Mahmoud A. Al-Khatib and Mohammed N. Al-Ali

Language and Cultural Shift Among the Kurds of Jordan

Abstract

This paper investigates the level of language and cultural shift among the Kurds of Jordan, a large minority group inhabiting the country for 100 years. The Kurds of Jordan are assumed to be experiencing a kind of shift in their language and culture. The main aim of this study is to gauge the shift and to highlight the sociodemographic factors enhancing it. The data were collected by means of questionnaires and interviews. The results of the study have shown that Arabic is used mainly in most social domains. However, the Kurdish language is found to be used in very restricted situations and by a very small number of people, particularly the elderly. The paper proves that the Kurds of Jordan are experiencing a gradual shift toward Arabic that may lead on their part to language loss. By calibrating the results of this study against those of previous works on other minority groups inhabiting the country for the same period of time, it has been shown that patterns of language and cultural maintenance within these communities are not the same. The distinction between them is accounted for in terms of the size of each group, demographic concentration, and types of occupations being occupied by each of them, among other sociopsychological factors.

1. Introduction

1.1 Theoretical background

Linguistic and cultural adjustments do not happen in a vacuum. Language and cultural shift is believed to be the by-product of the interaction of a number of sociolinguistic, cultural, and affective variables that work together to affect one's choice or use of one language over another (see, for example, Kloss 1966; Fishman 1980; Dorian 1982). There are several possible hypotheses or reasons explaining the loss of languages. For example, it has been observed that

> in the case of language, the social and economic necessity of using the official or majority language of the host country, and the lack of opportunities for using the

> mother tongue, may lead to a loss of ability in the latter. This loss of language ability, extended over several generations, will result in the phenomenon of language shift (or transfer), in which the habitual use of one language by a minority group is replaced by the habitual use of another. This shift to the second language usually, but not always, involves the gradual disappearance of the first. (Buda 1992.)

Similarly, Hatoss (2005) contends that relations between ethnolinguistic groups are influenced by a range of sociostructural and situational factors. Therefore, in order to yield a better understanding of linguistic adjustment in language contact situations, it is important to handle the process in terms of the sociostructural context in which it takes place.

The study of languages and how they emerge and evolve has also been the focus of a large number of works (e.g., Brandt & Youngman 1989; Dorian 1982, 1987, 2001; Rhodes 1992; Hoffman 1991; Al-Khatib 2001). Many research efforts have been directed to the description of different minority situations in different parts of the world. It has been suggested in a considerable number of works on language maintenance and shift that language shift is a gradual process that usually takes place in response to a number of sociological and demographic factors. Commenting on this issue, Hoffman (1991: 186) says that "under certain cultural, social and political conditions, a community might tend to change one set of linguistic tools for another. This phenomenon is clearly observable in the case of migrant communities". Similarly, Fishman (1966: 424) contends that the issue of language maintenance and language shift "is concerned with the relationship between change or stability in habitual language use, on the one hand, and on-going psychological, social or cultural processes, on the other hand, when populations differing in language are in contact with each other".

Fishman (1991: 55–65) also believes that there are two major causes of language shift:

1. the physical and demographic dislocation of language groups due to, for example, famine, population expulsion policies and the urbanization of rural populations;

2. the social dislocation, whereby members of the minority speech community are frequently but not inevitably less socially, educationally and economically fortunate than the average surrounding population.

Building on Fishman's (1966) views and drawing on Kloss's (1966) observations of language maintenance among the German speech community in the USA, a plethora of theoretical work has appeared in an attempt to identify the possible social correlates of maintenance and shift (e.g., Fishman 1980, 1991; Dorian 1982, 1987, 2001; Rhodes 1992; Al-Khatib 2001; Brandt & Youngman 1989; Mougeon & Beniak 1994). Most of these works reveal that among the many important factors that impact on language shift and maintenance are the demographic, economic, and attitudinal factors (see, for example, Edwards 1983; Kwachka 1992; Garzon 1992; Craig 1992; Dorian 1994; Strubell 2001; Al-Khatib 2001; Aipolo & Holmes 1990; Holmes & Harlow 1991; Mougeon & Beniak 1994).

From the same vantage ground, Sun (1999) reported that most studies have addressed, right from the beginning, the factors that accelerate language shift as opposed to elements that favor language maintenance. She noted that

> in theoretical and empirical inquiries, factors such as, just to name a few, the suppressive or permissive attitude by the majority group, the socio-economic and historical status of the minority, the numbers of birth rate and mixed marriages, the mass media, religions, the role of institutional power, the 'success' to interact with the majority group, the number of claimants of the minority language and the number of institutions that support the language in the community, the social networks of the individuals, etc., have been examined (Sun 1999: 4–5).

It has also been found that the effects of these factors on language maintenance and/or language shift vary according to the social contexts in which they were studied.

Motivated by these views, along with other basic assumptions on language maintenance and language shift like those raised by Fishman (1966), Dressler (1988), and Dorian (1980, 1982, 1987), among others, several related studies were carried out in the context of Jordan addressing the issue of language maintenance and shift from different perspectives (see Dweik 2000; Abd-el-Jawad 2006; Al-Khatib 2001; Al-Khatib & Al-Ali 2005; Al-Khatib & Alzoubi 2009). An examination of the results of previous works on the language situation among the different minority groups – the Armenians, the Chechens, the Circassians, and the Gypsies – inhabiting Jordan demonstrates similarities and differences among them in terms of language maintenance and/or language shift. It has been observed

that patterns of language and cultural maintenance within these communities are not the same. For instance, the Chechens, the Circassians, and the Gypsies of Jordan demonstrated clear-cut cases of language and cultural maintenance, whereas the Armenians showed obvious case of language and cultural shift. The differences and/or similarities between them reflect the influence of a large number of socioeconomic and demographic factors. As will be seen later, the existence of linguistic islands, the positive or negative attitude towards the majority speech community language, the residential closeness, and resistance to interethnic marriages were found to be important elements responsible for either retention or attrition of the minority languages in Jordan.

The present study, therefore, follows from previous works on other Jordanian minority communities such as the Chechens (Dweik 2000), the Armenians (Al-Khatib 2001), the Circassians (Abd-el-Jawad 2006), the Gypsies (Al-Khatib & Al-Ali 2005), and the Druze of Jordan (Al-Khatib & Alzoubi 2009), extending its scope to another minority group inhabiting Jordan for the same period of time. In fact, Al-Khatib's (2001) work on the Armenians of Jordan is the one most relevant to this research for two reasons: firstly, both studies are concerned with two minority groups inhabiting the country for almost the same period of time and, secondly, both groups of people had passed through the same bad experience of exile and deportation. It follows that the Kurdish community in Jordan is expected to show a similar pattern of language and cultural shift. To the best of our knowledge no previous study has covered this community in this particular milieu so far; therefore, this study seeks to fill that gap. Hopefully, this work will provide a small step toward a better understanding of the language situation among the Kurdish migrants in terms of their acculturation strategies, attitudes to the host and source cultures, ethnic identity, and language maintenance and/or shift patterns.

1.2 Objectives of the study

The Kurds of Jordan is one of the largest and most integrated communities in the country, whose immigration levels have increased quite significantly in the late nineties and early twenties. The main objective of this study is to provide insights into the linguistic situation among the Kurds of Jordan in terms of language use, language attitude, and acculturation. Putting it

differently, this paper looks at language shift in the Kurdish-speaking community from a sociolinguistic point of view. Another important aim of this study is to make a structured overview of the language situations among the five minority groups – the Kurds, the Armenians, the Chechens the Gypsies, and the Circassians of Jordan – inhabiting the country for the same period of time, aiming at refining theories and guiding future efforts at studying other minority groups inhabiting other countries in the Middle East. Furthermore, we will reflect on the distinctions between the factors that contribute either to maintenance or shift.

Based on personal observations and an assessment of the language situation among the Kurds of Jordan and due to the fact that the speech community under investigation was preceded by earlier waves of Kurdish immigrants who have already lost their language and have been totally assimilated into the Arabic-speaking mainstream society, we hypothesize that the Kurds of Jordan will show a clear case of language and cultural shift to the majority speech community. We also hypothesize that intermarriage, demographic concentration, and religion, among other sociodemographic factors, play a crucial role in the process.

1.3 Who are the Kurds?

The Kurds are a largely Sunni Muslim people of Indo-European origin who live mainly in an area known as “Kurdistan” for hundreds of years. They have their own language and culture. Most of them live in the generally contiguous areas of Turkey, Iraq, Iran, Armenia, and Syria – a mountainous region of southwest Asia generally known as Kurdistan (The Columbia Encyclopedia 2007). Although the Kurds are overwhelmingly Sunni Muslim, they include Jews, Christians, Yazidis, and other sects (see Al-Kurdi 2004; Poladian 2004; www.al-bab.com 2005).

The Kurdish language is a member of the Indo-Iranian language group which is a branch of the Indo-European family. The most closely related languages to Kurdish are Balochi, Gileki, and Talysh all of which belong to the north-western branch of Iranian languages. The Persian language which belongs to the south-western branch, especially the Lori and Bakhtiari dialects, is related to Kurdish (Poladian 2004; Kurd_lal Working Groups 2003; Ali 1992).

Data sources estimate the population of the Kurds at around 27 million people (see Kurdastanica 1991; McDowall 1996; Kurds homepage 1996; Poladian 2004; Basri 1991; Ali 1992; The Columbia Encyclopedia 2007; Edmonds 1957). According to 1991 population estimate, they were distributed in the different host countries, approximately (in millions) as follows:

Iran	6.8
Iraq	4.3
Turkey	15.4
Syria	1.3
USSR	0.3
Estimated total for 1987	27

Source: Adapted from Kurdastanica (1991).

Roj Bash Kurdistan (2008) reports that a considerable number of Kurds had inhabited the Levant long before the First World War. Some of the Jordanian Kurds reached Palestine and Jordan long time ago through the war campaign by the Kurdish leader Saladin Al-Ayubi against the crusaders in Jerusalem and during the Ottoman Empire. The Arab-Israel war in 1948, which resulted in the incursion of thousands of Palestinians to the East Bank of Jordan, also served to multiply the number of Kurds in Jordan. In the absence of any official census, it is very difficult to give exact figures of their number in the country. However, many official sources of those we met during our survey estimated their population of about 30,000 people. In comparison with other Arab countries like Iraq and Syria, their population in Jordan is very small. This could be due in part to the remoteness of the country from Kurdistan. Just like other Jordanians, about half of the Jordanian Kurdish community is under 20 years of age (see Al-Kurdi 2004; Poladian 2004; Ali 1992; Kurdistan 1996).

The Kurds mainly live in the large urban centers of the country like Amman, Irbid, Assalt, and Al-Zarqa. The following are some of the well-known Jordanian Kurdish families who live in Jordan: Al-Kurdi, Al-Ayubi, Zibari, Sido, Baban, Al-Rashwani, Al-Shikhani, Ja'alo, Badrkhan, Al-Kiki, Al Rashi, Dhadha, Bakdash, Sa'adon, Hashlmon, Al-Qaymari, and Niroukh, among others. It should be noted here that some of these families have been living in Jordan since 1173, with the establishment of Al-Ayubi

state in the Levant (see Al-Kurdi 2004; Poladian 2004; Basri 1991; Ali 1992). Unlike the other large minority groups inhabiting Jordan (i.e., the Chechens and the Circassians) who live in tightly knit communities, the Kurds do not have their own neighborhoods; rather they live with other Jordanians in different residential areas of the country.

Although the bulk of Kurds are highly educated (i.e., they are college- or university-educated), a considerable number of them have been working in different parts of the country as employees, technicians, craftsmen, mechanics, photographers, and so on. Like the Armenians, the Kurds are well-known in Jordan and the other Arab countries for their skillfulness as technicians, handymen, and mechanics. Socially, the Kurds of Jordan are nearly completely integrated into the Jordanian major society; therefore, unlike the other minority groups, they have not been given a quota that designates seats for them in Parliament.

2. Methodology and sampling

2.1 Methods

The data used in this analysis was collected through questionnaires, structured interviews, and observations. Backing up the results of the questionnaire with data coming from the other sources gives the results more credibility. Furthermore, by using such method we are able to get more information on *what* language is used for *what* reasons. The questionnaire was fashioned after those employed by Al-Khatib & Al-Ali (2005), Al-Khatib (2001), and Dweik (2000). However, the questionnaire was modified in a way so as to better serve the purpose of this study. The questionnaire was designed to elicit different types of data on the biographical background of the subjects, language use, language proficiency, and language attitude towards Arabic and Kurdish.

Four main sections form the body of the questionnaire. The first section consists of five questions intended to elicit some demographic data, such as name, age, gender, occupational, and educational backgrounds, etc. The second section has 11 questions the purpose of which is to examine language use on a daily basis for different functions, i.e., writing personal letters, talking with other people, and invoking and expressing some personal feelings and attitudes. The third section was designed to elicit

some attitudinal data toward the use of both Arabic and Kurdish in different social settings and for different purposes. The fourth section contains questions on language proficiency in the four main skills in both Arabic and Kurdish. Furthermore, a pilot survey was conducted to pre-test the questionnaire prior to the final survey. The pre-test exposed certain weaknesses and limitations, which necessitated amendments and modifications.

The data were collected through personal contacts with the subjects over a period extending from January to December 2008. Also, part of the corpus was collected with the assistance of four Kurdish university students. The method of using assistants from the same speech community had proven to be a useful tool in collecting data. We taught the assistants thoroughly beforehand how to use the standard questionnaire appropriately. The reason why we used assistants from the same speech community was to secure more cooperation on the part of the interviewees. The interviews were conducted individually to minimize any external influence or bias in their responses.

Because of the absence of an official population census of the Kurds of Jordan which differentiates them in terms of age, gender, education, occupation, etc. and due to the fact that people in Jordanian society, in general, are very suspicious of outsiders with whom they are not acquainted or have not, at least, been introduced to through a third party, a random selection of informants was neither possible nor available. Therefore, the only possible way for us to draw the sample was to follow the "social network" model proposed by Milroy & Milroy (1978) and approach the subjects in the capacity of "a friend of a friend" or, in some cases, through "a friend of friend's friend". By following this method we were able to select a sample of 100 informants who belong to different gender, age, occupation, and educational backgrounds. We were able to draw almost an equal number of informants from the two gender groups. Moreover, in order to get a representative sample of the Kurdish speech community, we tried to diversify our sample in the best possible way according to the city, residential area, and the socioeconomic status of the subject.

Data analysis was carried out both quantitatively and qualitatively. Percentages were utilized to show how frequently Kurdish and Arabic are

used by the respondents. Qualitative analysis was also carried out so as to highlight the communicative functions performed by using the two codes.

2.2 The sample

The present research is based on data collected from 100 respondents all of whom are Jordanian Kurds who arrived in Jordan in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries. The rationale behind excluding some of them is because the descendants of the early wave of Kurdish immigrants, especially those who arrived earlier with Saladin's campaign against the crusaders, have already lost their language and are totally assimilated into the Arabic-speaking mainstream society. Tables 1 and 2 below show the distribution of the sample according to age, gender, educational background, and occupation. However, we were not able to draw an equal number of informants from the two gender groups. As seen below, 61 percent of the respondents are males and 39 percent are females. The uneven distribution of the sample according to gender is due to some sociocultural constraints. In general, male researchers (i.e., strangers) are not allowed to interview female respondents in Jordanian society, so we did not ask for that. Usually male guests are received and entertained in the guest room by only the male members of the family. Therefore, in such a situation, we resorted to Kurdish assistants to administer the questionnaire and conduct interviews with the female subjects.

It is worth mentioning that the selected sample is divided into four age groups. Following on the footsteps of Dweik (2000), Al-Khatib (2001), Al-Khatib & Al-Ali (2005), and Abd-el-Jawad (2006), we used their works as a model and categorized the sample into four age groups according to the same age patterns. The rationale behind doing this is to facilitate the process of comparison and contrast between the results of this study and those related to other minority groups.

Table 1. Distribution of the sample by age and gender

Age	**N**	**Gender**	
		Males **N**	**Females** **N**
14–29	40	25	15
30–45	20	13	7
46–59	24	14	10
60–	14	8	7
Not mentioned	2	2	
Total	**100**	**61**	**39**

Table 2. Distribution of the sample by educational level

Education	**N**
Limited formal schooling	0
Preparatory	16
Secondary	31
Two-year college	14
University graduate	39
Total	**100**

Table 3. Distribution of the sample by occupation

Occupation	**N**
Policemen	4
Housewives	8
Managers	8
Students	26
Teachers	4
Drivers	2
Engineers	3
Doctors	2
Retired	7
Accountants	5
Lawyers	2
Workers (civil servants)	11
Nurses	2
Photographers	1
Businessmen	4
Technicians	3
Traders	6
Not mentioned	7
Total	**100**

Admittedly, the data suffer inevitably from shortcomings. One of the limitations of this study was the relatively small sample size. That is because, as said earlier, a random selection of informants was neither possible nor available; therefore, these findings cannot be generalized to the broader Kurdish community. Also, due to the limited scope of this study, it was not possible to study the use of Kurdish in all the language domains. Since the use of Kurdish is directly related to the issues of power and solidarity, we were able to cover only a few aspects of power and solidarity here. For example, we were not able to elicit data on the use of Kurdish in domains such as administration, business, partying, and so on.

It, therefore, seems likely that the data provides only a broad coverage of the language situation among the Kurdish speech community of Jordan. However, it does provide a useful source of information on the direction of

language and cultural shift among the Kurds of Jordan in terms of language use, language attitude, language change, and acculturation.

3. Results and discussion

Table 4 demonstrates that the overwhelming majority of the respondents could not read, write, speak, or understand Kurdish, though their ability to speak or understand is a little better. This indicates that a great source of their ability to use the language is often overlooked. However, the responses to items 5, 6, and 7 indicate that the great majority of them could understand, read, and write in Arabic. These findings appear to support our informal observation of the Jordanian Kurdish speech community in most social domains where they tend to use Arabic, even among themselves, much more often than Kurdish.

Table 4. Language proficiency in Arabic and Kurdish

Language skills	**Yes**	**No**	**A little**	**Total**
1. Can you understand a conversation in Kurdish?	18	76	6	100
2. Can you engage in a conversation in Kurdish?	18	76	6	100
3. Can you read Kurdish?	11	85	4	100
4. Can you write Kurdish?	11	84	5	100
5. Can you understand Arabic?	96	2	2	100
6. Can you read Arabic?	96	2	2	100
7. Can you write Arabic?	96	2	2	100

In addition, their responses to items 1–4 indicate that the Kurdish speech community in Jordan has not yet taken deliberate steps that help revitalize Kurdish or slow down the process of shift toward Arabic. That is to say, there is a lack of any institutional support which, as Holmes (1992: 39) put it, makes the difference between success and failure in maintaining a minority group language.

3.1 Language use

Virtually all the available evidence suggests that the Jordanian Kurdish community tends to use Arabic in all domains much more often than Kurdish. Respondents of different age groups were asked to report on the use of Kurdish and Arabic languages. The use of Kurdish, as seen in table 5, has remarkably declined among Jordanian Kurds to less than 20 percent in contrast to more than 80 percent use of the Arabic language. Furthermore, it is noticed that the loss of Kurdish, as seen in table 4, is greater in reading and writing skills than in speaking and listening, as hardly did any of the younger age group of speakers use Kurdish. These findings demonstrate that Kurdish is witnessing a kind of recession in the linguist repertoires of the younger speakers. This assumption can be supported by the respondents' answers to items 1 and 2 which show that 85 percent of them tend to use Arabic with brothers and sisters (the younger) more often than with their parents (77 percent), though the difference is not that big. Putting it differently, the younger group of speakers tends to use Arabic with each other more often than with their parents.

Table 5. Language use in different domains

Questions	Only Arabic %	Mostly Arabic %	Arabic & Kurdish %	Mostly Kurdish %	Only Kurdish %	No response %	Total %
1. What language do you use at home with your children and parents?	77	6	10	2	5	–	100
2. What language do you use at home with your brothers and sisters?	85	3	8	2	2	–	100

3. What language do you use on Kurdish social occasions?	77	2	11	3	7	–	100
4. What language do you use when you meet Kurdish friends in Jordan?	79	3	7	2	7	2	100
5. What language do you use when you meet Kurds abroad?	75	1	5	4	12	3	100
6. What language do you use most commonly when you are angry?	80	1	4	1	11	3	100
7. What language do you use when you are excited?	82	–	7	3	8	–	100
8. In what language do you dream?	80	1	–	–	9	10	100

We also observed that there is little interest in using Kurdish especially among the younger groups of speakers. To illustrate, most Kurdish people in Jordan do not seem to mind identifying with the majority community, and now there is still a great deal of attachment to this identification as seen from the respondents' reaction to our questions. Just like the Armenians of Jordan (see Al-Khatib 2001), the majority of the Jordanian Kurds do not live in tightly knit communities. Rather, they live with other Jordanians in

the different residential areas of the country. Therefore, the most commonly expressed reason for the decline of Kurdish in the speech of the Jordanian Kurds is that they find no one to use the language with. On this matter Holmes (1992: 71) writes:

> There are certain social factors to retard wholesale language shift for a minority language group, at least for a time. Where language is considered an important symbol of a minority group's identity, for example, the language is likely to be maintained longer. If families from a minority group live near each other and see each other frequently, this also will help them maintain their language.

She adds that the degree and frequency of contact with the homeland is another crucial element in the process.

3.2 Language attitudes

In this section, we will examine, inter alia, the respondents' general attitude to Arabic and Kurdish, their attitudes to Kurdish as a symbol of identity, and their attitudes and perceptions regarding the viability and future of Kurdish in this particular milieu. Several techniques were used to uncover the attitudes of respondents. Firstly, respondents were questioned about their feelings toward the two languages by using a number of questions (see table 6). We intended to explore the rationale for and value of using each code. Secondly, we employed a self-assessment method by asking respondents to answer a number of questions about their feelings for being unable to use Kurdish (see table 7). Fasold (1984: 148) assumes that attitudes toward a language are often the reflection of attitudes towards members of various ethnic groups. Similarly, Edwards (1983: 221) suggests that people's reactions to language varieties reveal much of their perception of the speakers of these varieties. It should be mentioned here that the analysis below is based on data (i.e., responses) given both orally and in writing.

A quick look at table 7 indicates that two contradicting types of attitudes toward the two languages are revealed. The first demonstrates that the majority of the respondents agreed that Arabic is valuable as a means of communication and is more useful to them than Kurdish (items 2 and 3). Responses to item 4 show that the great majority of the respondents agree that they can express themselves better in Arabic than in Kurdish.

Moreover, the overwhelming majority of them reported that it is important for them to speak in both Arabic, as a means of communication, and Kurdish, as an important symbol of identity. However, their answers to items 7 and 8 demonstrate that there is a decline in the use of Kurdish at home as well as among the Jordanian Kurdish speech community.

Surprisingly enough, when some of the respondents who can speak Kurdish were asked about the advantages they might have, a female respondent answered that "learning Kurdish would give me a sense of self worth and accomplishment". Another said that "it would give me the ability to preserve our own culture in our own language". This indicates that some of the Kurds are still loyal to their language and culture.

Table 6. Attitudes toward Arabic and Kurdish

Questions	**Arabic %**	**Kurdish %**	**Both %**	**No response %**	**Yes %**	**No %**	**Total %**
1. What language is more beautiful?	20	21	59	–	–		**100**
2. What language is more useful to you?	65	5	30	–	–		**100**
3. What language would you prefer to use for communication with others?	60	12	28	–	–		**100**
4. In what language can you express yourself better?	63	13	24	–	–		**100**
5. Is it important for you to speak Arabic?				–	100		**100**
6. Is it important for you to speak Kurdish?				–	70	30	**100**
7. Is Kurdish dying in your home?				6	74	20	**100**
8. Is Kurdish dying in Jordan?				2	79	19	**100**

When asked about their feelings toward being unable to use Kurdish (see table 7), 40 percent of the respondents said that they feel strongly embarrassed about that and 36 percent answered by "embarrassed only". However, 24 percent of them see this behavior as not embarrassing at all. In total, about 76 percent of the respondents appear to be still emotionally attached to their language. All in all, these findings reveal strong positive attitudes towards Kurdish as a symbol of identity. This same feeling was also revealed in their responses to the first question in table 6 above; namely, they see both languages as beautiful, though they cannot in reality use Kurdish.

Table 7. Self-assessment as a way of attending to language attitudes (interview data)

How do you feel when you find yourself unable to use Kurdish?	
Feeling	**%**
Strongly embarrassed	40
Embarrassed	36
Not embarrassed	24
Total	**100**

For more clarification on the attitudes of the Kurds toward Arabic and Kurdish, four age groups were asked about their use of Kurdish. The results are given in tables 8 and 9. They show that there is a decline in the use of Kurdish over the generations. The differences between the four age groups are easily remarkable.

In answer to the question "How often do you speak Kurdish today?", these differences again appear to be easily noticed. As a whole, the old people speak Kurdish much more often than the young and the middle-age groups, a hierarchy which is in line with the data obtained from the questionnaire. A further indication that Kurdish had already lost ground to Arabic is the answers to the level of proficiency in the Kurdish language, as reported in table 4.

Table 8. Answers to the question "Do you speak Kurdish today?" by age groups

Age groups	YES		NO	
	N	%	N	%
14–29	2	5	38	95
30–45	3	20	17	80
46–59	7	41	17	59
60–	7	50	7	50

Table 9. Answers to the question "How often do you use Kurdish with family members?" by age groups

Age groups	Always		Sometimes		Never		Total
	N	%	N	%	N	%	%
14–29	–	–	2	05	38	95	**100**
30–45	1	5	2	10	17	85	**100**
46–59	4	17	3	8	17	75	**100**
60–	4	29	3	21	7	50	**100**

Overall, we conclude from these results that, in reality, Kurdish has lost its function as the language of group identity. It will most probably disappear in the next few generations.

In order to see whether the educational background of the speakers plays a role in the process of language and cultural shift among the members of the Jordanian Kurdish speech community, the sample was distributed by education into three educational groups: highly educated (university or college education), moderately educated (preparatory or secondary school education), and limited formal schooling (little or no schooling).

Table 10. Answers to the question "Do you speak Kurdish today?" by educational level

Educational groups	YES		NO		Total
	N	%	N	%	%
H. educated	2	5	38	95	**100**
M. educated	3	15	17	85	**100**
Limited formal schooling	6	25	18	75	**100**

H = highly, M = moderately.

Table 11. Answers to the question "How often do you use Kurdish with family members?" by educational level

Educational groups	Always		Sometimes		Never		Total
	N	%	N	%	N	%	%
H. educated	–	–	2	5	38	95	**100**
M. educated	1	5	2	10	17	85	**100**
Limited formal schooling	4	17	2	8	18	75	**100**

A quick look at tables 10 and 11 indicates that education has a role to play in the process. It is evident that the limited schooling group of respondents is more loyal to their language (Kurdish) than both the highly educated and the moderately educated groups. The limited schooling group who, by virtue of the type of jobs they hold, neither have access to the social life in the country nor are given the opportunity, unlike their educated counterparts, to have daily contact with the majority community. Therefore, they tend to be linguistically more conservative. A similar observation was made by Holmes (1992: 25) who says that "one of the first domains in which children of migrant families meet English is the school". She adds that in many families English gradually infiltrates the home through the children.

3.3 Acculturation and language use

The purpose of this section is to examine the Arabic language acculturation among the Kurdish speech community. Brown (1994: 169) defines acculturation as the process of becoming adapted to a new culture. It is a reorientation of thinking and feeling. He adds that the process of acculturation runs even deeper when language is brought into the picture. According to Scollon & Scollon (2001/1995), patterns of social behavior are also given a firm cast during the period of enculturation. Erikson (1968: 19, 22–23, quoted in Laitin 1998: 20) describes identity formation as

> a process by which the individual judges himself in the light of what he perceives to be the way in which others judge him in comparison to themselves and to a typology significant to them; while he judges their way of judging him in light of

> how he perceives himself in comparison to them and to types that have become relevant to him.

Building on this definition, Laitin (1998, reported in Linton 2003: 12) emphasizes the instrumentality of the process.

Most previous studies on language acculturation (e.g., Dorian 1987; Fishman 1991; Crawford 2007; García 1995; Carliner 2000; Al-Khatib & Al-Ali 2005) emphasized the importance of studying language in relation to culture and that culture and language are inseparable. Fishman (1991), for example, contends that the relationship between the two concepts is three-dimensional. Firstly, there is a kind of indexical relationship between language and culture. Secondly, the most important relationship is that most of the culture is in the language and is expressed in it. Thirdly, a deeper relationship is the symbolic relationship. Fishman (2007: 79) adds that "culture is expressed through language, when language is lost, those things that represent a way of life, a way of valuing, and human reality, are also lost". Gordon (1964: 72) defines acculturation or assimilation as an "unbalanced" model; namely, one group is completely absorbed into another group's culture. He (1978: 172, reported in Williams & Ortega 1990: 699) suggested seven variables of the assimilation process that can be measured against the "melting pot" goal as well as against the "adaptation to the core society and culture" goal. These are Cultural or Behavior Assimilation, Structural Assimilation, Marital Assimilation, Identificational Assimilation, Attitude Receptional Assimilation, Behavior Receptional Assimilation, and Civic Assimilation. The importance of these variables in studying sociolinguistic phenomena, especially in the study of language and cultural maintenance and/or shift, was noted by a wealth of sociologists, anthropologists, and sociolinguists (e.g., Williams & Ortega 1990; Holmes 1992; Craig 1992; Fishman 2007; Dauenhauer & Dauenhauer 1998; Laitin 1998; Carliner 2000; Al-Khatib & Al-Ali 2005).

In this section, we will employ some of these variables in analyzing and discussing the process of acculturation among the Kurds of Jordan. The results below captured the views of 100 Jordanian Kurdish respondents on various issues. Among these are naming, self-introduction, personal involvement and their children's involvement in learning Kurdish, intermarriage with the majority group, and their participation in any of the local Jordanian ceremonies.

When the respondents were asked in face-to-face interviews what names they prefer to give their children, 20 percent mentioned that they prefer Kurdish names, 26 percent reported they favor Arabic and Kurdish names, and 54 percent said they prefer Arabic names only. Those who prefer to give their children Kurdish-Arabic names have reported that they do that because a large number of names are shared by Kurds and Arabs; namely, they are of Islamic roots. When questioned about how they introduce themselves to others, 59 percent said they introduce themselves as Jordanian, 27 percent as Jordanian of Kurdish origin, and only 14 percent as Kurdish. Thus, these figures demonstrate that the Kurds of Jordan appear to define themselves on the basis of cultural similarities with the larger majority group. They tend to affiliate more consciously with certain aspects of the majority speech community. However, this is not the case for the Armenians of Jordan who were found to be still affiliated with their culture by giving their children Armenian names (see Al-Khatib 2001).

Table 12. Naming and introducing themselves to others (interview data)

Which names do you prefer to give your newly born children?	**%**	**How do you introduce yourself to a stranger?**	**%**
Kurdish names	20	Jordanian	59
Arabic names	54	Kurdish	14
Kurdish and Arabic names	26	Jordanian of Kurdish origin	27
Total	**100**	**Total**	**100**

Table 12 indicates that 74 percent agreed that if Kurdish is taught in Jordan they will learn it and 72 percent agreed that they may recommend their children learn the language had it been taught in the country. These answers indicate that a considerable portion of respondents is still attached to their roots. The respondents were also asked whether they have encountered any negative actions toward them because of their ethnic backgrounds. About 94 percent of them claimed that they do exercise their rights like all other Jordanians. When questioned about their attitudes toward intermarriage, about 95 percent said they do encourage intermarriage with other Jordanians. Over the years we have noticed that

the attitude of most Jordanian-Kurds toward intermarriage has been positive. This is not an unusual phenomenon because the Kurds of Jordan are Sunni Moslems, and we think the majority of them see no harm in doing that. “I would encourage the whole Kurdish community to do that”, said a professor of biology at one of the most well-known universities in the country. “We pay no attention to intermarriage in a more serious and thoughtful way, we see ourselves as Jordanians and form an integral part of Jordanian society”, said a twenty-two-year-old female student. Respondents interviewed were also asked whether they participate actively in the local social events such as ceremonies, traditions, customs, and so on. Out of 100 respondents, 97 percent answered that they do participate actively.

Table 13. Attitudes of the respondents as reflected in their sociocultural affiliation with the majority society

Question	**Yes %**	**No %**	**Total %**
If Kurdish is taught in Jordan, do you learn it?	74	26	**100**
Do you recommend your children to learn the language?	72	28	**100**
Have you encountered any negative actions toward you because of your origin?	6	94	**100**
Do you encourage intermarriage with Jordanians of Arab origin?	95	5	**100**
Do you usually participate in any of the local social events such as ceremonies, traditions, and customs?	97	3	**100**

All in all, these findings reveal that the length of residence in the country has a remarkable impact on language acculturation. It has been observed that the Kurdish people of all age groups and of different gender groups have no problems with language acculturation. Based on the above findings, which were also confirmed by our observations, one might claim that even though the Kurds of Jordan are still emotionally attached to their

culture, in reality they appear to have been assimilated and integrated into the larger speech community.

In summary, an analysis of the questionnaires, the interviews along with the sociocultural and religious background of the Jordanian Kurds enables us to demonstrate that resistance to language shift on their part is not strong enough. Furthermore, it has been observed that the attitude of Kurds toward the use of Arabic appears to be integrative rather than instrumental. Supporting this view is the fact that they do encourage intermarriage with other Jordanians. Another piece of evidence is the fact that, although at least three or four generations of the Kurds were born in the country, very few of them still give and use Kurdish proper names. Given the rather advanced stage of language shift which has taken place in the Kurds' speech, only a few of them are still proud of using Kurdish proper names. This implies that the great majority of the Kurds of Jordan consider themselves as Jordanians. Most of them believe that as long as they share the same religion with the majority group, no harm in sharing with them the same culture and language. Based on these results, we assume that even though language shift among the Kurds has reached an advanced stage, it will take another two or three generations to reach a conclusion. Hence, for some of the Kurds, particularly the elderly, the case still represents a case of bilingualism, which might extend for few generations to come.

3.4 An overview of the language situation among five minority groups inhabiting Jordan

As said earlier, one important objective of the present study is to make a structured overview of the language situation among five minority groups inhabiting the country for almost the same period of time. These are the Kurds, the Armenians, the Chechens, the Circassians, and the Gypsies of Jordan. In this section, our goal is to articulate and refine what we view as language maintenance and language shift, as well as to discuss the sociolinguistic factors that contribute to either case of maintenance or shift. A detailed comparison and contrast between these five groups is then offered.

An examination of the findings of previous works (e.g., Dweik 2000; Al-Khatib 2001; Abd-el-Jawad 2006; Al-Khatib & Al-Ali 2005; Al-Khatib

& Alzoubi 2009) on the language situation among the different minority groups inhabiting the country indicates similarities and differences among them due to similarities and differences in the background of immigrants, the circumstances of their migration and the host society policies, and reception environment. It has been observed that patterns of language and cultural maintenance within these communities are not the same. These differences and/or similarities between them can be aggregated into two main groups: 1) those who demonstrated clear-cut cases of language and cultural maintenance, such as the Chechens, the Circassians, and the Gypsies of Jordan, and 2) those that showed obvious cases of language and cultural shift, like the Kurds and the Armenians. As far as the first group is concerned, all observations suggest that language and cultural maintenance among them is the norm and expected to last in the foreseeable future. Comparing the degree of language and cultural maintenance among the gypsies of Jordan (Al-Khatib & Al-Ali 2005), on the one hand, with that among the Chechens (Dweik 2000) and the Circassians (Abd-el-Jawad 2006), on the other, we observe that these three groups are demonstrating considerable signs of language and cultural maintenance. However, the reasons of maintenance for them are not the same. While the Chechens and the Circassians do that by conscious choice, the Gypsies do it, as Dorian (2001) put it, by "necessity" or being imposed on them by the wider Jordanian society (see Al-Khatib & Al-Ali 2005). In all three cases, language and cultural maintenance is due to the fact that these three minority groups live in tightly knit communities where their neighbors are people of the same origin and as such their interaction with the majority language and culture is limited.

In so far as the Kurds and the Armenians are concerned, the case is entirely different. Both groups demonstrated a great deal of cultural and language shift toward the majority speech community. Just like the Kurds, the Armenians have been assimilated into the host majority society, though they are not Muslims. Furthermore, unlike the Armenians, the Kurds tend to use Arabic names much more often than the Armenians. An examination of the very long list of names of the 100 Kurdish respondents reveals that more than 90 percent of them have Arabic names.

The question that arises is why some of these groups still maintain their language and culture and some others do not. Although this question has been addressed partially throughout the above discussion, we shall try

to elaborate for the purpose of clarification. To answer this question, a number of sociodemographic factors must be considered: size, demographic concentration, and socioeconomic status of each group. In all cases of language and cultural maintenance among the different Jordanian minority groups, with the exception of the Gypsies, it has been observed that these factors are of great importance, though they vary greatly in weight and importance from one case to another. This means that not all of these factors are relevant in any particular case. Through a careful examination of the results of these studies, we observe, as said earlier, that language and cultural maintenance among the Chechens, the Circassians, and the Gypsies is mainly due to the existence of linguistic and cultural islands whereby these minority groups live in tightly knit communities (see Dweik 2000; Abd-el-Jawad 2006; Al-Khatib & Al-Ali 2005). Nevertheless, the elements most responsible for language and cultural shift among the Armenians are both the small size of their population and the way they live in the country; namely, they are scattered over the large urban centers (see Al-Khatib 2001). In like manner, we believe that this same factor (i.e., lack of residential contiguity) is the element most responsible for the clear case of language and cultural shift among the Kurds of Jordan who, like the Armenians, are scattered over the large urban centers of the country. In addition, it is highly likely that the earlier waves of Kurdish immigrants who arrived five or six centuries ago to the country and who have already been assimilated into the larger host society have contributed to the assimilation of the new waves of immigrants who arrived in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

4. Conclusions and implications

We have provided a detailed analysis of the language situation among the Kurds of Jordan. The evidence suggests that the Kurds of Jordan who consciously placed more importance on Arabic to enable them to integrate and settle in the country are witnessing a clear-cut case of language and cultural shift toward the majority society. By analyzing the different patterns of language use among the Kurds, one can trace the course that language shift has taken for this group of speakers and the extent to which it has taken place. It is quite evident that language shift appears to have occurred in most social domains. Moreover, the study revealed that the loss

of the Kurdish language is more in writing than in listening and speaking. Remoteness of Jordan from Kurdistan is believed to be the factor most responsible for language and cultural shift among them. It makes mother tongue communication for them more difficult. In addition, lack of residential contiguity among them is believed to be another important element that contributed to language and cultural shift toward the host society. This has limited their use of Kurdish language upon interacting with each other and weakened community ties among them. Additionally, living in a country away from their homeland would provide less opportunity for them to use the language in a regular basis. Also, encouraging interethnic marriage on their part may have resulted in accelerating language and cultural shift among them. It is assumed that interethnic marriage may result in permanent rupture in family relationships (see Fishman 2007; Craig 1992). Furthermore, it is highly likely that the positive attitude of the Kurds toward the Arabic language and culture has resulted in weakening the community language position and in causing them to use Arabic as a mother tongue.

Thus, unless the Kurds of Jordan are willing to radically change the way they approach their language and unless they are willing to spend the time and effort required to learn and promote Kurdish in the context of Jordan, it is expected that their language will be lost completely in a few decades. Our own observation convincingly shows that there does not seem to be enough motivation at the community level to do what needs to be done to revive the language or even to keep it from being lost.

References

Abd-el-Jawad, Hassan (2006) Why do minority languages persist? The case of Circassian in Jordan. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism* 9 (1): 51–74.

Aipolo, Anahina & Holmes, Janet (1990) The use of Tongan in New Zealand: Prospects for language maintenance. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 11 (6): 501–521.

Ali, Hamid (1992) *Al-Mushkila alkurdiah filsharq alawsat munthu bidayatha* [The Kurdish Problem in the Middle East from the Beginning]. Cairo: Madbuli Bookstore.

Al-Khatib, Mahmoud A. (2001) Language shift among the Armenians of Jordan. *The International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 152: 153–177.

Al-Khatib, Mahmoud A. & Al-Ali, Mohammed N. (2005) Language and cultural maintenance among the Gypsies of Jordan. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 26 (3): 187–215.

Al-Khatib, Mahmoud A. & Alzoubi, Abdulaziz A. (2009) The impact of sect-affiliation on dialect and cultural maintenance among the Druze of Jordan: An exploratory study. *Glossa* 4 (2): 186–219.

Al-Kurdi, Mohammed (2004) *Al-Akrad Al-Urduniuun Wadwruhim fi Bina'a Alurdun* [The Jordanian Kurds and Their Role in Building up Modern Jordan]. Amman: Dar Sindibad Publishers.

Basri, Meer (1991) *A'alaam Al-Kurd* [The Kurdish Important Figures]. London: Riad El-Rayyes Books.

Brandt, Elizabeth A. & Youngman, Vivian A. (1989) Language renewal and language maintenance: A practical guide. *Canadian Journal of Native Education* 16 (2): 42–77.

Brown, Douglas (1994) *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching*. San Francisco: Prentice Hall Regents.

Buda, Janusz (1992) Language shift in Australia and Canada. In *Otsuma Women's University Annual Report: Humanities and Social Sciences*, Vol. XXIV. Retrieved January 4, 2010 from http://www.f.waseda.jp/buda/texts/langshift.html.

Carliner, Geoffrey (2000) The language ability of U.S. immigrants: Assimilation and cohory effects. *International Migration Review* 34: 158–182.

Craig, Colette G. (1992) Language shift and language death: The case of Rama in Nicaragua. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 93. 11–26.

Crawford, James (2007) Seven hypotheses on language loss: Causes and cures. In Gina Cantoni (ed.), S*tabilizing Indigenous Languages*, revised edition, pp. 45–60. Flagstaff: Northern Arizona University.

Columbia Encyclopedia (2007) *Kurds*, sixth edition. Retrieved February 2, 2009 from http://www.bartleby.com/65/ku/Kurds.html.

Dauenhauer, Nora & Dauenhauer, Richard (1998) Technical, emotional, and ideological issues in reversing language shift: Examples from Southeast Alaska. In Lenore A. Grenoble & Lindsay J. Whaley (eds.), *Endangered Languages: Current Issues and Future Prospects*, pp. 57–98. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Dorian, Nancy (1980) Language shift in community and individual: The phenomenon of the Laggard semi-speaker. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 25: 85–94.

—— (1982) Language loss and maintenance in language contact situations. In Richard D. Lambert & Barbara F. Freed (eds.) *The Loss of Language Skills*, pp. 44–59. Rowley: Newbury House.

—— (1987) The value of language maintenance efforts which are unlikely to succeed. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 68: 57–68.

—— (1994) Comment: Choices and values in language shift and its study. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 110: 113–124.

—— (2001) Small peoples in globalization's grip: Can short-term disaster become longer-term opportunity? Presentation given at the American Anthropological Association's annual meeting, November 2001.

Dressler, Wolfgang U. (1988) Language death. In Frederick J. Newmeyer (ed.), *Language: The Socio-cultural Context*, Linguistics: The Cambridge Survey Volume IV, pp. 184–192. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Dweik, Bader S. (2000) Linguistic and cultural maintenance among the Chechens of Jordan. *Language, Culture and Curriculum* 13 (2): 184–195.

Edmonds, Cecil J. (1957) *Kurds, Turks and Arabs: Politics, Travel and Research in North-Eastern Iraq, 1919–1925.* London: Oxford University Press.

Edwards, Walter F. (1983) Code selection and shifting in Guyana. *Language in Society* 12: 295–311.

Erikson, Erik H. (1968) *Identity: Youth and Crisis*. New York/London: W. W. Norton & Company.

Fasold, Ralph (1984) *The Sociolinguistics of Society: Introduction to Sociolinguistics, Volume I*, Language in Society 5. Oxford/New York: Basil Blackwell.

Fishman, Joshua A. (1966) *Language Loyalty in the United States: The Maintenance and Perpetuation of Non-English Mother Tongues by American Ethnic and Religious Groups*, Bilingual-bicultural education in the United States, Janua linguarum, series maior 21. The Hague: Mouton.

—— (1980) Bilingualism and biculturalism as individual and societal phenomena. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 1 (1): 3–15.

—— (1991) *Reversing Language Shift: Theoretical and Empirical Foundations of Assistance to Threatened Languages*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

—— (2007) What do you lose when you lose your language? In Gina Cantoni (ed.), *Stabilizing Indigenous Languages*, revised edition, pp. 71–81. Flagstaff: Northern Arizona University.

García, Ofelia (1995) Spanish language loss as a determinant of income among Latinos in the United States: Implications for language policy in schools. In James W. Tollefson (ed.), *Power and Inequality in Language Education*, pp. 142–160. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Garzon, Susan (1992) The process in language death in Mayan community in southern Mexico. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 93: 53–66.

Gordon, Milton M. (1964) *Assimilation in American Life: The Role of Race, Religion, and National origins*. New York: Oxford University Press.

—— (1978) *Human Nature, Class, and Ethnicity*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Hatoss, Anikó (2005) Do multicultural policies work? Language maintenance and acculturation in two vintages of the Hungarian diaspora in Queensland, Australia. In James Cohen, Kara T. McAlister, Kellie Rolstad & Jeff MacSwan (eds.), *Proceedings of the 4th International Symposium on Bilingualism*, pp. 1001–1009. Somerville: Cascadilla Press. Retrieved January 4, 2010 from http://www.lingref.com/isb/4/076ISB4.PDF.

Hoffmann, Charlotte (1991) *An Introduction to Bilingualism.* London: Longman.

Holmes, Janet (1992) *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*. London: Longman.

Holmes, J. & Harlow, R. (eds.) (1991) *Threads in the New Zealand Tapestry of Language*. Auckland: Linguistic Society of New Zealand.

Kloss, Heinz (1966) German-American language maintenance efforts. In Joshua A. Fishman (ed.), *Language Loyalty in the United States*, pp. 206–252. The Hague: Mouton.

Kurdistan (1996) *Who are the Kurds?* Retrieved February 10, 2009 from http://www.cool.mb.ca/~kakel/kurds.html.

Kurdastanica (1991) *Kurdish Population*. Retrieved February 10, 2010 from http://www.kurdistanica.com/?q=gallery&g2_itemId=95.

Kurds Homepage (1996) *Kurdistan*. Retrieved December 24, 2008 from http://www.cool.mb.ca/~kakel/kurdistan.html.

Kurd_lal Working Groups (2003) *Kurdish Language and Linguistics.* Retrieved December 24, 2008 from http://www.cogsci.ed.ac.uk/~siamakr/kurd_lal.html.

Kwachka, Patricia (1992) Discourse structures, cultural stability, and language shift. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 93: 67–74.

Laitin, David D. (1998) *Identity in Formation: The Russian-Speaking Populations in the Near Abroad*, Wilder House Series in Politics, History, and Culture Ithaca/London: Cornell University Press.

Linton, April (2003) *Is Spanish Here to Stay? Contexts for Bilingualism among U.S.-born Hispanics, 1990–2000*, Working Paper No. 81. The Center for Comparative Immigration Studies: University of California, San Diego. Retrieved March 3, 2009 from http://www.ccis-ucsd.org/PUBLICATIONS/wrkg81.pdf.

McDowall, David (1996) *A Modern History of the Kurds.* London/New York: I.B. Tauris.

Milroy, James & Milroy, Leslie (1978) Belfast: Change and variation in an urban vernacular. In Peter Trudgill (ed.), *Sociolinguistic Patterns in British English*, pp.19–36. London: Edward Arnold.

Mougeon, Raymond & Beniak, Edouard (1994) Bilingualism, language shift, and institutional support for French: The case of the Franco-Ontarians. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 105–106: 99–126.

Poladian, Arshak (2004) *Mas'alit Asl Al-Akrad fi Almasadir Alarabia* [The Question of the Origin of Kurds in the Arabian Sources]. Abu Dabi: The UAE Center for the Strategic Research.

Rhodes, Richard (1992) Language shift in Algonquian. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 93: 87–92.

Roj Bash Kurdistan (2008) *The Kurds in Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Israel and Egypt.* Retrieved February 10, 2009 from https://northerniraq.info/forums/viewtopic.php?f=1&t=2966.

Scollon, Ron & Scollon, Suzanne Wong (2001/1995) *Intercultural Communication: A Discourse Approach*, Language in Society 21, second edition. Malden/Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

Strubell, Miquel (2001) Catalan a decade later. In Joshua A. Fishman (ed.), *Can Threatened Languages Be Saved? Reversing Language Shift Revisited: A 21st Century Perspective*, pp. 74–100. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Sun, Susan (1999) The New Zealand-born Chinese community of Auckland: Aspects of language maintenance and shift. *Hong Kong Journal of Applied Linguistics* 4 (2): 1–14. Retrieved March 13, 2009 from http://sunzi1.lib.hku.hk/hkjo/view/5/500070.pdf.

www.al-bab.com (2005) *The Kurds*. Retrieved January 3, 2009 from http://www.al-bab.com/arab/background/kurds.htm.

Williams, Allen J. & Ortega, Suzanne T. (1990) Dimensions of ethnic assimilation: An empirical appraisal of Gordon's typology. *Social Sciences Quarterly* 71 (4): 697–710. Retrieved March 7, 2009 from http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1008&context=sociologyfacpub.

Contact information:

Mahmoud A. Al-Khatib
Department of English for Applied Studies
Jordan University of Science and Technology
Irbid 22110
Jordan
e-mail: mahmoud(at)just(dot)edu(dot)jo

Mohammed N. Al-Ali
Department of English for Applied Studies
Jordan University of Science and Technology
Irbid 22110
Jordan
e-mail: alali(at)just(dot)edu(dot)jo