as laws, administrative and educational practices, language standardization or media supply) and those which are predominantly related to questions of identity and practices (such as language attitudes, interethnic relations, language competence and prestige). (p.3)

The latter cannot be changed quickly by administrative measures, but reflects the history and values of historically emerged human groups as well as the forms of governance in a particular region.

## **2.2 Review of Local and Regional Empirical Studies Related to Language Shift and Maintenance**

Dweik (1986) investigated the language situation among three linguistic minorities in Jerusalem (i.e. the Armenians, the Assyrians and the Greeks). He aimed at finding out the extra-linguistic factors that determined the language maintenance among these ethnic groups. The researcher used various methods in collecting data such as participant observation in the communities and interviewing key personalities, i.e., spiritual and educational personalities. The results of the study showed that most of the Armenians, Assyrians and Greeks master four languages, i.e., their ethnic language, Arabic, English and Hebrew. The researcher asserted that "the three linguistic minorities maintain their ethnic languages and cultures very highly."

On the other hand, Dweik (1992) studied the extralinguistic factors that determined language shift and language maintenance among the Lebanese Christians in Buffalo, New York. The researcher established a community profile containing historical and sociolinguistic data related to the community in question in the period from 1900-1970. Then he interviewed key personalities in the community. A sample of fifty Lebanese- Americans was selected randomly to fill out a fifty-three item questionnaire. The results proved that most of the respondents and almost half of their parents use English as a first language, and they use English in almost all domains, which means that the community was experiencing a language shift which led finally to language loss.

Dweik (2000) investigated the linguistic and cultural maintenance among the Chechens of Jordan. In his study the researcher used a random sample of 100 subjects to fill out a questionnaire about their linguistic and cultural maintenance. The results of the study showed that the Chechens of Jordan have maintained their language and culture. Moreover, the findings proved that the Chechens showed positive attitudes towards their ethnic and national Jordanian identities.

Dashti (2004) investigated the language situation among the Kuwaiti Ajams. This study aimed at investigating whether the Kuwaiti Ajams maintained their ethnic language or shifted to the majority language.

Participant observation and ethnographic recorded conversations techniques were adopted to obtain in-depth analysis of Farsi maintenance and shift among Kuwait Ajams. The researcher analyzed the social networks of each family when examining their language choice. Results showed that the grandchildren's generation of the two families has shifted from Farsi to Arabic due to several factors such as "migration, religion and intermarriage which are relatively important. Consequently, it could be argued that Farsi in Kuwait is likely to be extinct within the next one or two generations." (p. 29)

Al-Khatib and Al-Ali (2005) investigated language and cultural maintenance among the Gypsies of Jordan to permit comparison of the relative influences of various social variables on their use of both Arabic and Gypsy. The researchers analyzed a corpus of data collected from 100 speakers by means of a questionnaire and interviews. Findings proved that Arabic and Gypsy were used side by side, each for different functions and domains. The factors that led to Language maintenance among the Gypsies included: the inability of the Gypsies to mingle in the majority culture, and thus they came to be clustered in their own areas and social and cultural isolation of the Gypsies from the Jordanian mainstream contributed to cultural maintenance among them. The Gypsies of Jordan were experiencing language and cultural maintenance.

Errihani (2008) explored the dynamics of language attitudes towards the main languages used in Morocco, especially towards the Berber language, and the effects that these attitudes were likely to have on the implementation of the language policy that might require all Moroccan children to learn Berber, regardless of their linguistic or ethnic backgrounds. The researcher investigated the views of a large and representative sampling of Moroccans regarding the inclusion of Berber in the educational fabric of Morocco. Data were collected through interviews, participant observations, and a survey of 531 individuals who were asked to fill out a 14-question questionnaire. Results showed that attitudes towards Berber were generally negative. This represented a major obstacle to the implementation of the language policy of maintaining and promoting Berber by teaching it to all Moroccans.

Sofu (2009) investigated language shift or maintenance in three Arabic-Turkish bilingual families through deep interviews held with third-generation representatives of each family. The aim of this research was to describe the language shift and maintenance in the southern part of Turkey where a lot of people were bilingual Turkish-Arabic speakers. Information about three generations of the families in this study was collected through structured interviews with family members belonging to the third generation who were themselves graduate students. The shift from Arabic

to Turkish was observed in the first and the second generations due to many reasons of which: education, contact with monolingual families, type of jobs and mobility. However, the third generation was more language conscious and saw the maintenance of their language as a way to preserve their cultural identity.

Al-Khatib and Al-Ali (2010) studied the level of language and cultural shift among the Kurds of Jordan. The researchers investigated the shift and highlighted the socio-demographic factors enhancing it. The sample of the study was one hundred Jordanian Kurds who arrived in Jordan in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The data used were collected through questionnaires, structured interviews and observations. The results proved that the Kurds of Jordan experienced a shift towards Arabic which led them to lose their ethnic language.

Gabsi (2011) examined the situation of Tunisian Berber from a linguistic and sociolinguistic perspective. The study had three goals; First, to give an assessment of the problems and the challenges facing Tunisian Berber. Second, to describe the extent of shift towards Arabic. Third, to suggest some directions for future studies of Tunisian Berber and strategies to stimulate its revival. Data were collected in three separate fieldwork trips to Douiret from November 1996 to January 2000. Data were also collected in the neighboring Chninni and Ouirighen. Results showed that

Tunisian Berber identified some fundamental factors of the attrition of Berber in Tunisia. Some of these factors were sociolinguistic, for instance negative language attitudes and lack of institutional support. The Berbers viewed their language rather as mere second language undeserving of affection. By contrast, there were no negative feelings towards Arabic even though its encroachments mean that their mother tongue now faces extinction.

In his thesis, Nofal (2011) investigated the language situation among the Indians of Yemen. The sample of this study included 100 Indians of Yemen who were selected purposively. Only 86 participants responded to a six-section language questionnaire about their linguistic and cultural situation. The results showed that some of the Indians of Yemen maintained their ethnic language in speaking and listening. The results also proved that non-linguistic factors such as home and family played a significant role in preserving their ethnic language.

Al-Obaidi (2013) investigated the language situation among the Chaldo-Assyrians in Baghdad. The study aimed to explore the domains of Neo- Aramaic and Arabic use, the attitudes towards each language and the factors that support the use of Neo-Aramaic and Arabic. Data were collected through employing three instruments: interviews, community profile and a questionnaire distributed to 135 participants. The findings of

the study showed that the Chaldo-Assyrians maintained their language over a long period of time. The results also proved that Arabic was used for various functions and Neo-Aramaic was used in a variety of social domains, such as home and religious settings. Additionally, the Chaldo-Assyrians showed highly positive attitudes towards both languages. Finally, the results showed that there is a strong relationship between language maintenance and non-linguistic factors such as home, religion and positive attitudes towards the ethnic language.

### **2.2.1 International Empirical Studies Related to Language Shift and Maintenance**

Odisho (1999) studied the Assyrian language maintenance and erosion among the Assyrian immigrants in the United States across three generations. The researcher employed the observation technique to investigate the shift to English within three generations of an Assyrian immigrant family. The results showed that most of the second generation became bilingual speaking their ethnic language and the majority-group language while with the third generation, English became dominant in almost all aspects of life and it replaced their ethnic language dramatically.

Brobely (2000) investigated the process of language shift and language maintenance in the bilingual community of Romanians living in Hungary.

The data were collected from forty tape- recorded Romanian sociolinguistic interviews. The researcher transcribed the forty tape recordings into computer. Then the transcribed Romanian data were analyzed by the following main research topics (p.37).

- The choice of Romanian and Hungarian in the community interactions; factors of choice
- Code-switching: intra-language and inter-language:
  - The reasons of the code switching of the community
  - The relationship between age, sex and the frequency of code-switching in the interview situation.
- Unequal competition of minority language and majority language at school.

The study showed that the community in question can be characterized by language shift.

David, Naji and Kaur (2003) examined language maintenance and language shift among the Punjabi Sikh community in Malaysia. The research aimed to determine the language choices of the Punjabi Sikh community of Petaling Jaya, Malaysia, with the ultimate objective of determining if they are still maintaining their ethnic language. Data came from a questionnaire given to 312 members of the Punjabi community living in Petaling Jaya. The findings showed that the community in



question was experiencing a shift to English and used a mixed code of three languages.

Oshana (2003) investigated the cultural identification, linguistic competence, and religious participation of the Assyrian adolescents in Chicago and how these factors influenced their ego identity. A non-probability sample of 101 Assyrian American adolescents was chosen from the first and second generations. The participants volunteered to complete two surveys. The researcher also interviewed three participants in depth. The results indicated that there is a strong relationship between cultural identification and identity status but there was limited relationship between identity status and linguistic competency. Furthermore, results showed that religious participation had a very important role in the Assyrian language maintenance and both religion and language were very important to adolescents' ego identity.

Søndergaard and Norrby (2006) investigated the level of language maintenance of Danish in the Danish community of Melbourne. Data were collected by 89 interviews with people of Danish ethnic background. The participants were divided into two generations; the oldest consisting of people who migrated to Australia after World War II, and the youngest arriving in Australia in the late 1980s. Results indicated that "the tendency to shift to English was more strongly pronounced among the earlier

arrivals, while the more recent ones often report a strong wish to maintain Danish as the home language and transmit it to their children". However, the results also proved the existence of considerable individual variation within generations.

Lucca, Masiero and Gabriel (2008) conducted a longitudinal ethnographic study on language socialization of a community of Moroccan adolescents living in a rural area in Northern Italy. These youths arrived in the country in the late 1990s, at age between nine and 13. The participants were asked to demonstrate their oral and written narrations on Moroccan and Islamic cultural traditions and the students' biographies, experiences and attitudes towards Italian. The researchers, then, interviewed ten of the participants in depth. Interviews were conducted in Italian and had no fixed structure. Results showed that standard Arabic was only present through television channels. Additionally, the competence in reading and writing Arabic was reduced and religion did not seem to be a valid motivation for maintaining Arabic. Finally, results showed that Italian is seen as a useful language not only for living in Italy, but also as a bridge to other European languages.

Aswegen (2008) investigated the language maintenance in Maali, a minority language spoken in Ethiopia. The main aims of the research were to give an account of the underlying social factors that had contributed to

language maintenance in the Maali speech community, and to investigate whether the mother tongue literacy program in the Maali region facilitated language maintenance or contributed to language shift. The research method applied to this study was essentially qualitative. In the research, Paulston's theory of social mobilization was applied to Maali language. This theory is concerned with context, that is, where, how and what social conditions do language maintenance and shift take place. The finding of the study suggested that the regional nationalism, which corresponded to ethnic nationalism is the reason why the Maali language has been maintained. The findings also indicated that the mother tongue literacy contributed to language maintenance.

Dayers (2008) investigated the factors determining the use of Afrikaans among township youth in South Africa. Data were collected from Afrikaans L1 learners in Grades 8 to 10 at Wesbank High School. The data consisted of classroom responses to a questionnaire on their use of Afrikaans in different domains, individual interviews and informal playground observation. The findings of the study indicated that the three main factors supported the maintenance of Afrikaans in Westbank included

- (i) the dominant role of Afrikaans, the L1 of the majority, in key domains of language use in the township, (ii) a powerful sentimental attachment to the language as a badge of individual and group identity, and (iii) the socio-spatial marginalization of the community. (p.50)

Ndhlovu (2010) investigated language attitudes towards the ethnic language among the African communities in Australia and the attitudes towards English language as well. The research also explored the factors affecting their language maintenance. Data were collected through a questionnaire that was taken after Mucherah (2008). The questionnaire was distributed to 40 respondents who were selected purposively. Results proved that non-refugee African migrants continue to express positive attitudes towards both; their ethnic languages and English. Findings showed also that the participants used their ethnic languages and English side by side, each for different domains. Finally results showed that the African migrants maintained strong social relationships among themselves and with their homelands.

Frank (2011) explored the processes of language maintenance and shift and language change of the Pennsylvania German-speaking Swiss Mennonites from the Waterloo Region in Ontario, Canada. The data were collected by participant observation, community profile and interviews. The findings of the study showed that the group language behavior is crucially influenced by non-linguistic factors such as age, gender, church affiliation, and linguistic proficiency. Results also showed that the community was experiencing gradual shift to English.

Bissoonauth (2011) investigated the use of Indian ancestral languages in the domestic domain by the younger generations. The data were collected by means of a questionnaire and interviews from a quota sample of secondary school population from an Indian background. The results showed that the ancestral languages were declining and replaced by Creole and French in the domestic domain. On the other hand, they were maintained by the older generations. Results also showed that the respondents revealed negative attitudes towards the ancestral languages, especially at that time, where a good command of English and French were associated with upward social mobility and academic success.

## **2.3 Summary**

Having reviewed the previous theoretical literature and empirical studies related to the study, the researcher concludes that the language situation among the minority groups varies from one minority to another according to the place and the type of this minority. The language situation of these ethnic groups is highly affected by a large number of factors and they have different kinds of attitudes towards their ethnic languages which in turn result in a unique set of findings for each one of the minorities that has been investigated. The literature reviewed in this chapter has helped the researcher in developing methodology in chapter three; presenting the results in chapter four and discussing the findings in chapter five.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Method and Procedures**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter describes the methodology and the procedures followed in this study. It begins with the population and the sample of the study and elaborates on the instruments used as well as their validity and reliability. Finally, it concludes with the procedures that the researcher followed throughout the study.

#### **3.1 Population and Sample of the Study**

The population of the study was all the Assyrians of Jordan who arrived in Jordan from Turkey during World War I and those who came from Palestine after the Israeli war of 1948. Fifty six participants were selected to serve as the sample of the study. Two sampling strategies were used in choosing the participants. First, the 'snowball' sampling strategy which was implemented especially for the interviews strategy involved accessing subjects via asking members of community to name other members they knew who shared the same characteristics relevant to the study (Chadwick, Bhar& Albrecht, 1984 ). Second, a convenience sampling strategy was used for the distribution of the sociolinguistic questionnaire where the

researcher accessed members of the community by using the 'social network' model proposed by Milroy and Milroy (1978) which enabled the researcher to approach the subjects via a third party. Four Assyrians assisted the researcher in the process of the distribution and collection of the sociolinguistic questionnaire among other Assyrians such as neighbors, friends and relatives.

The sample of the current study contained participants, covering different demographic variables as shown in Table (A) below.

**Table (A): Distribution of the Participants as per their Demographic Data**

		Sex		Total
Age		Male	Female	
	(20 – 29)	9	7	16
	(30 – 39)	5	7	12
	(40 – 49)	9	6	15
	(50 – 59)	4	5	9
	60 and above	3	1	4
	Total	30	26	56
Marital Status		Male	Female	Total
	Single	14	10	24
	Married	16	15	31
	Widowed	0	1	1
	Divorced	0	0	0
	Total	30	26	56

Occupation		Male	Female	Total
	Business	9	7	16
	Education	2	3	5
	Medical field	0	0	0
	Civil service	3	5	8
	Handcraft field	8	0	8
	Student	2	0	2
	No occupation	3	6	9
	Other	3	5	8
	Total	30	26	56
Education		Male	Female	Total
	Elementary	1	1	2
	Secondary	4	7	11
	Diploma	8	10	18
	Bachelor degree	14	8	22
	Master	2	0	2
	Ph. D	1	0	1
	Total	30	26	56
Residency		Male	Female	Total
	Assyrian neighborhood	0	0	0
	Arab neighborhood	23	22	45
	Mixed neighborhood	7	4	11
	Total	30	26	56



Social and Religious Activities		Male	Female	Total
	Attending (Syrian) Church services	30	26	56
	Visiting Assyrian social institutions	30	26	56
	Attending Assyrian parties	30	26	56
	Attending Assyrian celebrations	30	26	56
Linguistic Background		Male	Female	Total
	Speaking Syriac	5	2	7
	Listening comprehension	6	3	9
	Reading Syriac	6	4	10
	Writing Syriac	6	2	8
	Father's Syriac speaking proficiency	5	5	10
	Mother's Syriac speaking proficiency	2	6	8
	Husband's/wife's Syriac speaking proficiency	2	0	2
	Children's Syriac speaking proficiency	0	1	1
Place of acquiring/learning Syriac		Male	Female	Total
	Home	3	1	4
	School	0	0	0
	With peers	0	0	0
	Church	5	2	7
	Self-taught	2	0	2
	Other	0	0	0
Place of Acquiring Arabic		Male	Female	Total
	Home	30	26	56
	School	30	26	56
	With peers	0	0	0

	Church	0	0	0
	Self-taught	0	0	0
	Other	0	0	0

## **3.2 Instruments of the Study**

The researcher utilized three instruments to accomplish the objectives of the study. These instruments were the community profile technique proposed by Wolck (1972), interviews and a sociolinguistic questionnaire.

### **3.2.1 The Community Profile**

First, the researcher established a community profile, which contained historical, religious and social data about the Assyrians. To establish the community profile, the researcher read the available literature on the community despite its scantiness and then distributed eight copies of a pilot questionnaire among members of the community to get general information about the community. Besides, he interviewed five members from the Assyrian community in Jordan.

Since initially the researcher did not have sufficient information about the Assyrians of Jordan, he designed a pilot questionnaire which contained 23 open-ended questions concerning several aspects of the Assyrian history, social life and linguistic background. Eight Assyrians

filled out the pilot questionnaire. The information received from the pilot questionnaire helped the researcher in building the community profile and designing the form of the main interview. The researcher asked five members of the community to provide him with any historical, religious, social, political and linguistic information they know. During the interviews, the researcher let the interviewees speak freely while taking notes and recording the information relevant to the study. These informal interviews were the most important tool used in collecting the data.

The first interview was held with Mr. Mohannad Bursheh who is a sound engineer and knowledgeable about the Assyrian history. He is in the process of writing a book about the civilizations and tribes that inhabited the Middle East since the Stone Age up to the present times. The second interview was with Mr. Edmon Anz who is a well-known businessman. He is an Assyrian from the first generation who witnessed the migration from Palestine and attended the old Assyrian school. He is also aware of all phases related to the Assyrian community in Jordan. The third interview was with Mr. Waleed Nemeh who is an activist in the "Syrian Orthodox Charity Association" in Jordan and an expert in the Assyrian culture. The fourth one was Dr. Anwar Jeries, who is the professor of hydrogeology at Muta'h University. Finally the researcher interviewed on the phone Father Botros Toma, who is living in Australia. He was the first and only

reference to the Assyrians in Jordan for more than 30 years. He is a very popular and beloved person among the Assyrians.

### **3.2.2 Interviews**

Open-ended interviews provided information that the structured written responses could not provide and they gave the researcher the chance to ask further questions and to observe the interviewee expressions and feelings while answering the questions as he gave instant answers rather than think of what the researcher wants to hear. (Bell, 2003)

The researcher relied heavily on the interviews to gather data for the following reasons. First, it helped him in gathering the community profile data that contain information about the Assyrians' historical, social, economic and linguistic background. Second, to get deep insight into the language situation among the Assyrians of Jordan. Finally, the interviews helped in constructing the linguistic questionnaire.

The interviews were open-ended and conducted informally with a number of personalities from the community who had different religious, economic, social and educational backgrounds. The interviews were recorded and transcribed. Upon convenience of the interviewees' time and place, the researcher set the date and time of each interview in advance.

First, the researcher introduced himself and gave a brief summary of his research and its objectives. Then, he asked the interviewees various questions related to their history, the time they reached Jordan, the waves of migration they experienced and the reasons led them to leave their original regions, the estimated number of the Assyrians of Jordan, social and religious organizations, social activities they have and their linguistic background. During the interview, several questions were raised through the context, which in turn helped the researcher to gain valuable information about the community.

After getting the necessary information about the community profile, the researcher asked some of the interviewees to provide him with detailed information about their language and the reasons behind their current linguistic situation. The researcher asked the questions and gave them the opportunity to answer freely without interruption. The interviewees were all very cooperative and helpful. They explained their answers in details and provided the researcher with valuable data.

### **3.2.3 The Sociolinguistic Questionnaire**

The designed questionnaire was created specifically to meet the purpose of the study. The questionnaire was based on similar previous questionnaires designed by researchers who investigated ethnic minorities in the Arab

world and in the West such as Dweik (2000), Jamai (2008), Martin (2009), Kondakov (2011), Nofal (2011) and Al-Obaidy (2013).

The questionnaire contained four parts; first, the demographic section that aimed to describe the social and the linguistic background of the respondents. The next three sections were designed to provide the information needed in order to answer the questions of the study.

The second section, titled "domains of language use", aimed at finding the domains in which the participants used each language. Six domains were listed; namely home and family, church, media, neighborhood and friends, workplace and finally emotional self-expressions. The participants were asked to choose the suitable answer from the following options:

<b>Only</b>	<b>Mostly</b>	<b>Both Syriac and</b>	<b>Mostly</b>	<b>Only</b>
<b>Syriac</b>	<b>Syriac</b>	<b>Arabic</b>	<b>Arabic</b>	<b>Arabic</b>

The family and home part consisted of ten different family members and occasions, such as father, mother, family meetings, etc... Five items focused on language use at the church. They asked questions about the languages used in prayers and with different people such as the priest and fellow prayers when discussing religious matters. The media part contained three items listed to get information about the languages used when interacting with media such as TV, radio and the internet. Moreover, one

open-ended question was listed to ask about the participants' knowledge of any international magazines or organizations that are concerned with Assyrians. The part related to the neighborhood and friends consisted of three items. Three other questions concentrated on language use among different people in the workplace were used when discussing different topics. The last four items in this section dealt with the language used in inner speech and when expressing emotions such as happiness, anger, and confusion.

The third section was concerned with the Assyrians' attitudes towards Syriac and Arabic. It contained 13 statements about the participants' feelings and attitudes towards Syriac and six towards Arabic. Employing a five- point Likert scale, the participants were asked to check one of the choices that measures the degree of their agreement or disagreement as shown below:

<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Undecided</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>

Additionally, four questions were listed to compare directly their attitudes towards Syriac and Arabic.

The fourth section of the questionnaire aimed at exploring the factors that support the use of Syriac and Arabic. This part contained 12 statements that reflected the factors that support the use of Syriac and seven statements

that support the use of Arabic. The choices were also based on the on the Likert scale that showed the degree of the participants' agreement or disagreement.

### **3.3 Validity of the Questionnaire**

To insure the validity of the questionnaire, a panel of university professors who have teaching experience in linguistics and education were requested to determine the face and the content validity of the questionnaire. They were asked to provide their comments, notes and recommendations on the appropriateness of the questions. The professors were very helpful and provided the researcher with valuable suggestions and recommendations. For example, one of the professors suggested the word 'relatives' instead of 'siblings'. Another professor suggested rewording the questions related to language attitudes. Then, the researcher adhered to the suggestions and amendments as recommended by the professors.

### **3.4 Reliability of the Questionnaire**

For the purpose of achieving a high degree of reliability of the questionnaire, the researcher conducted a pilot study in the last week of March 2013. Seven students from the Assyrian community who did not belong to the sample of the study were chosen purposively to fill up the questionnaire and to rate the approximate time to fill it up. Two weeks



later, the questionnaire was distributed again to the same respondents. The researcher used Cronbach alpha to measure the reliability of the questionnaire. The estimated result, 0.842, showed that the questionnaire items were consistent.

### **3.5 Data Analysis and Statistical Treatment**

The researcher collected the raw data from the respondents via the sociolinguistic questionnaire and then analyzed data in terms of frequencies and percentages and then he displayed them in tables as follows:

1. The responses of all items of the questionnaire were recorded manually using a summary sheet.
2. Results were illustrated in tables. Each table described a certain topic, with a title, number and was accompanied with comments and description of the higher and lower rates.
3. Results were presented in terms of frequencies and percentages.
4. The researcher interpreted the obtained data and highlighted their consistency with the findings of other researchers mentioned in the related literature.

### **3.6 Procedures of the Study**

The researcher used the following steps in conducting this research:

- 1- reading a number of previous studies that were related to language and ethnicity, language and minority groups, languages in contact, a historical background about Assyrians, and the situation of the Assyrians in their homeland and in diaspora.
- 2- setting forth the research objectives and its questions and its hypotheses which utilize readings from previous studies, and thus the elements of the study were established.
- 3- designing a pilot questionnaire and distributing it to a small group of the community.
- 4- conducting interviews with key figures from the Assyrian community.
- 5- establishing the community profile
- 6- preparing the questionnaire
- 7- establishing the validity and reliability of the questionnaire.
- 8- obtaining a letter of permission from the Middle East University to facilitate and give assistance to the researcher.

9- distributing the questionnaire which included a covering letter explaining the purpose of the study and the official approval to carry out this study.

10- collecting the raw data from the questionnaire and recording and analyzing them.

11- interpreting the data, discussing the results, giving logical explanations for them, and comparing the results of this study with the results of other studies by referring to previous literature and indicating with whom the results agreed or disagreed.

12- drawing the main conclusions from the findings.

13- presenting some recommendations for future studies.

14- listing references according to APA style and adding appendices at the end of the thesis.

## Chapter Four

### Results of the Study

#### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter provides answers to the three questions of the study that investigate the language situation among the Assyrians of Jordan. These questions are:

1. In what domains do the Assyrians of Jordan use Syriac and Arabic?
2. What are the attitudes of the Assyrians of Jordan towards Syriac and Arabic?
3. What are the factors that either help the Assyrians of Jordan maintain or lose their ethnic language?

#### 4.1 Results of the First Question:

The first question of this study is *"In what domains do the Assyrians of Jordan use Syriac and Arabic?"*

This question focuses on the language used by the respondents in various domains including home, neighborhood, workplace, church, media and emotional self – expressions.

The respondents are asked to choose one among five choices indicating the language used in each domain. The results are presented by combining the two choices "Arabic" and "only Arabic" together and "Syriac" and "only Syriac" together.

The results in Table (1) below show the languages that the respondents use at home and when they talk to family members. Results indicate that the overwhelming majority of the respondents, 95 %, use Arabic at home with their family members and relatives and only 2% use Syriac while 3% use both languages.

The results presented in Table (1) also show that 97% of the respondents speak Arabic when they talk to their relatives during a phone call. Moreover, when the respondents are asked about the language they use when they talk to their grandfathers, 96% of them choose Arabic while only 2% use Syriac and 2% use both languages. The same percentage, 96%, is shown for the language used when talking to grandmothers, to children, to other relatives, and at family meetings.

**Table (1) Language Use at Home and among the Family**

<b>Questions</b>	<b>Only Syriac %</b>	<b>Mostly Syriac %</b>	<b>Both Syriac and Arabic %</b>	<b>Mostly Arabic %</b>	<b>Only Arabic %</b>	<b>Total %</b>
What language do you use when you talk to your relatives during a phone call?	1	0	2	13	84	100
to your grandfather?	2	0	2	17	79	100
to your grandmother?	2	0	2	23	73	100
to your other relatives?	2	0	2	28	68	100
to your children?	0	2	2	14	82	100
at family meetings?	0	2	2	30	66	100
to your father?	2	0	4	21	73	100
to your brothers and sisters?	2	0	4	14	80	100
to your spouse?	2	0	4	10	84	100
to your mother?	2	2	4	26	66	100

Regarding the language used with their fathers, 94% of the respondents prefer using Arabic while only 2% use Syriac and 4% use both languages. Similarly, 94% of them use Arabic when they talk to their brothers and sisters and, again, 94% of the married respondents speak Arabic to their spouses. Finally, results from Table (1) above indicate that 92% of the respondents speak Arabic to their mothers.

With regard to church and religion domain, results from table (7) below indicate that 77% of the respondents use Arabic and 9% use Syriac while 14 % use both languages

Table (2) below shows that 88 % of the respondents use Arabic when they discuss religious subjects outside the church, 80% use Arabic when they talk to the priest or the clergyman, 75% to use it with their fellow worshippers at church. Finally, the least use of Arabic is shown when the respondents pray and supplicate at church while 64% of them use Arabic, 25% use Syriac and 11% use both languages.

**Table (2): Language Use at Church**

<b>Questions</b>	<b>Only Syriac %</b>	<b>Mostly Syriac %</b>	<b>Both Syriac and Arabic %</b>	<b>Mostly Arabic %</b>	<b>Only Arabic %</b>	<b>Total %</b>
What language do you use in the religious meetings outside the church?	0	4	8	27	61	100
when you talk to your fellow worshippers at church?	2	5	18	14	61	100
when you talk to the priest or clergyman?	2	11	17	18	52	100
when you pray and supplicate at Church?	11	14	11	21	43	100

Despite the fact that the percentage of using Arabic in this domain is relatively high, it is still low compared to other domains. These results can be justified in light of the fact that the original language of the prayers at church is Syriac but due to the fact that most of the Assyrians are not proficient in Syriac, as pointed out in Table (A) above, the prayers are written in what is called "Gersony"; three different forms of language, Syriac, Arabized Syriac (Syriac words written in Arabic alphabets) and the last one is translation of the ceremonies into Arabic.

**Table (3): Language Use at Workplace**

Questions	Only Syriac %	Mostly Syriac %	Both Syriac and Arabic %	Mostly Arabic %	Only Arabic %	Total %
What language do you use:						
when you discuss general topics with your colleagues at work (weather, sports, politics... etc. )?	0	0	0	11	89	100
with your fellow employees?	0	0	2	23	75	100
with your boss to discuss business and technical matters?	0	0	3	33	64	100

Table (3) above indicates that the respondents use mainly Arabic in the workplace domain where 96% use Arabic 4% use both languages and none of them use Syriac.



Results show that all the respondents, 100%, use Arabic when discussing general topics with their colleagues at work, 98% of them use Arabic with their fellow employers and 98% use Arabic when discussing technical matters with their boss.

Similarly, Table (4) below presents results for the language used by the respondents when they express emotional reactions and unconscious feelings. Results prove that Arabic is dominant again where 96% of them use Arabic and only 4% use both languages.

Results indicate that 98% of the respondents use Arabic when they are confused or stressed; 96% of them use Arabic to express happiness or to express anger and 94% also use Arabic in their dreams.

**Table (4) Language Use and Emotional Self-Expressions**

<b>Questions</b>	<b>Only Syriac %</b>	<b>Mostly Syriac %</b>	<b>Both Syriac and Arabic %</b>	<b>Mostly Arabic %</b>	<b>Only Arabic %</b>	<b>Total %</b>
What language do you use:						
when you are confused or stressed?	0	0	2	14	84	100
when you express happiness?	0	2	2	7	89	100
when you express anger?	0	2	2	14	82	100
in your dreams?	0	2	4	14	80	100

Again, results presented in Table (5) below indicate that Arabic is dominant in the neighborhood and friends domain. The vast majority of the respondents, 95 %, use Arabic and none of them uses Syriac while only 5% use both languages.

**Table (5): Language Use in the Neighborhood and with Friends**

<b>Questions</b> What language do you use:	<b>Only Syriac %</b>	<b>Mostly Syriac %</b>	<b>Both Syriac and Arabic %</b>	<b>Mostly Arabic %</b>	<b>Only Arabic %</b>	<b>Total %</b>
When you buy grocery?	0	0	2	5	93	100
With your neighbors?	0	0	5	11	84	100
When you meet friends in the neighborhood?	0	0	8	29	63	100

When they are asked about the language they use in this domain, 98% of the respondents prefer to use Arabic when they buy their needs; 95% use Arabic when they talk to their neighbors and 92% of them use Arabic when they meet their friend in the neighborhood.

Results in Table (6) below show that the respondents favor Arabic in the 'media domain'. Results point out that none of them uses Syriac in this domain. The overwhelming majority, 91 %, use Arabic and 9% use both languages.

Results also show that none of the respondents favors using Syriac in the media domain while 93 % of them favor Arabic when they listen to radio, only 7% listen to the radio in both languages Arabic and Syriac. Also, 90% favor Arabic when they watch TV, and 89% browse internet by using Arabic.

**Table (6): Language and Media**

Questions	Only Syriac %	Mostly Syriac %	Both Syriac and Arabic %	Mostly Arabic %	Only Arabic %	Total %
In what language do you listen to the radio?	0	0	7	18	75	100
In what language do you watch TV?	0	0	10	27	63	100
What is the language of the internet websites that you browse?	0	0	11	25	64	100

To conclude, results from tables 1-6 prove that the majority of the Assyrians of Jordan use Arabic at home among family members; at Church with the celebrant and fellow worshipers, at the workplace with fellow workers; in the neighborhood with neighbors; in the emotional self-expressions such as dreaming and cursing and in the media domain especially when listening to radio stations and watching television

programs. However, a scanty number of the respondents still use Syriac in the church and at home with family members

## **4.2 Results of the Second Question**

The second question of this study is "*What are the attitudes of the Assyrians of Jordan towards Syriac and Arabic?*"

This question deals with the respondents' attitudes and feelings towards both Syriac and Arabic. Results are presented by combining the choices "agree" and "strongly agree" and combining "disagree" and "strongly disagree".

Results in Table ( 7 ) below indicate that 93% of the respondents consider Syriac as a symbol of their identity and only 7% of them are undecided while none of them disagrees with this statement .Results also show that the majority of the respondents, 93%, regard Syriac as a prestigious language as it is one of the oldest languages in history and 91% of them regard it as their national language.

As for establishing Assyrian schools in Jordan to teach Syriac, the majority of them, 91%, agree with the idea, while only 2% disagree and 7% of them are undecided. When the respondents are asked whether Syriac should be the first language used at home, 88% of the respondents agree and only 9% disagree while 3% are undecided. Moreover, 86% of the

respondents believe that their children should speak Syriac fluently while communicating with other Assyrians.

As for the feelings of the respondents towards the status of Syriac, 78% of them report that it is dying in Jordan, 4% disagree and 18% are undecided. Similarly, 75% of them agree that it is dying in their homes.

**Table (7) Attitudes towards Syriac**

Item	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Undecided %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagreed %	Total %
It is the symbol of my Assyrian identity	75	18	7	0	0	100
It is a prestigious language because it is one of the most ancient languages in history.	82	11	5	0	2	100
It is my national language	84	7	9			100
Assyrian schools should be established in order to teach Syriac.	84	7	7	2	0	100
Syriac should be the first language at home	61	27	3	5	4	100
It is important that my children speak Syriac fluently.	52	34	9	0	5	100
It is dying in my home( not used at all)	54	21	20	5	0	100
It is dying in Jordan( not used at all)	52	26	18	4	0	100
It is associated with the Syriac history and culture.	63	9	21	4	4	100
Syriac language is easy to learn.	16	37	9	38	00	100
It is the language of my childhood and I am emotionally attached to it.	20	29	37	5	9	100
It is more important than Arabic for me.	14	29	43	9	5	100
It is a poetic language	52	13	31	4	0	100

Results shown in Table (7) also indicate that 70% of the respondents believe that Syriac is associated with the Assyrian history and culture and 65% of them regard Syriac as a poetic language, 32% of them are undecided and only 4% of them disagree with this idea. When the respondents are asked whether Syriac is easy to learn, 53% of them agree while 38% disagree.

Regarding the linkage between Syriac and childhood, 49% of the respondents confirm, 38% of them are undecided and only 14% disagree. As for the usefulness of Syriac in comparison with Arabic, the results show that 43% of the respondents consider Syriac to be more useful than Arabic, 43% of them are undecided and 14% of them consider Syriac to be more useful than Arabic.

Table (8) below shows the attitudes of the Assyrians towards Arabic. Results show that the majority of the respondents, 93%, agree that Arabic enables them to socially communicate with all Jordanians while only 2% disagree and 5% of them are undecided. Similarly, 91% of the respondents report that it is important to use Arabic in all situations.

Economically, results from Table (8) below indicate that 89% of the respondents support the idea that Arabic is more important than Syriac at work, and 88% of them regard Arabic as very important to succeed in their

careers. Moreover, 85% of the respondents agree that fluency in Arabic is important to them in order to improve their economic status.

Regarding the importance of Arabic compared to Syriac, results show that 69% of the respondents agree that Arabic is more important while 20% of them are undecided and only 11% disagree.

**Table (8) Attitudes towards Arabic**

Item	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Undecided %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %	Total %
Arabic enables me to socially communicate with all Jordanians because I am Jordanian.	77	16	5	2	0	100
It is important to use Arabic in all situations	34	57	9	0	0	100
Arabic is more important than Syriac regarding my job.	48	41	7	4	0	100
Fluency in Arabic is crucial to succeed in my career	59	29	9	4	0	100
Fluency in Arabic improves my economic status	71	14	9	5	0	100
Arabic is more important than Syriac	21	48	20	7	4	100

Table (9) below shows the respondent's attitudes towards Syriac and Arabic. When they are asked about the more beautiful language, 36% of them consider Syriac as more beautiful and 16% consider Arabic as more beautiful while 48% like both languages.

**Table (9) Attitudes towards Syriac and Arabic**

Question	Syriac %	Arabic %	Both %	Total %
Which language is beautiful?	36	16	48	100
Which language is useful?	11	63	26	100
Which language do you prefer when you communicate with others?	13	66	21	100
In what language do you best express yourself?	7	80	13	100

Results in Table (9) above also show that 11% of the respondents regard Syriac as more useful while 63% regard Arabic as more useful and 26% regard both languages as useful to them.

With regard to the language they prefer to communicate with others, 13% of the respondents prefer using Syriac and 66% prefer using Arabic while 21% prefer both languages.

Finally, only 7% of the respondents express themselves better by using Syriac while 80% of them express themselves better in Arabic and only 13% express themselves in both languages.



To conclude, the results shown in tables 7-9 prove that the Assyrians of Jordan have very positive attitudes towards both Syriac and Arabic.

### **4.3 Results of the Third Question**

The third question of the study is "*What are the factors that either help the Assyrians of Jordan maintain or to lose their ethnic language?*"

This question is concerned with the impact of 20 given factors on supporting the use of Syriac and Arabic.

Table (10) below presents the degree of the respondents' agreement or disagreement with the influence of certain factors in supporting the use of Syriac.

Results indicate that the respondents believe that the pride in the ethnic origin plays a significant role in the ethnic language preservation. The majority of them, 93%, support the idea and only 7% are neutral. As for the role of the church in general and the clergymen in particular in preserving ethnic languages, the majority, 93%, of the respondents believe that fact that they have an important role in language preservation. Moreover, 92% agree that the tight relationships among the ethnic group members play a pivotal role in retaining the ethnic language.

One of the most important factors in the ethnic language maintenance is internal marriage. The majority, 92%, agree with the influence of this factor while only 8% are neutral.

**Table (10) Factors that Support the Use of the Ethnic Language**

<b>Factors</b>	<b>Strongly Agree %</b>	<b>Agree %</b>	<b>Undecided %</b>	<b>Disagree %</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree %</b>	<b>Total %</b>
The pride in the ethnic origin helps to preserve the ethnic language.	55	38	7	0	0	100
The clergyman has a positive role in preserving the ethnic language	61	32	5	2	0	100
The tight relationships among the community members help preserve the ethnic language	46	46	5	0	2	100
The internal marriage among ethnic group members helps them preserve the ethnic language.	48	44	8	0	0	100
Living in an isolated neighborhood helps preserve the ethnic language.	34	55	11	0	0	100
The continuous suffering and displacement of ethnic groups through history help them preserve their ethnic languages	52	36	8	4	0	100

The church has a role in language preservation	68	20	13	0	0	100
The attachment of the ethnic language to the childhood plays a role in language maintenance.	43	43	14	0	0	100
The democratic atmosphere in Jordan gives the freedom to all Jordanians of all origins to freely learn and use their ethnic languages.	43	43	14	0	0	100
Family and the home have a significant role in ethnic language preservation.	46	39	9	2	4	100
Grandparents play an important role in preserving the ethnic language.	46	38	12	0	4	100
Community associations play a positive role in preserving the language.	43	37	18	2	0	100

The results from Table (10) above also indicate that 89% of the respondents believe that living in isolated neighborhoods helps preserve the language, 88% of them believe that the continuous suffering of ethnic minorities throughout history plays a significant role in preserving the language and 88% agree that the church plays an important role in preserving the ethnic language. Moreover, 86% agree that the attachment of the ethnic language to childhood plays an important role in preserving it.

Regarding the democratic atmosphere as a factor to language preservation, eighty-six per cent agree with that as they have the freedom to choose the language they prefer in their country, Jordan.

Results reported in Table (10) also indicate that 85% agree that the home and family play a key role in preserving the ethnic language, only 6% disagree and 9% are undecided. Similarly, 84% support the idea that grandparents play an important role in preserving the ethnic language, 80% of them agree that the community associations play a role in preserving the ethnic language.

Results reported in Table (11) below indicate that there are very important factors that support using and learning Arabic by the Assyrians in Jordan. The overwhelming majority, 95%, believe that being a Jordanian citizen demands to learn and use Arabic as it is the official language of the country.

Results also assert that the economic factor plays a significant role in learning and using Arabic; 94% believe that fluency in Arabic helps them to get a good job and 87% support that Arabic facilitates and supports their occupational status. Again, 93% believe that knowledge of Arabic helps them to assimilate in the Jordanian society.

**Table (11) Factors that Support Using and Learning Arabic.**

<b>Factors</b>	<b>Strongly Agree %</b>	<b>Agree %</b>	<b>Undecided %</b>	<b>Disagree %</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree %</b>	<b>Total %</b>
Being a Jordanian of an Assyrian origin demands to learn and use Arabic because it is the official language of the country	50	45	5	0	0	100
Knowledge of Arabic helps Assyrians to assimilate in the Jordanian society	48	45	7	0	0	100
Arabic helps me to have a good job	39	55	6	0	0	100
Arabic enables me to get access to the field of knowledge.	36	55	7	2	0	100
Arabic facilitates and supports my occupational status.	41	46	13	0	0	100
My education in the Jordanian schools and universities helps me to learn Arabic.	55	34	11	0	0	100

The results from Table (11) above also show that the educational field plays a significant role in learning and using Arabic where 91% believe that Arabic is an important vehicle that enables them to get access to fields of knowledge and 89% regard education in the Jordanian schools and universities helps as an important factor that support learning Arabic.

## 4.4 Analysis of the Interviews

This section provides answers of the three questions of the study based on the interviews that were made by the researcher concerning the language situation among the Assyrian community in Jordan. The interviews were recorded, transcribed and then translated into English.

Three Assyrians were interviewed to discuss the language situation among the Assyrian community in Jordan.

**The first interviewee** is an activist in the "Syrian Orthodox Charity Association" in Jordan and an expert in the Assyrian culture. He expressed his deep regret regarding the current status of the Syriac in Jordan because the role of this language is declining dramatically in the Assyrian life. He said that it is only used in church. He attended some classes in the church in order to learn Syriac for religious purposes but he is unable to communicate in Syriac.

Nevertheless, he is proud of Syriac because it is one of the most ancient languages in history and because of its attachment to the golden era of the Assyrian Empire. Moreover, it is the language of Jesus the Christ and it enriched the world literature.

He compared the status of the Assyrians to that of the Armenians; Unlike Syriac, Armenian is the official language of an official country

"Armenia" which acts as a reference for the Armenians and plays a great role in preserving their ethnicity.

Another important factor that supports the use of Arabic is historical. After a long period of oppression and displacement, the Assyrians wanted to maintain a normal and peaceful life. This made learning and using Arabic a must to achieve their justified goal.

**The second interviewee** is an Assyrian from the first generation who witnessed the migration from Palestine and attended the old Assyrian school. He is also aware of all phases related to the Assyrian community in Jordan. When he was asked about the domains of language use among the Assyrians of Jordan, he answered that Arabic is dominant over almost all situations, topics and places. He maintained that the Assyrians are viewed as a religious minority rather than an ethnic and linguistic one. When he was asked about the reason behind the domination of Arabic and the declining role of his ethnic language in the Assyrian daily life, he reported that the social nature of the Assyrians and their willingness to mingle in the Jordanian society leads them to exert every possible effort to learn and use Arabic properly. Additionally, he reported that the lack of serious attempts to preserve Syriac by the Assyrian leaders and the inability to follow clear plans to familiarize the Assyrians, especially the young generations, with

their ethnicity and language are the most important reasons behind shifting to Arabic.

He said that he learned Syriac when he was a child in the old Syriac school and that he forgot the spoken language due to the minimal use of it. And now he only remembers some fragment vocabularies. When he was asked to describe his feelings and attitudes towards both Syriac and Arabic, he conveyed very positive attitudes towards Syriac. He considers it a very important constituent of the Assyrian history, heritage, culture and national identity. He also expressed his desire to re-open the Assyrian school because he considers the as a very important factor in preserving the language.

As for his attitudes towards Arabic he stated that it is the language that enables him to communicate and integrate socially and economically with the mainstream community. As the Assyrians of Jordan long to be an integrated part of the Jordanian society, they intentionally learned and used Arabic.

**The third interviewee** is the professor of hydrogeology at Muta'h University. He was also asked "in what domains do the Assyrians of Jordan use Syriac and Arabic?" He says that the use of Syriac is restricted in some domains such as church and home and the influence of Arabic extends to



dominate all other domains. He also stated that he learned Syriac by himself. He can read and write Syriac but he cannot speak or understand the spoken language because the written language is very different from the spoken one.

Moreover, he reported that the status of Syriac nowadays is similar to the status of Hebrew before the Israeli occupation of Palestine. Hebrew became codified and official language. Before that it was, like Syriac now, fragment spoken by different groups of people in several parts of the world.

As for his attitudes towards Syriac, he expressed his psychological attachment to it as he considers it as a symbol of the Assyrian identity and a label for all the Assyrians. He stated that you cannot be Assyrian without the Assyrian religion and language.

With regard to his attitude towards Arabic, he also conveyed very positive attitude. He regards it in most cases as his first language. It is crucial to use Arabic in almost all domains in order to improve their social and economic status. The social and economic factors are the most important factors that lead them to learn and use Arabic. For him, mastering Arabic is a must to interact socially and economically with the mainstream society. He regards himself as a Jordanian citizen of an Assyrian origin and he is proud of both identities.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Discussion, Conclusions and Recommendations**

#### **5.0 Introduction**

This chapter renders a brief summary and a short discussion of the findings of the three research questions. It also attempts to explain and interpret the results in the light of the reviewed literature. The chapter concludes with a summary of the findings of the study and recommendations for future research.

#### **5.1 Discussion of the Findings Related to the Domains of Language Use**

Results related to the domains of language use prove that the Assyrians of Jordan use the host language (Arabic) in almost all the domains. The results reported in Table (1), page 50 concerning language use at home show that the overwhelming majority of the Assyrians of Jordan choose Arabic to communicate at home with several members of the family.

This may indicate that the Assyrians of Jordan are losing their ethnic language in one of the most important domains of language use which is the home and family domain. This result could be analyzed in the light of

Fishman (1989) who claims that “what begins as the language of social and economic mobility ends, within three generations or so, as the language of the crib as well, even in democratic and pluralism-permitting contexts”(p. 206). Since the sample of the study belongs to third or the fourth generation, this fact proves the validity of Fishman's claim.

Results in Table (2) page 51 prove that a great number of the Assyrians of Jordan use Arabic at church when discussing different topics with different people such as clergymen and fellow worshippers.

Despite the fact that the percentage of using Arabic in this domain is relatively high, it is still low compared to other domains. These results can be justified in light of the fact that the original language of the prayers at church is Syriac but due to the fact that most of the Assyrians are not proficient in Syriac, as pointed out in Table (A) page 35, the prayers are written in what is called "Gersony" which means using three different forms of language; Syriac, Arabized Syriac (Syriac words written in Arabic alphabets) and the last one is translation of the ceremonies into Arabic.

Results reported in Table (3) page 52 show that the Assyrians of Jordan use mainly Arabic in the workplace when talking to different people and while discussing several types of topics. This result could be explained by the fact that the Assyrians work in different workplaces that demand the

use of the mainstream language which is Arabic. This result also indicates that they are integrated in the Jordanian community.

Results reported in Table 4, page 53 concerning language use and emotional self-expression show that Arabic is mostly used in psychological situations such as when dreaming, when angry or confused and when happy. Almost the majority of respondents indicate the use of Arabic when they dream, confused or angry and when they want to express happiness. This result may indicate that the Assyrians of Jordan regard Arabic as their first language. This result is in line with Fishman (1966) who emphasizes the role of psychological processes in maintaining or losing ethnic languages.

Similarly, results shown in Table (5) page 54 indicate that the Assyrians of Jordan use Arabic when they interact with different people in the neighborhood for several purposes. This result may be justified by the fact that the Assyrians of Jordan do not live together in their own neighborhoods but they are spread all over Amman. At the beginning, they were gathered in certain regions such as Al-Muhajereen and Al-Ashrafeieh but as their economic status improves, they moved to live in more prestigious suburbs in Amman. This result agrees with Dweik (1992) who claimed that “the dispersal of the Lebanese throughout the city and

suburbs." (p. 116) has been one of the factors that caused Arabic language loss.

Again, Results shown in Table (6) page 55 indicate that the vast majority of the respondents use Arabic in the media domain. Despite the existence of a well-known Assyrian TV channel called Suroyo, Arabic is still the predominant language used in media because this channel is transmitted in Arabic and Syriac and the Assyrians of Jordan prefer using Arabic when watching it. Additionally, "Al- Hikma" magazine is a cultural and religious Assyrian magazine published in Arabic and contains some articles written in Syriac.

This result agrees with (Lucca et al., 2008) who stated that religion does not seem to be a valid motivation for maintaining Arabic among the Moroccans in Italy. However, this result disagrees with (Oshana, 2003) who concludes that the religious affiliation had a very important role in the Assyrian language maintenance.

These results prove that the host language (Arabic) is used in all the domains of language use. Results also prove that Syriac is minimally used in such domains as church, home and among family members. These results support the results of

These results support the findings of (Holmes, 2001),(Dweik ,1986) and (Odish, 1999) who maintain that shift occurs when the host language is used in most of the key domains.

The results lead to the fact that the Assyrians of Jordan are witnessing a state of language shift towards the majority language (Arabic). These findings agree with (Yildiz, 2000) who mentions that most Aramaic-speaking groups are losing their native language gradually in struggle with Arabic and it agrees with (Fishman, 1985)who suggests that when an intrusive (minority) language comes in contact with an indigenous (majority) one, the minority language loses its influence to the majority language. Finally, it agrees with the studies of (Dashti, 2004) who investigated the language situation of the Kuwaiti Ajams, (Al-khatib, 2010) who investigated the language shift among the Kurds of Jordan, (Brobely, 2000) who investigated the language shift and maintenance of the Romanian minority community in Hungary and (Søndergaard and Norrby, 2006) who studied the level of language maintenance of Danish in the Danish community of Melbourne. All these results concluded that the ethnic intrusive language shifted towards the majority language.

## **5.2 Discussion of the Findings Related to Language Attitudes**

Results reported in Table (7), page 57 concerning language attitudes towards Syriac show that the Assyrians of Jordan have positive attitudes

towards Syriac. a lot of them believe that Syriac is a prestigious language in connection with its history and is a symbol of their identity. They also believe in the importance of establishing Assyrian schools in order to enable them to learn their ethnic language.

Additionally, a great number of the Assyrians confirm that Syriac should be the first language used at home and that their children should speak Syriac fluently. They also associate Syriac with their history and culture and consider it a poetic language. Half of the respondents view Syriac as an easy language. On the other hand, and despite of all the above a high number of the Assyrians believe that Syriac is about to die in their homes and in Jordan as a whole.

Regarding their attitudes towards Arabic, the majority of the Assyrians have positive attitudes. Results shown in Table (8) page 59 indicate that most of the respondents believe that Arabic is the language that enables them to socially communicate with the Jordanian community and it is crucial to use Arabic in all situations. This feeling perhaps stems from the fact that Arabic is the language of instruction in the country they live in and it is suitable for everyday speech and because it advances them economically, occupationally and educationally.

A great number of the Assyrians in Jordan believe that Arabic is more important than Syriac regarding their jobs and to improve their economic status. Similarly, they prefer to use Arabic when they communicate with others. The results regarding the attitudes towards Arabic and Syriac indicate that the positive attitudes towards Arabic played a significant role in shifting to Arabic.

Positive attitudes towards ethnic languages are usually considered a significant indicator for language maintenance and negative attitudes usually speed up the process of language shift. However, the findings related to language attitudes indicate that although the Assyrians of Jordan maintain very positive attitudes towards their ethnic language, they are still unable to maintain Syriac. Positive attitudes towards Syriac may be linked to their psychological attachment to their ethnic identity and history. It could also be explained by the fact that the Assyrians of Jordan confirm that language is a very important constituent in their culture and identity.

The results agree with (Dyers, 2008) who viewed language as a badge of individual and group identity. These findings also agree with (Oshana, 2003) who stated that there is a strong relationship between cultural identification and identity status but there was limited relationship between identity status and linguistic competency.



The results disagree with (Holmes, 2001), (Gabsi, 2011), (Al-Obaidi, 2013), (Ndhlovu, 2010) and (Bissoonauth, 2011) who emphasized the role of positive language attitudes towards ethnic languages in maintaining them. However, the negative language attitudes play an important role in language shift. It also disagrees with ( Dweik, 2000) who stated that positive language attitudes towards Chechne language played a significant role in preserving it. However, it agrees with the results saying that the positive attitudes towards the host language played a great role in using and learning it. Again, the results support the findings of (Gabsi, 2011) who concluded the Tunisian Berber did not have negative feelings towards Arabic even though its encroachments mean that their mother tongue was facing extinction.

(Sufo, 2009) concludes that the third generation of the Arabic Turkish families was conscious and believed that the maintenance of their language was a way to preserve their cultural identity. In this sense, these results may give the Assyrians the opportunity to revitalize their language in order to maintain their cultural identity.

### **5.3 Discussion of Findings Related to the Factors that Support the Use of Syriac and Arabic.**

Results shown in Table (10) page 62 indicate that the Assyrians of Jordan are aware of the role of the given factors in preserving ethnic languages. These factors include historical factors such as the pride in the ethnic origin, social factors such as the tight relationships among the members of the ethnic group and the internal marriage, and religious factors such as the church and the clergymen. However, Tables 1-6 (pp. 50-55) prove that the Assyrian ethnic language is spoken minimally in certain domains such as church and home which may indicate that the Assyrian community is unable to maintain their original language and they are moving towards language shift.

The high percentages shown in Table (10) may indicate that although the members of the Assyrian community confirm the role of these factors in the ethnic language preservation, they are unable to maintain their ethnic language. This could be explained by the fact that Syriac is not widely used in the key domains which make these factors of a secondary importance behind the need to use Syriac in their lives. These factors should be accompanied with language use in order to take effect in maintain ethnic languages.

On the other hand, results in Table (11) page 65 and the interviews show that the social, economic, educational and political factors play a great role in shifting to Arabic. Results indicate that the Assyrians of Jordan agree with the role of some social factors such as "the Jordanian citizenship demands to learn and use Arabic". Moreover, they confirm the influence of the economic factors such as "knowledge of Arabic facilitates and supports the occupational status. Finally they assure the economic factors such as 'Arabic enables them to get access to the field of knowledge'.

The results of the overall study show that the major factors that lead to language shift are:

1. Historical, psychological and social factors.

The long history of displacement and dislocation of the Assyrians and their desire to integrate into a peaceful society affected their language situation. Although they are proud of their language and identity, they now feel that Arabic is their first language. The results presented in the community profile show that they suffered a lot before they finally succeeded in obtaining an equal social status to all Jordanians. This result agrees with (Al-Khatib and Al-Ali, 2005) who concluded that the inability

of the gypsies to mingle in the Jordanian society contributed to the maintenance of their language.

## 2. Economic factors

The economic factor proves to be one of the most important factors determining language shift. Since the Assyrians of Jordan seek a better life and higher economic status, they enroll in different types of occupations that demand fluency in Arabic. This kind of attitudes towards using Arabic in work affects the use of their ethnic language gradually which results in the present situation of language shift. This result agrees with (Giles et. Al , 1977), (Holmes, 2001) and (Myrers-Scotton, 2006) who shed the light on the importance of the economic factor in maintaining or losing the ethnic languages. It also agrees with ( Sufu, 2009) who stresses that the type of jobs affect language maintenance or shift among ethnic minorities.

## 3. Political factors:

Originally, the Assyrians departed their lands due to political reasons. They faced oppression and continuous attempts to be displaced from their homelands by the Ottomans and Kurds. After they arrived in Jordan, they experienced a very different treatment since their presence in Jordan was welcomed by the authority who endowed them full capacity to practice their own religion, cultural practices and hold all kinds of occupations.

Additionally, because of their relatively small number, the Assyrians in Jordan do not seek to have their own independent state like the case of Kurds in Iraq and Turkey. Finally, the Assyrians do not have an independent state and their language is not the language of any independent state that may act as a reference for them as is the case of the Armenians.

#### 4. Demographic factors

It is clear from Table (A) page35 that the Assyrians of Jordan do not live together in their own neighborhoods. This factor proves to be a valid motivation for language maintenance among ethnic groups. When the ethnic group lives in isolated neighborhoods they usually communicate using their ethnic language which may lead to maintain it. Moreover, the numerical power proves to be an important factor in preserving ethnic languages. The population of the Assyrians of Jordan does not exceed 2000 people which may affect the use of their language. This result agrees with (Giles et. al , 1977), (Holmes, 2001) and (Myrers-Scotton, 2006) as they regard the demographic factors as one of the factors that affect language maintenance and shift.

5. The habitual use of Arabic in a variety of situations and locations helps in language shift towards it. This means that Syriac has lost many domains of language use because of the attraction from the host language which

seems to have advanced the Assyrians of Jordan in most aspects of life. Usually, using the ethnic language in the key domains in language use plays a significant role in preserving the language. The Assyrians of Jordan abandoned their ethnic language in almost all the domains which highly affected their language shift towards Arabic. This result agrees with (Fishman, 1966) who pointed out that the habitual use of the ethnic language in more than one time and place is an indicator of language maintenance.

#### 6. Generational distance:

According to (Fishman, 1989) the third and the fourth generations usually shift to the host language. As time passes by, the desire of the new generations to integrate in the host community increases which enhances their ability to learn and use the host language. Results from the interviews show that the pioneers of the first generation who first arrived during the World War I were speaking Syriac fluently in a variety of social domains in addition to other languages such as Arabic, Turkish and Kurdish. The next generations of the Assyrians in Jordan gradually abandoned the use of Syriac because of the attractions from Arabic.

## 5.4 Conclusions

An overall analysis of the questionnaire, interviews and community profile indicates that the Assyrians of Jordan are witnessing a shift from their ethnic language "Syriac" towards the majority language " Arabic". They consciously place more importance on Arabic to enable them to be assimilated in the mainstream society.

The research questions could be answered as follows:

1. The Assyrians of Jordan use Arabic in almost all domains. However results prove that Syriac is still minimally used in certain key domains such as at home with family members and at church.
2. The Assyrians of Jordan maintain very positive attitudes towards Syriac and Arabic. They perceive Syriac to be a source of pride to them and a symbol of their culture and history while they regard Arabic as the most appropriate vehicle for social communication and to improve their economic and occupational status.
3. There is a limited relationship between positive attitudes towards ethnic language and maintaining it. Results prove that the positive attitudes towards Syriac do not play role in preserving the language.

4. Positive attitudes towards Arabic play a significant role in learning and using it.
5. Regarding the factors that affect the use of Syriac, results prove that although the Assyrians of Jordan acknowledge the influence of the social, historical and economic factors, it is found that these factors are not enough for them to maintain their language.
6. The factors that have a significant role in language shift of the Assyrians in Jordan towards Arabic are historical, psychological social, economic, political and demographic factors in addition to the habitual use of Arabic in the key domains and the generational distance.
7. The Assyrians in Jordan by resorting to Arabic is an indication that they live in a tolerant society as Dweik (2000) had concluded in his study on the Chechens of Jordan.

## **5.5 Recommendations for Future Research**

Owing to the fact that the current study has dealt with the Assyrian community in Jordan, further research on the Assyrian communities in different parts of the world is recommended. Due to the fact that the Assyrians of Jordan are historically and socially linked to the Assyrians of Palestine, the researcher recommends conducting a research on the Assyrian communities in both locations. Moreover, it is recommended to



investigate the language situation among an Aramaic- speaking minority in three villages north east of Damascus– Syria.

## References

- Al-Khatib, M. and Al-Ali, M. (2010). Language and cultural shift among the Kurds of Jordan. *Sky Journal of Linguistics*, 23(1), 7-36.
- Al-Khatib, M. & Al-Ali, M. (2005): Language and cultural maintenance among the Gypsies of Jordan, *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 26 (3), 187-215.
- Al-Obaidi, T. (2013). *Language contact and the Neo-Aramaic language of the Chaldo- Assyrians in Baghdad: A Sociolinguistic Study*. (Unpublished M.A thesis). MEU: Amman.
- Aswagan, J. (2008). *Language shift and maintenance in Ethiopia: The Case of Maale* (Unpublished M.A thesis). South Africa University: South Africa. Retrieved on November 18<sup>th</sup> from <http://uir.unisa.ac.za/handle/10500/2119?show=full>
- Baker, C. (1988). *Key issues in bilingualism and bilingual education*. Multilingual Matters: England.
- Bell, J. (2003). *Doing your research project*. McGraw-Hill International: USA.
- Bissoonauth, A. (2011). Language shift and maintenance in multilingual Mauritius: the case of Indian ancestral languages. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 32(5), 421-434.

- Brobely, A. (2000). *The process and factors of language shift and maintenance: A sociolinguistic research in the Romanians minority community in Hungary*. Retrieved august 19 2012 from <http://rss.archives.ceu.hu/archive/00001155/01/167.pdf>
- Chadwick, B., Bahr, H. & Albrecht, S. (1984). *Social science research methods*. Prentice-Hall: England.
- David, M., Naji, I. & Kaur, S. (2003). Language maintenance or language shift among the Punjabi Sikh community in Malaysia?. *Int'l. J. Soc. Lang*, 161 (1), 1–24.
- Dashti, A. (2004). *Language maintenance or shift? An ethnographic investigation of the use of Farsi among Kuwaiti Ajams*. Arab Journal of Humanities. Retrieved July 27, 2010 from <http://pubcouncil.kuniv.edu.kw>
- Dunlap, S. (1995). *Nationalism, native language maintenance and the spread of English: A comparative study of the cases of Guam, the Philippines and Puerto Rico*. (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation) University of Puerto Rico: Puerto Rico. Retrieved February 13th 2013 from <http://ponce.inter.edu/vl/tesis/sharon/diss.html>
- Dweik, B. (1986). *Research papers in applied linguistics*. Hebron: Hebron University Press.

Dwiek, B. (1992). Lebanese Christians in Buffalo: Language maintenance and language shift. In A. Rouchdy (ed.). *The Arabic language in America* (pp. 100-118). Detroit: Wayne State University Press.

------. (2000). Linguistic and cultural maintenance among the Chechens of Jordan. *Language, Cultural and Curriculum*. 13. (2). 184-195.

Dyers, C. (2008). Language shift or maintenance? Factors determining the use of Afrikaans among some township youth in South Africa. *Stellenbosch Papers in Linguistics*, 38(1), 49-72.

Errihani, F. (2008). Language attitudes and language use in Morocco: effects of attitudes on 'Berber language policy'. *The Journal of North African Studies*, 13 (4), 411-428.

Frank, M. (2011). *Language maintenance and change among the Swiss mennonites of the Waterloo region, Ontario*. ( Unpublished M.A thesis). Buffalo, State University of New York: USA.

Ferguson, C. , Heath, S. , & Hwang, D.(1981). *Language in USA*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Fishman, J. (1966). *Language loyalty in the United States*. The Hague: Mouton and Co.

------( 1972). *The sociology of language*. Rowley: Newbury House.

----- (1985). *The rise and fall of the ethnic revival: Perspectives on language and ethnicity*. New York: Mouton.

Gabsi, Z. (2011). Attrition and maintenance of the Berber language in Tunisia. *Int'l. J. Soc. Lang*, 211(1), 135–164.

Giles, H., Bourhis, R., & Taylor, D. (1977). Towards a theory language in ethnic group relations. In H. Giles (Ed.), *Language, ethnicity and intergroup relations* (pp. 307–348). London: Academic Press.

Holmes, J (2001) *An introduction to sociolinguistics*, New York: Longman.

Jamai, A. (2008). *Language use and maintenance among the Moroccan minority in Britain*. (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation). University of Salford: UK.

Kondakov, A. (2011). *Koch survey wordlists and sociolinguistic questionnaire*. India: SIL International

Kiraz, G. (2001). *Assyrian or Syriac?: common language and heritage, different denominations*. Retrieved on September 13, 2012 from [http://www.midyatcity.com/articles/as-syr\\_kiraz.doc](http://www.midyatcity.com/articles/as-syr_kiraz.doc)

Kloss, H. (1966). German-American language maintenance efforts. In

J. Fishman (Ed.) *Language loyalty in the United States* (pp. 52–206).

New York: Mouton.

- Lasagabaster, D. (2008). Basque diaspora in the USA and language maintenance. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 29(1), 66-90.
- Lucca, D., Masiero, G. and Gabriele(2008). Language socialisation and language shift in the 1b generation: A study of Moroccan adolescents in Italy. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 5 (1),53-72.
- Martin, N. (2009). *Arab American Parents' Attitudes toward their Children's Heritage Language Maintenance and Language Practices*. (M.A thesis). University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill: USA. Retrieved from [https://cdr.lib.unc.edu/indexablecontent?id=uuid:15b293f9-982f-445f-9add-400e48ad38b4&ds=DATA\\_FILE](https://cdr.lib.unc.edu/indexablecontent?id=uuid:15b293f9-982f-445f-9add-400e48ad38b4&ds=DATA_FILE)
- Milroy, J. and Milroy, L. (1978). Belfast: Change and variation in an urban vernacular. In P. Trudgill (Ed.). *Sociolinguistic patterns in British English* (pp. 19-36). London: Arnold.
- Myers-Scotton, C. (2006). *Multiple voices: An introduction to bilingualism*, Malden. USA: Blackwell Publishing.
- Ndhlovu, F. (2010). Belonging and attitudes towards ethnic languages among African migrants in Australia. *Australian Journal of Linguistics*, 30(3), 299-321.

- Nofal, M. (2011). *The language situation among the Indians of Yemen: A sociolinguistic study*, (Unpublished M.A thesis). MEU: Amman.
- Odisho, E. (1999). Assyrian language maintenance and erosion in U.S.: A World War immigrant family case study. *Journal of Assyrian Academic Studies*, 13 (1), 3-15.
- Oshana, D. (2003). *Cultural identification, Linguistic Competency, and Religious Participation as Mediating Constructs in the Development of Ego Identity among Assyrian American Adolescents*. (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation) .Loyola University: Chicago.
- Saarikivi, J and Marten, H. (2012) Political and economic obstacles of minority languages maintenance. *Journal of Ethnopolitics and Minority Issues in Europe*, 11(1), 1-16.
- Søndergaard, B. & Norrby, C. (2006). Language maintenance and shift in the Danish community in Melbourne. *Int'l. J. Soc. Lang*, 180 (1), 105-121.
- Sofu, H. (2009). Language shift or maintenance within three generations: Examples from three Turkish-Arabic speaking families. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 6 (3), 246\_257.
- Tsitsipis, L. (2009). *Language shift and Maintenance*. Retrieved from <http://www.eolss.net/Sample-Chapters/C04/E6-20B-09-02.pdf>

- Wolck, W. (1972). A sociolinguistic survey of bilingualism in Buffalo. *The Third International Congress of Applied Linguistics*. Denmark: Copenhagen.
- Wolck, W. (2004) Universals of language: Maintenance, shift and change. *Collegium Antropologicum*, 18 (1), 5-12
- Yildiz, E. (1999). The Assyrians: A historical and current reality. *Journal of Assyrian Academic Studies*, 13 (1), 15-30.
- .(2000). theAramaiclanguage and its classification.*Journal of Assyrian Academic Studies*, 14 (1), 23-44.
- Younan, P. (2000). *History of Aramaic*. Retrieved from <http://www.peshitta.org/initial/aramaic.html>.

### Arabic references

عبدہ, سمیر (1997). السريان قديما وحديثا. عمان: دار الشروق للنشر والتوزيع



## Appendix (A)

### English Pilot Questionnaire

#### Community Profile Questions

Dear respondents,

I am Tareq Al-Refa'i, an MA student at the Middle East University in Amman – Jordan, Department of English, conducting a sociolinguistic study as a partial requirement for obtaining the Master's degree in English.

I would like to express my gratitude in advance for your taking the time in answering the following questions about the Assyrians in Jordan.

1. What languages do the Assyrians of Jordan speak?

.....

.....

2. What are the dialects do the Assyrians of Jordan speak?

.....

.....

3. Where did the Assyrians of Jordan come

from?.....

.....

4. When did they come to Jordan?

.....

5. What reasons made them come to Jordan?

.....

.....

6. Where do the Assyrians of Jordan live in Amman?

.....

7. Do the Assyrians of Jordan live in particular neighborhoods in Amman?

If yes, name them?

.....

.....

8. Where else in Jordan do they live?

.....

.....

9. Are there any Assyrian schools in Amman? If yes, name them?

.....

.....

10. What is the religious background of the Assyrians of Jordan? Name them.

.....

.....

11. Are there any religious places, centers, churches that they attend? name them.

.....

.....

12. Are there any Assyrian cultural and sports clubs? If yes, name them.

.....

.....

13. Name some of the celebrations and festivals that they celebrate?

.....

.....

14. Are there any Assyrian musicians who play music in Amman? If yes, name them.

.....

15. What kind of jobs do they have? Name them?

.....

.....

16. What kind of business do they manage? Name them?

.....

.....

17. Are there any newspapers written in Assyrian languages in Jordan? If yes, name them?

.....

.....

18. Are there any Assyrian radio stations in Jordan? If yes, name them?

.....

19. Are there any Assyrian restaurants in Amman? If yes, name them.

.....

20. How strong are the social relationships among the Assyrian in Jordan?

.....

21. Are there well-known personalities among the Assyrians of Jordan who hold high positions in the country? (Like members of the parliament, municipality, head of big business corporation, high ranking religious person...etc.) Name them.

.....

.....

.....

### **Respondents' Demographic Background**

1. How old are you? .....

2. What is your gender? .....

3. Where were you born? .....

4. What is your educational level? .....

5. What is your occupation? .....

6. What is your marital status? .....

7. When did your grandparents come to Amman?

## Appendix (B)

### Arabic Pilot Questionnaire

#### أسئلة عن مجتمع الدراسة

أعزائي،

أنا الطالب طارق جمال الرفاعي، أحد طلاب الماجستير في جامعة الشرق الأوسط في عمان- الأردن، قسم اللغة الانجليزية وآدابها. أقوم بدراسة لغوية اجتماعية وذلك كمتطلب لنيل درجة الماجستير في اللغة الانجليزية.

أود التعبير مسبقا عن شكري وامتناني لمساعدتكم إياي في الإجابة عن الأسئلة التالية المتعلقة بالسريان الاردنيين.

1. ما هي اللغات التي يتكلمها السريان الاردنيون؟

.....

.....

2. ما اللهجات التي يتكلمها السريان الاردنيون ؟

.....

.....

3. من أين جاء السريان الاردنيون؟

.....

.....

4. متى قدموا الى الأردن؟

.....

.....

5. ما الأسباب التي دفعتهم للقعود إلى الأردن؟

.....

.....

6. أين يعيش السريان الاردنيون في عمان؟

.....

.....

7. هل يسكن السريان الاردنيون في احياء معينة في عمان؟ اذكرها.

.....

.....

8. أين يعيش السريان الاردنيون في أماكن أخرى في الاردن؟

.....

.....

9. هل هناك أية مدارس سريانية في عمان؟ اذكرها.

.....

.....

10. ما الخلفية الدينية للسريان الاردنيين؟ اذكرها.

.....

.....

11. هل هناك أماكن أو مراكز دينية أو كنائس سريانية في عمان؟ اذكرها.

.....

.....

12. هل هناك نوادٍ ثقافية أو رياضية سريانية يرتادونها؟ أذكرها.

.....

.....

13. اذكر بعض الاحتفالات والمهرجانات التي يحتفلون بها؟

.....

14. هل هناك موسيقيون سريان يعزفون في عمان؟ أذكرهم.

.....

.....

15. ما الوظائف التي يعملون بها؟ اذكرها.

.....

.....

16. ما الأعمال التجارية التي يديرونها؟ اذكرها.

.....

.....

17. هل هناك صحف مكتوبة بلغات سريانية في عمان؟ اذكرها.

.....

.....

18. هل هناك محطات إذاعية سريانية في عمان؟ اذكرها.

.....

.....

19. هل هناك أي مطاعم سريانية في عمان؟ اذكرها.

.....

.....

20. ما مدى قوة الروابط الاجتماعية بين السريان الاردنيين؟

.....

.....



21. هل هنالك شخصيات مشهورة وسط السريان الاردنيين من الذين يتقلدون مواقع سلطة في الدولة (مثل أعضاء في البرلمان والمجالس البلدية ومدراء شركات كبرى ورجال دين... الخ)؟ اذكرهم.

.....

بيانات المشاركين في تعبئة هذا النموذج

1. العمر: .....

2. الجنس: .....

3. مكان الولادة: .....

4. التحصيل العلمي: .....

5. العمل: .....

6. الحالة الاجتماعية: .....

7. متى جاء أجدادك إلى عمان؟ .....

## Appendix (C)



### A Sociolinguistic Questionnaire

Dear participants,

I am, *Tareq Al-Refai*, a student at Middle East University, Dept. of English language and literature, doing my MA thesis as per the degree requirements. I am carrying out a survey on the **language situation among the Assyrians in Jordan**. You are kindly requested to take part in completing the attached questionnaire.

The questionnaire includes four sections. Section one aims to gain information about your social and linguistic background. The second section contains questions about the domains of Syriac and Arabic including home, church, media, neighborhood and workplace. Finally, the fourth section contains information about the factors that support the use of each language.

The data will be kept confidential and the used solely for the purpose of academic research.

In case you are uncomfortable with any question you can move on to answer the next.

Thank you so much for your cooperation.

Best regards,

Tareq Al-Refa'i

E-mail: [tareqrefaee@hotmail.com](mailto:tareqrefaee@hotmail.com)

## Part One: Demographic Data: Personal Information and Social Background

Please, choose the suitable answer by putting (✓) inside the brackets

### 1. Gender

Male ( )

Female ( )

### 2. Age:.....

### 3. Marital Status

Single ( )

Married ( )

Widowed ( )

Divorced ( )

### 4. Occupation

Business ( )

Education ( )

Medical field ( )

Civil service ( )

Handicraft field ( )

student( )

No occupation ( )

Other: .....

### 5. Education

Elementary ( )

Secondary ( )

Intermediate ( )

Diploma ( )

Bachelor degree ( )

Master ( )

Ph. D ( )

### 6. Residency

Assyrian neighborhood ( )

Arab neighborhood ( )

Mixed neighborhood ( )

### 7. Social Activities

- Attending Syrian Church services      Yes ( )      No ( )
- Attending Assyrian parties and      Yes ( )      No ( )  
national celebrations
- Participating in Assyrian social      Yes ( )      No ( )  
activities.

## 8. Linguistic Background

In the following questions we would like to rate your proficiency in Syriac. Please check (✓) the suitable answer.

Questions	Excellent (more than 90%)	Very Good (80-90%)	Good (70- 80%)	Fair (50- 70%)	Poor (Less than 50%)
I can <b>speak</b> Syriac					
When I <b>listen</b> to a Syriac conversation, I can <b>understand</b> it					
I can <b>read</b> Syriac					
I can <b>write</b> Syriac					
How proficient is your <b>father</b> in speaking Syriac?					
How proficient is your <b>mother</b> in speaking Syriac?					
How proficient is your <b>husband/wife</b> in speaking Syriac?					
How proficient are your <b>children</b> in speaking Syriac?					

### - If you speak Syriac, how did you acquire it?

At home ( )                      At school ( )                      From peers ( )  
In church ( )                      Self -taught ( )                      Other: .....

### - How did you acquire Arabic?

At home ( )                      At school ( )                      From peers ( )  
Self- taught ( )                      Other: .....

## Part Two: Domains of Language Use

The following questions are related to the language(s) that you use when you speak to different people in various places about different topics.

Please choose, the suitable answer by putting (√) in the proper box.

Questions	Only Syriac	Mostly Syriac	Both Syriac and Arabic	Mostly Arabic	Only Arabic
<b>1. Language Use at Home with the Family</b>					
• <b>What language do you use when you talk</b>					
- To your <b>father</b> ?					
- To your <b>mother</b> ?					
- To your <b>brothers and sisters</b> ?					
- To your <b>children</b> ?					
- To your <b>spouse</b> ?					
- To your <b>grandfather</b> ?					
- To your <b>grandmother</b> ?					
- To your other <b>relatives</b> ?					
- To your relatives during a phone call?					
- At family meetings?					
<b>2. Language Use at the Church</b>					
• <b>What language do you use</b>					
- When you pray and supplicate at the church?					
- When you talk to the priest or clergymen?					
- When you talk to your fellow worshippers at the church?					
- In religious meetings outside the church?					
<b>3. Language and Media</b>					
- In what language do you watch TV?					
- Which language you listen to on radio?					
- Which language you browse the internet with?					
- Are there any international organizations, associations or magazines you know that are concerned with the Assyrian affairs? Mention them, please. ..... ..... .....					

Questions	Only Syriac	Mostly Syriac	Both Syriac and Arabic	Mostly Arabic	Only Arabic
<b>4. Language Use in the Neighborhood and with Friends</b>					
• What language do you use					
- When you meet friends in the neighborhood?					
- With your neighbors?					
- When you buy grocery?					
<b>5. Language Use at Workplace</b>					
• What language do you use					
- With your fellow employees?					
- With your boss to discuss business and technical matters?					
- When you discuss general topics with your colleagues at work ( weather, sports, politics... etc. )?					
<b>6. Language and Emotional Self-expressions</b>					
• What language do you use					
- When you express happiness?					
- When you express anger?					
- When you are confused or stressed?					
- When you dream?					

### Part Three: Language Attitudes towards Syriac and Arabic

The following part contains items related to your attitudes and feeling towards Syriac and Arabic. Please choose the suitable answer by putting (✓) in the proper box.

Items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>A. Attitudes towards Syriac</b>					
- It is the symbol of my Assyrian identity					
- It is my national language					
- It is a prestigious language because it is one of the most ancient languages in history.					
- It is a poetic language.					
- It is the language of my childhood and I am emotionally attached to it.					
- It is associated with the Syriac history and culture.					
- Syriac language is easy to learn.					
- It is more important than Arabic for me.					
- It is dying in my home( not used at all)					
- It is dying in Jordan( not used at all)					
- It is important that my children speak Syriac fluently.					
- Syriac should be the first language at home					
<b>B. Attitudes towards Arabic</b>					
- It is important to use Arabic in all situations					
- Arabic is more important than Syriac					
- Fluency in Arabic is essential to succeed in my career					
- Arabic is more important than Syriac regarding my job.					
- Fluency in Arabic improves my economic status					
- Arabic enables me to socially communicate with all Jordanians because I am Jordanian.					

- If Syriac is dying please state the reasons:

.....

.....

.....

Questions	Syriac	Arabic	Both
Which language is beautiful?			
Which language do you prefer when you communicate with others?			
In what language do you best express yourself?			

#### Part Four: Factors that Support Syriac and Arabic Language Use

Please read the following statements and indicate to what degree you agree with them by putting ( √ ) in the suitable box only.

Factors	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>A. Factors that Support Ethnic Language Use</b>					
Family and the home have a significant role in ethnic language preservation.					
Grandparents play an important role in preserving the ethnic language.					
The close relationships among the community members help preserve the ethnic language					
The internal marriage among ethnic group members helps them preserve the ethnic language.					
The pride in the ethnic origin helps to preserve the ethnic language.					
The attachment of the ethnic language to the childhood plays a role in language maintenance.					
The continuous suffering and displacement of ethnic groups through history help them preserve their ethnic					



languages					
The church has a role in language preservation					
Community associations play a positive role in preserving the language.					
The clergyman has a positive role in preserving the ethnic language					
The democratic atmosphere in Jordan gives the freedom to all Jordanians of all origins to freely learn and use their ethnic languages.					
Living in an isolated neighborhood helps preserve the ethnic language.					
<b>B. Factors that Support the Use of Arabic</b>					
Being a Jordanian of an Assyrian origin demands to learn and use Arabic because it is the official language of the country					
Knowledge of Arabic helps Assyrians to assimilate in the Jordanian society					
Arabic helps me to have a good job					
Arabic enables me to access to the field of knowledge.					
Arabic is the language of my childhood and I am emotionally attached to it.					
Arabic facilitates and supports my occupational status.					
My education in the Jordanian schools and universities helps me to learn Arabic.					

## Appendix (D)

## Arabic Sociolinguistic Questionnaire



## استبانة لغوية اجتماعية

اعزائي المشاركين،

انا الباحث طارق الرفاعي، احد طلاب الدراسات العليا في جامعة الشرق الاوسط،

عمان – الاردن. اقوم باعداد رسالة ماجستير بعنوان **الوضع اللغوي للسريان الاردنيين**.

في البداية اود التعبير مسبقا عن شكري لمشاركتم في تعبئة هذه الاستبانة.

عند الاجابة على هذه الاستبانة ستقوم بتزويدنا ببيانات مختلفة حول خلفيتكم الاجتماعية و اللغوية،

ومعلومات حول الاستعمالات اللغوية ، وحول الاتجاهات اللغوية نحو اللغتين السريانية والعربية

واخيرا العوامل التي تدعم استخدام كل من اللغة السريانية واللغة العربية.

سيتم التعامل مع المعلومات الواردة في هذه الاستبانة بسرية تامة. واشكركم مرة اخرى على حسن

تعاونكم.

واقبلو فائق الاحترام

E-mail: [tareqrefaee@hotmail.co m](mailto:tareqrefaee@hotmail.co m)

## استبانة لغوية اجتماعية

الجزء الأول: المعلومات الشخصية والخلفية الاجتماعية:

الرجاء وضع اشارة ( √ ) امام الاجابة التي تناسبك

1. الجنس

ذكر ( )      انثى ( )

2. العمر: .....

3. الحالة الاجتماعية

اعزب/عزباء ( )      متزوج/متزوجة ( )  
ارمل / ارملة ( )      مطلق / مطلقة ( )

4. العمل

الاعمال التجارية ( )      التعليم ( )  
الطب ( )      وظيفة حكومية ( )  
الحرف اليدوية المهنية ( )      طالب ( )  
اخرى..... ( )      عاطل عن العمل ( )

5. التحصيل العلمي

اساسي ( )      ثانوي ( )  
دبلوم ( )      بكالوريوس ( )  
ماجستير ( )      دكتوراه ( )

6. مكان السكن

في حي ذو غالبية سريانية ( )  
في حي ذو غالبية عربية ( )  
في حي مختلط سريان وعرب ( )

7. النشاطات الاجتماعية

- الذهاب الى الكنيسة      نعم ( )      كلا ( )  
- الذهاب الى المؤسسات الاجتماعية السريانية      نعم ( )      كلا ( )  
- المشاركة في المناسبات والحفلات الدينية والاجتماعية      نعم ( )      كلا ( )

## 8. الخلفية اللغوية

الاسئلة	بشكل ممتاز	بشكل جيد جدا	بشكل متوسط	بشكل ضعيف	بشكل ضعيف جدا
استطيع التحدث باللغة السريانية					
عندما استمع الى اللغة السريانية فاني افهمها					
يمكنني قراءة اللغة السريانية وفهم محتواها					
يمكنني كتابة اللغة السريانية					
والذي يتقن التحدث باللغة السريانية					
والدتي تتقن التحدث باللغة السريانية					
زوجي / زوجتي يتقن التحدث باللغة السريانية					
ابنائي يتقنون التحدث باللغة السريانية					

- اذا كنت تعرف اللغة السريانية فكيف تعلمتها

- في البيت ( ) في المدرسة ( ) مع الاصدقاء ( )  
 في الكنيسة ( ) تعلم ذاتي ( ) اخرى: .....

- كيف تعلمت اللغة العربية؟

- في البيت ( ) في المدرسة ( ) مع الاصدقاء ( )  
 تعلم ذاتي ( ) اخرى: .....

## الجزء الثاني: استخدام اللغة

الأسئلة التالية تتعلق باللغة/ اللغات التي تستخدمها عند التحدث مع اشخاص مختلفين في اماكن مختلفة وفي مواضيع مختلفة. ارجو تزويدنا بالاجابة التي تناسبك عن طريق وضع اشارة ( √ ) في المكان المناسب.

الاسئلة	اللغة السريانية فقط	اللغة السريانية غالبا	اللغة السريانية والعربية معا	اللغة العربية غالبا	اللغة العربية فقط
1. الاستعمال اللغوي في البيت وبين افراد العائلة					
• ما اللغة التي تتحدث بها					
- الى والدك؟					
- الى والدتك؟					
- الى اخوتك واخواتك؟					
- ابناءك؟					
- زوجتك /زوجك؟					
- الى جدك؟					
- الى جدتك؟					

					- الى اقاربك الاخرين؟
					- اثناء التحدث على الهاتف مع اقاربك؟
					- عند الاجتماعات واللقاءات الاجتماعية؟
الاسئلة	اللغة السريانية فقط	اللغة السريانية غالبا	اللغة السريانية والعربية معا	اللغة العربية غالبا	اللغة العربية فقط
<b>2. الاستعمالات اللغوية في الكنيسة</b>					
• ما هي اللغة التي تستخدمها					
					- عند الصلاة او الدعاء؟
					- مع القس او رجال الدين؟
					- مع المصلين في الكنيسة؟
					- في اللقاءات الدينية خارج اماكن العبادة؟
<b>7. الاستخدامات اللغوية في مجال الاعلام؟</b>					
					• باي لغة تشاهد التلفاز؟
					• باي لغة تستمع الى المذياع؟
					• ما لغة مواقع الانترنت التي تتصفحها؟
• هل تعرف جمعيات او منظمات او مجلات دولية معنية بامور السريان ؟ اذكرها.					
.....					
.....					
<b>8. الاستخدامات اللغوية في الحي ومع الاصدقاء</b>					
					- ما اللغة التي تستخدمها
					- مع اصدقائك عندما تقابلهم في الحي؟
					- مع جيرانك؟
					- عند شرائك احتياجاتك ؟
<b>9. الاستخدامات اللغوية في مكان العمل</b>					
					• ما اللغة التي تستخدمها
					- مع زملائك في العمل؟
					- مع رئيسك في العمل لمناقشة امور ادارية او تقنية؟
					- عند مناقشة موضوعات عامة مع زملائك في العمل (طقس, رياضة, سياسة.....الخ)
<b>10. الاستخدامات اللغوية في التعبير العاطفي عن الذات</b>					
					• ما اللغة التي تستخدمها
					- عند التعبير عن السعادة او الغضب؟
					- عندما تكون متوترا او مرتبكا؟
					- في احلامك؟

### الجزء الثالث: الاتجاهات اللغوية نحو اللغتين السريانية والعربية

هذا الجزء يعنى بآرائك واتجاهاتك نحو اللغتين السريانية والعربية، الرجاء اختيار الاجابة التي تناسبك بوضع اشارة ( √ ) في المربع المناسب

الاسئلة	اوافق بشدة	اوافق	محايد	لا اوافق	لا اوافق بشدة
أ. الاتجاهات نحو اللغة السريانية					
• هي رمز لهويتي السريانية					
• هي لغتي القومية					
• هي اللغة الأكثر عراقية واصالة باعتبارها من اقدم اللغات في التاريخ					
• هي لغة شاعرية وادبية					
• هي لغة طفولتي وانا مرتبط بها وجدانيا					
• هي مرتبطة بالتراث والتاريخ السرياني					
• يجب انشاء مدارس يتم فيها تعليم اللغة السريانية					
• اللغة السريانية هي سهلة التعلم					
• هي مفيدة اكثر من العربية بالنسبة لي					
• هي في طريقها للاندثار في منزلي					
• هي في طريقها للاندثار في الاردن					
• من المهم ان يستخدم اطفال اللغة السريانية بطلاقة في التواصل مع غيرهم					
• من الضروري ان تكون اللغة السريانية هي اللغة الاولى المستخدمة بالبيت					
ب. الاتجاهات نحو اللغة العربية					
• من المهم ان استخدم اللغة العربية في كل المجالات					
• اللغة العربية مفيدة اكثر من السريانية					
• معرفتي باللغة العربية شئ ضروري لنجاحي بوظيفتي					
• العربية اهم من السريانية في مجال عملي					
• معرفتي باللغة العربية تحسن وضعي الاقتصادي					
• اللغة العربية تجعلني قادرا على التواصل الاجتماعي مع جميع الاردنيين باعتباري اردنيا					

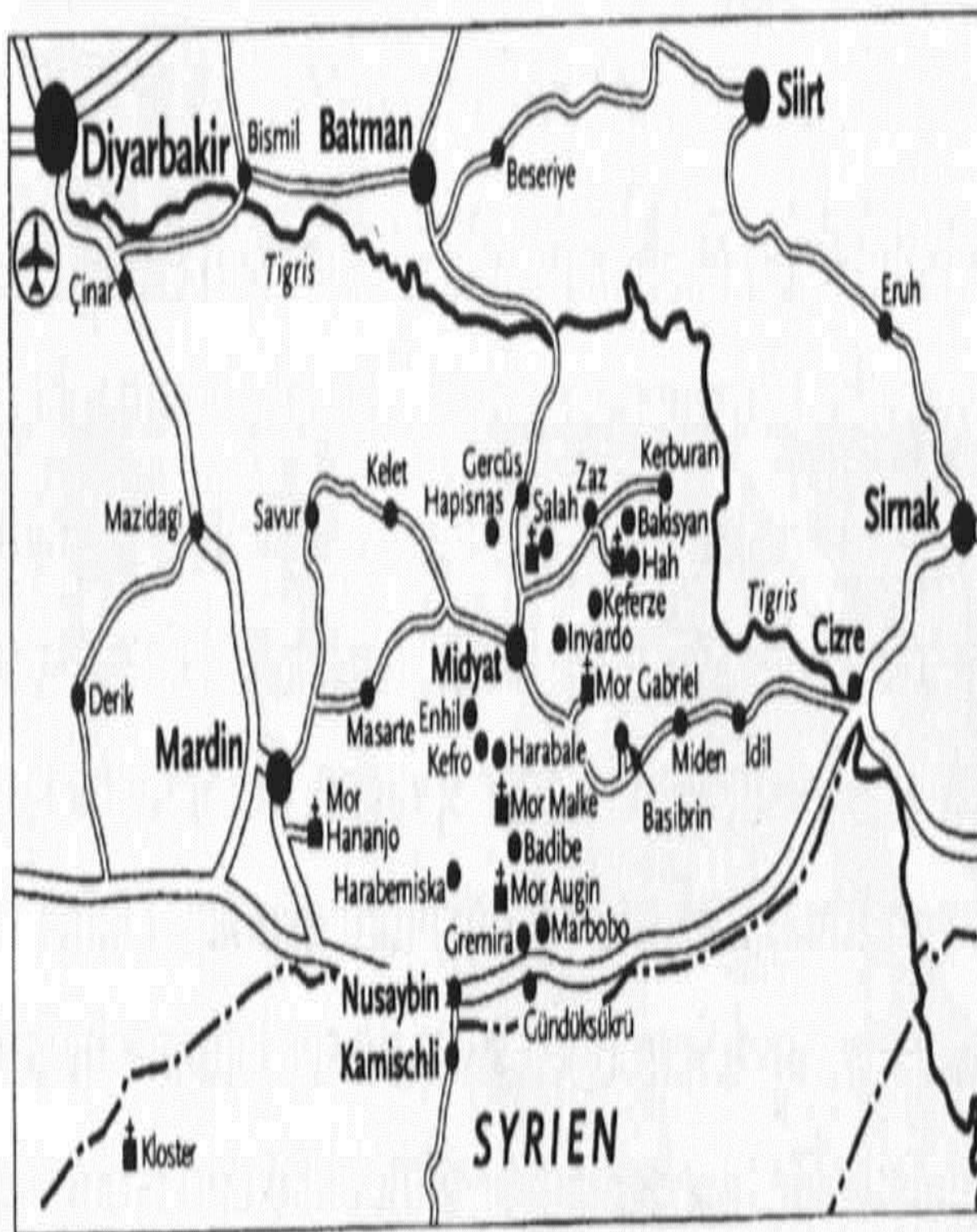
الاسئلة	السريانية	العربية	كلاهما
ما هي اللغة الأكثر جمالا			
ماهي اللغة الأكثر فائدة			
ماهي اللغة التي تفضل استخدامها للتواصل مع الآخرين			
ما هي اللغة التي تعبر فيها عن نفسك بشكل افضل			

## الجزء الرابع:العوامل التي تساعد على استخدام اللغة السريانية واللغة العربية

اقرأ العبارات التالية وضع اشارة (√) عند الاجابة التي تشير الى مدى موافقتك.

الاسئلة	اوافق بشدة	اوافق	محايد	لا اوافق	لا اوافق بشدة
أ. العوامل التي تدعم استخدام اللغة السريانية هي:					
العائلة والمنزل كان لهما دورا هاما في المحافظة على اللغة السريانية					
وجود جدي وجدتي كان له دور مهم في المحافظة على اللغة السريانية					
الروابط الاجتماعية القوية بين السريان في الاردن تساعد في المحافظة على اللغة السريانية					
زواج السريان من السريان يساعد في المحافظة على اللغة السريانية					
افتخاري باصلي وهوية اجدادي السريانية تساعدني في المحافظة على لغتي السريانية					
اللغة السريانية هي لغة طفولتي وانا مرتبط بها وجدانيا					
التاريخ السرياني بما فيه من تهجير و معاناة ساعدني على التمسك والمحافظة على اللغة السريانية					
الكنيسة السريانية تساعدني بالمحافظة على اللغة السريانية.					
جمعية السريان تساعدني بالمحافظة على اللغة السريانية.					
رجال الدين لهم دور كبير في المحافظة على اللغة السريانية					
الجو الديمقراطي في الاردن يعطي الحرية للاردنيين من كافة الاصول والمنابت في استخدام وتعلم اللغات التي يرغبونها					
العيش في اماكن سكن قريبة او مجاورة للسريان ساعدني في الحفاظ على لغتي السريانية					
<b>العوامل التي تدعم تعلم واستخدام اللغة العربية</b>					
مواطنتي كأردني من اصل سرياني تتطلب مني ان اتعلم واستخدم اللغة العربية باعتبارها اللغة الرسمية للدولة					
اللغة العربية تساعدني على الاندماج في المجتمع.					
العربية تساعدني بالحصول على وظيفة جيدة.					
العربية تتيح لي الفرصة للوصول الى اكبر قدر من المعرفة.					
العربية هي لغة طفولتي وانا مرتبط بها وجدانيا					
العربية تدعم وتسهل لي العمل الوظيفي والمهني .					
اندماجي في المجتمع ساعدني على استخدام العربية					
دراستي في المدارس والجامعات الاردنية ساعدني على معرفة وتعلم اللغة العربية.					

### Appendix (E) Map of Tur Abdin





## Appendix (F) The Assyrian Flag



## Appendix (G). The Syriac Alphabet.

	Estrangela	Serto	Nestorian		Estrangela	Serto	Nestorian
,	ܐ	ܐ	ܐ	ܐ	ܐ	ܐ	ܐ
b	ܒ	ܒ	ܒ	m	ܡ	ܡ	ܡ
g	ܓ	ܓ	ܓ	n	ܢ	ܢ	ܢ
d	ܕ	ܕ	ܕ	s	ܣ	ܣ	ܣ
h	ܗ	ܗ	ܗ	ܥ	ܥ	ܥ	ܥ
w	ܘ	ܘ	ܘ	p	ܦ	ܦ	ܦ
z	ܙ	ܙ	ܙ	ܫ	ܫ	ܫ	ܫ
ḣ	ܚ	ܚ	ܚ	q	ܩ	ܩ	ܩ
ṫ	ܬ	ܬ	ܬ	r	ܪ	ܪ	ܪ
y	ܝ	ܝ	ܝ	ܝ	ܝ	ܝ	ܝ
k	ܟ	ܟ	ܟ	t	ܬ	ܬ	ܬ

## Appendix (H)

### Panel of Experts

<b>Name</b>	<b>University</b>	<b>Specialization</b>
1. Prof. Riyadh Hussein	Middle East University	Applied Linguistics
2. Dr. Fatimah Jafar	Middle East University	EFL
3. Dr. Wajeeh Abd Alrahman	Al Isra University	Applied Linguistics
4. Dr. Issam Al-Kayed	Al Isra University	English Language & Literature
5. Dr. Othman Al-Jaber	Middle East University	Arabic Language & Literature