



**The Language Situation among The
Assyrians of Palestine**

الوضع اللغوي بين سرياني فلسطين

By

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Authorization Form

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Al- Shunnaq

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Dedication

To the soul of Jihad Al- Amareen and all those who sacrificed their lives in the pursue of better tomorrow for Palestine. I also dedicate this work to my two beloved brothers, Zaid Ayyash and Laith Ayyash, who always believed in me and supported me through this journey. I extend great appreciation to my parents who encouraged me to the limits to fulfill my ambitions.

Table of Contents

A	Authorization Form	i
B	Thesis Committee Decision	ii
C	Acknowledgement	iii
D	Dedication	iv
E	Table of Contents	v
F	List of Tables	viii
G	List of Appendices	ix
H	English Abstract	x
I	Arabic Abstract	xii
Chapter One: Introduction		
1.0	Introduction	1
1.1	Background of the Study	1
1.2	The Assyrians of Bethlehem: A Community profile	2
1.3	Statement of the Problem	6
1.4	Objectives of the Study	7
1.5	Questions of the Study	7
1.6	Significance of the Study	7
1.7	Limitations of the Study	8

1.8	Limits of the Study	8
1.9	Definition of Terms	8
Chapter Two: Review of Literature		
2.0	Review of Literature	10
2.1	Review of Theoretical Literature	10
2.1.1	Literature Related to Language Contact and Language Situation	10
2.1.2	Literature Related to Language Choice, Use and Language Attitudes	11
2.1.3	Literature Related to The Factors That Lead to Language Maintenance and Language Shift	13
2.2	Review of Empirical Studies	15
2.2.1	Studies Related to Language Situation	15
2.2.2	Studies Related to Language Use and Attitudes	18
2.2.3	Empirical Studies Related to The Factors That Lead to Language Maintenance and Language Shift	23
Chapter Three: Method and Procedures		
3.0	Introduction	27
3.1	Population and Sample of The Study	27
3.2	Instruments of The Study	28
3.3	The Sociolinguistic Questionnaire	31

3.4	Validity of The Questionnaire	33
3.5	Reliability of The Questionnaire	34
3.6	Procedures of The Study	34
Chapter Four: Findings of the Study		
4.0	Introduction	37
4.1	Findings of The First Question	37
4.2	Findings of The Second Question	44
4.3	Findings of The Third Question	47
4.4	Findings of The Interviews	50
Chapter Five: Discussion, Conclusions and Recommendations		
5.0	Introduction	53
5.1	Discussion of the Findings Related to the Domains of Language Use	53
5.2	Discussion of the Findings Related to Language Attitudes	58
5.3	Discussion of the Findings Related to the Factors that Support the Use of Arabic and Syriac	59
5.4	Conclusions	61
5.5.0	Recommendations for Future Research	61

List of Tables

Chapter No.	Table No.	Description	Page No.
3	A	Distribution of the Participants as per their Demographic Data	28
4	1	Language Use at Home with the Family and Relatives	38
4	2	Language Use among Friends	40
4	3	Language Use and Media	40
4	4	Language Use in the Church	41
4	5	Language Use in the Neighborhood and Workplace	42
4	6	Language Use at School	43
4	7	Language Use for Emotional Expression	44
4	8	Language Attitudes	45
4	9	Factors Contributed to Shifting towards Arabic and to Gradual Loss of Syriac Language.	47

List of Appendices

Appendix	Description	Page No.
A	The English Pilot Questionnaire	68
B	The Arabic Pilot Questionnaire	72
C	The English Sociolinguistic Questionnaire	76
D	The Arabic Sociolinguistic Questionnaire	83
E	Panel of Experts	90

The Language Situation among the Assyrians of Palestine:

A Sociolinguistic Study

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the language situation among the Assyrians of Palestine. The purpose of this study is to find out the domains where the Assyrians of Palestine use Arabic and Syriac. The study also intends to unfold the Assyrians' attitudes towards both languages (Syriac and Arabic). Finally, the study looks into the factors which either have led them to maintain or lose their ethnic language. The researcher established a community profile and interviewed several key figures from the Assyrian community in Bethlehem before distributing the sociolinguistic questionnaire which consisted of five sections and each section was concerned with one of the questions of the study. The researcher chose a purposive sample of 50 Assyrians from the Assyrian community in Bethlehem in order to respond to the instruments used in the study. The results showed that the Assyrian community in Bethlehem is currently witnessing a language shift. Despite the fact that the church and other

religious and community institutions play a significant role in trying to preserve Syriac language, the Assyrians of Bethlehem are shifting towards Arabic. Moreover, their residency in Palestine most of their lives demand them to learn and use Arabic because it is the official language of the country. Also, the lack of Syriac written literature, newspapers, TV and Radio channels contributed to shifting towards Arabic. Moreover, living in Palestine where Arabic is the dominant language helped them to shift towards Arabic in order to obtain jobs and live in peace and harmony in Palestine. Also the fact that their parents do not use Syriac at home and external marriages from people who do not belong to the Assyrian community contributed to this language shift. The Assyrians in Bethlehem nowadays use Arabic in all domains i-e among their families, educational institutions, in business and trading but the use of Syriac language is restricted to praying in the church and performing certain religious rituals.

الوضع اللغوي بين سرياني بيت لحم

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الوضع اللغوي بين سريانيي فلسطين

دراسة لغوية اجتماعية

هدفت هذه الدراسة الى التحقق من الوضع اللغوي بين سريانيي فلسطين , وذلك بالإجابة عن اسئلة الدراسة المتعلقة بالمجالات التي يستخدم فيها السريان في فلسطين اللغة السريانية و العربية و معرفة اراءهم اتجاه اللغتين و الكشف عن اهم العوامل التي ادت الى اما المحافظة او التحول عن لغتهم العرقية. وقد قامت الباحثة بإنشاء صورة جانبية للمجتمع السرياني وذلك بإجراء مقابلات مع شخصيات متنوعة عن المجتمع السرياني في بيت لحم. اختارت الباحثة عينة مكونة من خمسين سرياني من القاطنين في مدينة بيت لحم, بهدف جمع المعلومات المتعلقة بأسئلة الدراسة. وقد أظهرت النتائج أن المجتمع السرياني في مدينة بيت لحم يشهد حالياً تحولاً لغوياً باتجاه العربية , على الرغم من ان اراءهم نحو هويتهم ولغتهم العرقية ايجابية. و يعود هذا التحول اللغوي الى زواج البعض من اعراق اخرى و ضعف العلاقات الاجتماعية بين السريان. و تساهم ايضا قلة المواد المكتوبة والأدب المنشور باللغة السريانية في هذا التحول. بالإضافة الى اسباب اقتصادية كترغبة السريان بتحسين اوضاعهم المعيشية مما يحتم عليهم تعلم العربية للحصول على وظائف مجدية. ومن الجدير بالذكر ان السريان في بيت لحم اليوم يستخدمون

اللغة العربية في كل مناحي حياتهم مع عائلاتهم و في المؤسسات التعليمية كافة وفي متجارتهم و اعمالهم الاقتصادية المختلفة اما استخدامهم للغة السريانية فيكاد يقتصر على ادائهم للصلاة في الكنيسة و اداء بعض الشعائر الدينية.

Chapter One

Introduction

1.0 Introduction

Many linguistic outcomes may emerge when two or more languages are in contact and used in the same area by different groups of people. This introduces a fertile ground for scholars to study and examine languages in contact. Nowadays, minority ethnic languages became one of the main interests of sociolinguists around the world because of the unstable condition of these languages. Winford (2003) categorized three possible language contact outcomes i-e: language maintenance, language shift, and language creation. He stated that these different outcomes have resulted from different social situations.

1.1 Background of the study

When languages are in contact, various situations can occur. Fishman (1989) predicts three potential results: The first possibility is that the intrusive language will dominate and replace the host language. The second possible result is that the host language will dominate the intrusive language and so the intrusive language will be lost. The last possibility is that the two languages will be used side by side, as the situation among the Palestinians who live in the green line where they use Arabic

and Hebrew in daily communication.

1.2 The Assyrians of Bethlehem: A Community Profile

The researcher conducted several interviews with some key figures of the Assyrian community of Bethlehem in order to collect such information about their history, linguistic background, and other aspects of their life in Bethlehem. The researcher used this instrument because of the lack of the paper resources and studies which dealt with Assyrians of Bethlehem.

Towards the end of the 19th century, some Assyrian families came to Palestine from Turkey to do the pilgrimage and to visit the holy places. During that time these families heard about the Armenian and Assyrian massacres under the rule of Ottomans, so they decided to settle in Palestine.(Khaleil Kindo, personal communication, January 27, 2014) Escaping from the massacres, many Assyrians left their villages specifically from TurAbdin region south-east of Turkey. (Al-Refae, 2013) Some of them first settled in Jerusalem and then moved to the city of Bethlehem.

Nowadays, the Assyrians represent 10% of the population of the Christian community in Palestine. (Afram Abdo, personal communication, July 6, 2013) According to the above aforementioned, the Assyrian immigration to Palestine was triggered by religious and

political factors.

The Assyrian community in Bethlehem now suffers from reversed immigration as many individuals and families leave Palestine to Europe searching for better opportunities specially to Germany, Sweden and Holland. This immigration was driven by different social, economic, and political factors. The poor economic situation in Bethlehem specially after the " Intifadah" in 2000, encouraged many families to leave Palestine and seek living in European countries where they can find better job opportunities.

Some Assyrians complain about religious discrimination in the city, especially by other Christians who belong to other churches and origins. This situation made some of them seek living in other countries, such as Holland. (George Dali, personal communication, January 31st, 2014)

Most of the Assyrians in Palestine follow the Orthodox Church in Syria and its Assyrian Patriarch Ignatius Zakka Ewas the first. There are also, few families who belong to the Catholic Church. The Assyrian community is well educated as many members of the community speak English, German, French, Hebrew, and other foreign languages. The Assyrians speak many dialects, such as Maserati and Azech which refer to the villages they immigrated from. There are approximately 4000

Assyrians in Palestine including 300 families who settled in Jerusalem, and another 400 families in Bethlehem in addition to few families in the city of Nazareth. (George Al-Syryani, personal communication, January 26, 2014)

Based on the researcher's investigation, it was found that the first generation of immigrants who came to Bethlehem lived in "Housh Al Sryan" which is the area that surrounds the Assyrian church. Nowadays, the Assyrians live in different parts of the city and Beit Jala with few families centering in "Ras Ftees". Yousef Azezeh (Personal communication January 26, 2014)

The first generation of the Assyrian immigrants was a mixture of educated and uneducated individuals. The elderly were mostly illiterate. When the Assyrians first settled in Palestine, they worked as mechanics, builders, and craftsmen. Later on, many of them benefited from their residence in holy cities, where religious tourism was active all around the year, and started to work in tourism. Therefore, many Assyrians worked as tour guides or opened gift shops selling oriental antiques.

Nevertheless, the Assyrians nowadays enjoy a high level of education and many of them obtained high educational degrees.

Nowadays, the Assyrians of Bethlehem in specific and in Palestine in general fill all sorts of positions at public and private sectors as doctors, engineers, teachers, and employees in different institutions.

The Assyrian community in Bethlehem is a correlated entity, where the associations and relations among the people in the community are solid and strong. In order to preserve the Assyrian tradition and to tackle the community issues, several institutions were established such as churches, schools and social clubs.

When the Assyrians first settled in Bethlehem, they realized the importance of having religious institutions to keep the Christian spirit alive among the members of the community. In 1922 the decision of establishing St Mary's Syrian Orthodox Church was resolved and so in 1926 the foundation stone of the church was laid. During the late thirties, it was noticed that there was a need to expand the church due to the increasing number of the community members and worshippers. In 1941 the expansion was completed and the church was inaugurated.

Later on, many institutions were emanated from the church such as "St Aphrem Association" which organizes all the gatherings and celebrations of the community and presides "The School of St Aphrem the Syrian" in Beit Jala. The school was established in 2003 where it accepted students from kindergarten till eighth grade. The school

accepted students from all different religious and ethnic backgrounds of the Palestinian community but learning the Syriac language was obligatory to all the students of all grades.

Few steps away from St Mary's Syrian Orthodox Church, a cultural and sports club takes place which is The Syrian Club. The club was founded in 1946 to look after the Assyrian youth in Bethlehem. A scout group was formed and it was highly supported by the church and the community so it became the largest scout group in the west bank. Moreover, the musical band of the Assyrian scout was invited to train the Palestinian presidential musical group. (Yousef Azezeh, Personal communication January 26, 2014)

All the Assyrian institutions in Bethlehem and the church follow the Orthodox Assyrian Patriarch in Jerusalem, the patriarchal vicar Bishop Mar Swerios Malki Murad.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Contact between the Assyrians and the Arabs in Palestine may have influenced their minority ethnic language in one way or another. This study aims to investigate how Syriac and Arabic are used, and to explore the Assyrians' attitudes towards both languages.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

This study aims to examine the domains of language use for Arabic and Syriac and to explore the Assyrians' attitudes towards Syriac and Arabic. Moreover, it investigates the factors that either helped maintain or lose the Syriac language.

1.5 Questions of the Study

1. In what domains do the Assyrians use Syriac and Arabic?
2. What are the Assyrians' attitudes towards Syriac and Arabic?
3. What factors have contributed to shifting towards Arabic and to the gradual loss of Syriac.

1.6 Significance of the Study

Although some studies were conducted on ethnic minorities in the Middle East, very few of them were conducted on the Assyrians of Palestine. Therefore, this study is an attempt to fill this gap. Moreover, since most language and linguistic investigations have examined large ethnic communities, this study may benefit those researchers who are interested in investigating small ethnic communities in the region. This study is distinguished from other previous studies in its topic, its design and its

method. To the best knowledge of the researcher, the Assyrians of Palestine were not dealt with except one study that was conducted in 1985. The study is also distinguished by multiple research design where the researcher is using three instruments in collecting data. Therefore, it is using a qualitative and quantitative method.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

The findings of this study are limited to the sample and the instruments employed in this study. Therefore, the findings cannot be generalized to all the Assyrian population of Palestine.

1.8 Limits of the Study

The study is conducted in Bethlehem, Palestine and in Amman, Jordan during the academic year of 2013/2014.

1.9 Definition of Terms

Language Situation has been defined by Ferguson 1971 as" the total configuration of language use at a given time and place; including such data as how many and what kind of languages are spoken in the area by how many people, under what circumstances, and what the attitudes and beliefs about language held by the members of the community." (p.157).

However, operationally in this study it refers to the domains of language use and the attitudes of the Assyrians towards each language.

Domains of Language Use: Theoretically, according to Fishman (2000) "Domains are defined in terms of institutional contexts or sociological co-occurrences. They attempt to designate the major clusters of interaction situations that occur in particular multilingual settings. Domains enable us to understand that language choice and topic... are... related to widespread socio-cultural forms and expectations." (p.86) Operationally, It refers to the situations and settings where each language is used, under what conditions and circumstances such as home, work, media, school, neighborhood, place of worship, and by what people.

Language Attitudes: Theoretically, Baker (1988) defines attitudes as hypothetical constructs that are interrelated, 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) Operationally, in this study it refers to peoples' feelings towards their language and other languages, and their behavior towards it. Positive feelings may encourage the maintenance of a language while negative feelings may speed up language shift.

Chapter Two

Review of Literature

2.0 Review of Literature:

This section reviews some theoretical and empirical studies that cover language contact in addition to language choice, use and attitudes

2.1 Review of Theoretical Literature:

2.1.1 Literature Related to Language Contact and Language Situation

Thomason (2001) classified the result of having two languages in contact into three categories which are: contact-induced language change, extreme mixture of language, and language death.

Wright, & Kelly (1995) stated that where a language contact happens, language conflict is an expected result:

Most contact between ethnic groups does not occur in context of peaceful, harmoniously coexisting communities. Rather, contact typically takes place in a context of varying degrees of tension, resentment and differences in opinion. (p.65)

Spolsky (2001) defined language conflict as "producing pressure from one language on speakers of other languages to adopt it."(p.55). He also stated that language conflict is the most common result of languages in contact.

Thomson and Kaufman (1988) distinguished two types of language contact situations: language maintenance and language shift. He also presented a model of contact-induced change which is a model that focuses on the interaction between language-internal and language - external factors. According to his model in a time of language contact, language external factors are capable of dominating the language internal ones.

2.1.2 Literature Related to Language Choice, Use and Language Attitudes:

Lewis (1985) indicated that the openness of a community may affect the language choice. The more the community is open to other cultures and languages the more it accepts the linguistic or nonlinguistic contacts. However, there are communities which will reject this contact because of their pride of their culture and language. These communities are more likely to adopt language maintenance and reject language shift.

Fishman (2000) argued that language choice is an outcome of certain conventions which are adopted from the society. This occurs when one language becomes linked to a situation or sphere of activities or as he calls domains. He stated that:

Domains are defined in terms of institutional contexts or sociological co-occurrences. They attempt to designate the major clusters of interaction situations that occur in particular

multilingual settings. Domains enable us to understand that language choice and topic... are... related to widespread socio-cultural forms and expectations. (p.86)

Likewise, Fishman (1964) stated that one language may seem more appropriate to a speaker in a certain domain. Moreover, the standard language is the one that is used in high domains, whereas the colloquial is the one that is used in low domains.

Holmes (2001) maintained that domain is a key to recognize many generalizations about any speech community. For instance it clarifies which code or codes are usually selected for use in different situations. Holmes has elaborated on "the reasons for the choice... of one direct rather than another involve the same kind of social constructions- the participants, the social settings, and the topic or the purpose of the interaction" (p.6).

Fasold (1984) observed that the attitudes towards languages reflect the attitudes towards members of various ethnic groups. He focused on the relations between high and low varieties of language and observed that there is a certain social hierarchy presented in the use of such varieties in society. Fasold suggested that the language relations between power and solidarity are not always presented in the high and low varieties of language.

Agheyisi and Fishman (1970) proposed two view points to language attitudes. The first is the mentalist view according to which attitudes are a "mental and neutral state of readiness which cannot be observed directly, but must be inferred from the subject's introspections"(p.181). The second view is the behaviorist and according to it attitudes are a dependent variable that can be statistically determined by observing actual behavior in social situations.

The speakers' attitudes towards the language can be considered as a factor for preserving it. Baker (1988) defined 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)

2.1.3 Literature Related to the Factors That Lead to Language Maintenance and Language Shift

According to Fishman (1972), language maintenance and language shift may be the result of many social, cultural, or psychological factors. Language maintenance is concerned with language stability where it is passed on from one generation to another despite the presence of other languages used by the community whereas language shift occurs when the younger generations of the immigrants' community move towards the majority language that is used by the dominant community.

Kloss (1966) elaborated on the factors that enhance language maintenance or hinder it. He suggested that the factors which foster it include: religio-societal insulation, time of immigration, existence of language islands, affiliation with denomination fostering parochial schools, pre-immigration experience with language maintenance efforts and former use as the only official tongue during pre-Anglo American period.(p.206) Kloss considered the factor of religio-societal insulation to be “so powerful as to enable those groups endowed with it to resist assimilation on the ground of this one circumstance.”(p.206). He also proposed other factors that influence the two extremes of language maintenance and language shift such as the level of education, the numerical strength of the group and the cultural/linguistic distance between minority and majority.

Weinreich (1974) suggested that some ethnic groups have preserved their languages because "it became a symbol of group integrity, based on the extensive emotional involvement of the speakers with the language during the period of its acquisition in childhood."(p.100). He stated that language shift happens in certain situations, domains and with certain people. According to him, language shift is "the change away from habitual use of one language to that of another." (p.16).

2.2. Review of Empirical Studies

This part introduces studies which investigated language contact among ethnic groups in the Middle East and the world at large. Moreover, this part includes studies related to the attitudes towards language among several minorities and the factors which lead to maintaining these languages or to language shift.

2.2.1 Studies Related to Language Situation:

Dweik (1986) examined the linguistic situation among three ethnic minorities who live in Jerusalem: the Armenians, the Assyrians and the Greeks. The researcher aimed to explore the linguistic situation of their languages after being into contact with (Arabic, English and Hebrew). The data were collected through interviews and questionnaires. It was found that various factors helped these minorities to maintain their languages.

Vakhtin (1998) conducted a study which aimed to examine the Siberian indigenous languages: Siberian Yupik and other languages of Chukotka. These languages were in contact with each other for centuries and considered as endangered languages in Northeast Siberia. It was found that the majority of the indigenous groups have lost their native languages and shifted to the dominant language "Russian". This shift

happened because this contact between Russian and these indigenous languages affected the lexicons, grammar and phonology. Despite the fact that these languages are in the process of language loss these indigenous groups had positive attitudes towards their languages and believed that their languages as a part of their ethnic identity.

Muaka (2007) conducted a study on the language situation among the Kenyan speakers in selected urban and rural areas. This study aimed to examine the language perception of Kenyan youths and how these perceptions are reflected in their daily language practices. Furthermore, the researcher examined how these language perceptions helped to construct their language identities. The researcher collected the data by means of a questionnaire, informal interviews, and participant observation. The results showed that due to the diversity and dynamicity of the Kenyan society the youth are exposed to different linguistic varieties which formed various language identities. The results also showed that the Kenyan institutions have adopted language policies that pressure Kenyans to abandon their local languages which led the Kenyan youth to use English and Kiswahili in certain domains but they immediately shift to their local languages when they are not with individuals who will judge their language choice. The respondents also demonstrated that they feel more comfortable using their local languages

than using English or Kiswahili. Finally, results showed that despite the official policies that encouraged the use of foreign languages, the local languages were still vibrant and considered as a reflection of the Kenyan identity.

Kittaneh (2009) investigated the language situation among the Arab Palestinians of 1948. She distributed a questionnaire among a selected sample from the community. The questionnaire was designed to examine their use of languages and their attitudes towards Arabic and Hebrew. The results showed that Arabic was used in the area as the official language. Moreover, it was found that the indigenous language Arabic was used side by side with the intrusive language Hebrew.

Sofu (2009) explored the language situation among some Arab families who live in southern Turkey. The researcher collected the data through interviews. The findings showed that the second generation started to lose some aspect of their language. This gradual shift resulted from schooling, the types of career paths this generation has chosen and the need to communicate with only speaking Turkish families. Despite the previous findings, the third generation seemed to be more interested in preserving their mother tongue. The third generation looks at maintaining their language as a way to hold into their identity and Arabic as a part of their heritage.

Storm (2009) investigated the language situation in Tanzania as a multilingual country with approximately 120 languages. The study mainly discussed the use of Ndengeleko as one of the minority languages in Tanzania and also investigated the areas which Ndengeleko was spoken and to determine whether Ndengeleko was endangered or not. Interviews were held with small groups of speakers who used Ndengeleko in their communication. Furthermore, a questionnaire was distributed in four schools where 310 students from 5th, 6th, and 7th grade were asked to answer the questionnaire. The researcher concluded that the future of Ndengeleko language was threatened. The researcher noticed that there is a low attention given to intergenerational language transmission due to the low status of this language. Finally, it was noted that the negative attitudes and the lack of pride and interest towards the culture and the language was a factor that made Ndengeleko a stigmatized language.

2.2.2 Studies Related to Language Use and Attitudes:

Al- Majali (1988) studied the language situation among the Circassians in Jordan. The aim of this study was to investigate language use, language proficiency and language attitudes among Circassians and that data were collected by a survey questionnaire, interviews and observation. It was found that although Arabic has replaced Circassian in most domains,

Circassian is still used by older generations which reflect a rarity in use among younger generations. The results also indicated that Circassians think highly of their language. However, Arabic, is more important as it is the language of Qur'an and Islam. Another result showed that the Circassians viewed their language as a means to bring their community together.

Dweik (1998) explored language loyalty among the Yemenites of Lackawanna, New York. Data were collected by distributing a structured questionnaire to 50 respondents from the second generation. The results showed that the Yemenites were loyal to their ethnic language Arabic. Islam as the religion of these immigrants played a huge role in encouraging them to preserve their language.

Al-Khatib (2001) examined the language situation among the Armenians in Jordan. The researcher distributed a questionnaire and conducted interviews to collect the data. The findings of the study showed that "the Armenians of Jordan are experiencing a gradual shift towards Arabic that may lead on their part to language loss." (p.152). The results also showed that Arabic is the language that is used mainly in most social domains, whereas Armenian language is used in very restricted situations and mostly by the elderly.

Chiung (2001) conducted a study that explored language use among the Hakka, Mainlanders, and the Holos as ethnic groups who live in Taiwan. The study intended to examine the relationships among the ethnic identity, mother tongue, and language ability that occurred in the younger generations that grew up under the national policy in Taiwan. This paper also attempted to find out whether one's ability to speak a certain language plays a part in his belonging to the ethnic group? The data were retrieved from a survey that the researcher conducted in a previous study. The subjects of this study were 244 students at Tamkang University from both genders who were living in various areas. The results showed that Hakka language was the most affected due to the small number of this ethnic group compared with the two other languages. The results also showed that in all three ethnic groups identity was preserved unlike the language which was affected by the national language policies in Taiwan. Furthermore, the researcher concluded that the erosion of one's original ethnic language did not inevitably result in the erosion of ethnic identity itself. On the other hand, he also concluded that the maintenance of one's ethnic language is a contributing factor to the one's ethnic identity.

Hohenthal (2003) explored language attitudes in India and focused on the attitudes towards English, and then he analyzed the use of English

in different domains. A survey was e-mailed to 30 informants. The findings suggested that English had more native speakers in India but still English is a language of ideas not emotions.

Mugaddam (2005) investigated language attitudes among ethnic migrant groups in Khartoum. The study aimed to investigate the language preference among these ethnic groups and what are the reasons for that preference. Moreover, the study also aimed to determine what languages did parents prefer their children to use and to explore the relationship between the ability that one has to speak a language and his attitudes towards it. A questionnaire was distributed to subjects from several domains such as schools, universities, and workplaces in Khartoum. In the first part of the questionnaire subjects were asked to list the languages they prefer and to provide the reasons behind that choice. Those reasons were divided into educational, economic, social interaction, religious, and symbolic reasons. In the second part, the elder generation respondents were asked about the languages they would like their children to learn with a justification for their choice whether it was educational, economic, social interaction, religious, or symbolic. Results showed that despite the fact that younger generations preferred Arabic, their parents showed more concern for their ethnic language. Yet, both generations preferred Arabic for educational, economic, social interaction, and religious reasons. The

elder generations encouraged their children to learn ethnic languages for pure symbolic reasons, which are to maintain the groups' ethnic identity. It was found that ethnic groups had positive attitudes towards ethnic languages but yet their conclusion contradicted their actual maintenance of these languages.

Park and Sarkar (2007) investigated the Korean immigrant parents' attitudes towards heritage language maintenance for their children in Montreal. The sample of the study was nine Korean parents who had children between the ages of 6-18 in 2005. The instruments used to conduct this study were a questionnaire and interviews. The results showed that Korean immigrant parents were very positive towards their children's heritage language maintenance. Korean parents believed that having a high level of proficiency in the Korean language is essential for their children in order to preserve their cultural identity, help them to have better economic opportunities, and to communicate with their grandparents more efficiently.

Burusphat, Suraratdecha, Patpupong and Saengmanee (2010) discussed language vitality and language attitudes among the Karen as an ethnic group living in Thailand. The study aimed to identify the Karen language which is spoken in six provinces in western region in Thailand, and to explore language use and language attitudes towards other

languages of the wider community. To achieve the first goal an ethnolinguistic map was drawn after referring to the locations where Karen language was used and to the picture and video tapes of the Karen culture and activities. The researchers also sent a postal survey to all relevant district and sub-district offices and then the researchers conducted 30 detailed interviews with several community leaders using a guided pilot questionnaire. Results showed that Karen language was maintained in some district while in other district language was only maintained among small groups of speakers mainly by the older generations. Among other district languages, 50 percent of the population still used the language while the other 50 percent shifted to Thai language. Language attitude varied from one generation to another. Children and teenagers were embarrassed from using their mother tongue while the middle aged elder people were proud of their language and wished their children to learn it.

2.2.3 Empirical Studies Related to the Factors That Lead to Language Maintenance and Language Shift:

Dweik (1992) conducted a study on the Maronite Christian Lebanese immigrants in Buffalo to find whether the language is maintained or lost. The researcher collected the data by means of a questionnaire, community profile, participant observation, and interviews). The results showed that due to psychological and communal factors the second and

third generations of this immigrant group shifted from Arabic to English. Due to their spread and living in expanded areas around the city the contact between themselves became less. Their attitudes towards Arabic were negative and so they used English in most domains.

Young and Tran (1999) explored the language situation among the urban Vietnamese community in California. 106 informants from the Vietnamese parents answered a survey to determine language use. The findings indicated that the second generation started to shift towards English despite the fact that the first generation maintained their language and encouraged the maintenance of Vietnamese.

Al – Nahar (2009) investigated the mother tongue, of Armenians of Jordan to determine whether they maintained or lost their language. A sample of 100 Armenians was chosen from the Armenians who reside in Amman, Zarqa and Irbid. The researcher used several instruments to conduct this study such as: personal observation, interviews, and a questionnaire. The overall result showed that the Armenians maintained their language and had a high proficiency in both languages: Arabic and Armenian.

Husain (2011) investigated the measures which the Asian communities of Indian, Pakistani, and Bangladeshi origins in the UK were taking to maintain their native languages. The study aimed to

determine whether the Asian communities in Britain were taking any measures to preserve their native languages. The data were collected through questionnaires with 45 participants from both genders and from varying age groups. The researcher concluded that because of the perceptions these respondents have of their mother tongue language shift will not occur. Furthermore, these immigrants were making efforts to preserve their language but they considered English to be equally important for their survival in the host country.

Jagodic (2011) discussed the process of language maintenance and language shift among the Slovenian community in north-eastern Italy. The study aimed to explore the level of language maintenance and language shift towards Italian among this minority group. The study also aimed to provide an intergenerational comparison between two age groups and the variables that cooperated in this diversity of results. The researcher used a community profile along with a structured questionnaire. 200 subjects answered the questionnaire from two age groups. The first age group consisted of 100 subjects 35 and 36 years old while the second age group included 100 subjects between 16 and 20 years old. Results showed that there was a general positive attitude toward the language. Most of the participants in this study supported teaching the language due to economic factors as new employment

opportunities in neighboring Slovenia. Others saw Slovenian language as a part of their heritage since it is the language of their ancestors while many of them considered learning the language as an opportunity for enriching one's own communicative competence. Despite the previous results the researcher noticed a gradual and slow shift toward Italian and recommended new measures in order to maintain the language.

Al-Obaidi (2013) investigated the language situation among the Chaldo-Assyrians in Baghdad. Three instruments were employed to collect the data: interviews, community profile, and a questionnaire distribute to 135 participants. The results indicated that the Chaldo-Assyrians maintained their language and that it is used in certain social domains such as home and religious settings, whereas Arabic is used for other various functions. The results also showed that Chaldo-Assyrians showed positives attitudes towards both languages.

The reading of these studies above benefited the researcher in determining the objectives of the current study. The researcher also looked into the instruments used in the previous study which helped in establishing the sociolinguistic questionnaire which was used in collecting the data for this study.

Chapter Three

Method and Procedures

3.0. Introduction

This section describes the population and sample of the study. It also elaborates on the instruments, and their validity and reliability. It concludes with statistical analysis and procedures of the study.

3.1. Population and Sample of the Study

The population of the current study is the Assyrians of Palestine, who came from Turkey in the early twentieth century and settled in Palestine becoming citizens in the country.

The researcher selected a purposive sample from that population which included 50 Assyrians who lived in Bethlehem. The researcher distributed some of the questionnaires to worshippers at ST Mary's Syrian Orthodox Church, to school teachers and students at Mar Afram school in Beit Jala, to shop owners, traders and other members of the Assyrian community. The selected sample covered several important demographic variables, namely, different gender, age, educational backgrounds, occupation, and marital status as illustrated at Table (A) below.

Table (A): Distribution of the Participants as Per Their Demographic Data

		Sex		Total
		Male	Female	
Age	(20 – 29)	7	3	10
	(30 – 39)	10	15	25
	(40 – 49)	2	4	6
	(50 – 59)	2	3	5
	60 and above	3	1	4
Marital status	Single	6	4	10
	Married	18	12	30
	Widowed	4	2	6
	Divorced	3	1	4
Occupation	Business	5	2	7
	Education	3	6	9
	Medical field	5	0	5
	Civil service	4	0	4
	Handcraft field	7	2	9
	Student	6	5	11
	No occupation	0	0	0
	Other	2	3	5
Education	Elementary	3	2	5
	Secondary	3	4	7
	Diploma	6	7	13
	Bachelor degree	12	9	21
	Master	2	1	3
	Ph. D	1	0	1
Residency	Assyrian neighborhood	10	5	15
	Arab neighborhood	3	7	10
	Mixed neighborhood	13	12	25
Social and Religious Activities	Attending (Syrian) Church services	24	16	40
	Visiting Assyrian social institutions	20	25	45
	Attending Assyrian parties	10	20	30
	Attending Assyrian celebrations	24	26	50

3.2. Instruments of the Study

To accomplish the objectives set for this study, the researcher used the community profile technique suggested by Wolck (1972) and others.

The community profile included collected data about the Assyrians' background. It contained sociological and historical data about the community obtained from the literature available at Bethlehem Peace Center. Data were also obtained from interviews that were conducted face to face with some members of the community. The researcher arranged appointments with the respondents and during the arranged meetings, the researcher asked the respondents to respond freely to the open-ended questions prepared by the researcher in order to collect as much data as possible. The researcher took notes instantly while speaking to the respondents or in some occasions an assistant helped the researcher with the note taking.

The people who responded to the interviews included his Grace Butros Ne'meh, the Bishop of St Mary's Syrian Orthodox Church in Bethlehem, Afram Abdo who is one of the attendants in the same church, Yousef Azezeh who is an owner of jewelry shop near the Nativity Church, Khaliel Kindo; owner of one of the biggest gas stations in Bethlehem. The researcher also interviewed Mr. George Al-Seryani who currently works as a supervisor in Mar Afram school and finally Mr. George Dali a trader who lives in Beit Jala.

The interview questions included thirty-two open-ended questions (See appendix A). p. 68 The questions covered different aspects of the

historical and social backgrounds of the Assyrian community such as; the regional origins their ancestors came from, causes of their immigration, their residential, educational, occupational distributions, institutions of the community, and some cultural aspects such as music and resources, linguistic background and social ties among them. It also contained demographic data about the respondents themselves such as gender, age, education, occupation, marital status, and place of birth.

The interviews aided the researcher in collecting data about different aspects of the Assyrian community. Moreover, the researcher used the interviews to obtain background information about the language situation among the Assyrian community, which helped the researcher to construct the sociolinguistic questionnaire.

The data collected from the community profile helped the researcher design and deliver the main sociolinguistic questionnaire. After the validity and reliability had been achieved, the collected data also helped the researcher to form the main interviews questions.

The researcher concluded the interviews by inquiring about the linguistic background of the Assyrian community and by asking about the current language situation. Moreover, the researcher also inquired about the factors that led to the current language situation.

3.3. The Sociolinguistic Questionnaire

After collecting the data from the community profile, the researcher designed the English sociolinguistic questionnaire. (See Appendix C) p. 76 The researcher benefited from earlier related studies, such as Fishman (1966), Dweik (1985), Kittaneh (2009), Al-Refaie (2013), and Nofal (2011). After reading the previous studies, the researcher adjusted the questionnaire to suit the Assyrian community. Before the questionnaire was distributed to the respondents, it was validated and examined by a panel of experts. The questionnaire was written in two languages: Arabic and English, and the respondents had the choice to fill up the questionnaire with either one.

The questionnaire consisted of five sections. A covering letter was attached at the beginning of the questionnaire to explain the purpose of the questionnaire and how to fill it up. The questionnaire started with a demographic background section to describe the social background of the participants. Then it included a number of questions to find out the level of proficiency in the four language skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking), and comprehending both languages (Arabic and Syriac).

The second section, titled domains of language use, aimed at finding the domains in which the participants used each language. Seven domains were listed; family and relatives, friends, media and culture,

church, neighborhood and workplace, attended educational institution, and emotional self- expressions. The participants were asked to choose the suitable answer from the following options:

only Arabic Arabic and Syriac only Syriac

The family and relatives domain included mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, etc... and the respondents were asked about the language they use during their family meeting and while using the social media websites. The friends domain asked about the language used when friends meet, make phone calls, and while using social media websites. The media and culture domain inquired about the languages used when interacting with media such as television , radio and internet, and when reading books, surfing the network, while discussing general topics and when writing personal letters. They were asked questions about languages used in prayers and with different people such as the priest and fellow prayers when discussing religious matters. The next domain dealt with the neighborhood and workplace which consisted of four items. Questions concentrated on language use among different people in the workplace when discussing different topics and languages used when socializing with the neighbors or while purchasing goods. The sixth domain inquired about languages used while speaking with the teachers, class mates in the university or in school. The last domain in this section

dealt with languages used in inner speech and when expressing emotions such as happiness, anger and confusion.

The third section centered on the participants' attitudes towards both Arabic and Syriac. In this section the respondents were asked ten questions about languages they prefer. The respondents were asked to choose between Arabic, Syriac or both languages.

The fourth section inquired about the factors which encouraged preserving the Syriac language depending on whether the participants believe that Syriac is still spoken and used in daily life. The participants were given thirteen statements based on a three-point Likert scale, and the participants were asked to check one of the choices that measures the degree of their agreement or disagreement as shown below:

Disagree	Undecided	Agree
1	2	3

The last section of this questionnaire tackled the factors which may have contributed to shifting from Syriac to Arabic, depending on whether the participants believed that Syriac is no longer used in daily life.

3.4 Validity of the Questionnaire

As the researcher must assure the validity of the sociolinguistic questionnaire, a panel of university professors were requested to provide

their comments on the appropriateness of the questionnaire with the objectives of the study. (See Appendix E) P. 90 All the members of the jury were experts in linguistics or teaching fields. The professors' contribution was very helpful and their suggestions and recommendations were implemented in the questionnaire.

3.5 Reliability of the Questionnaire

A separate group from the chosen sample was handed the questionnaire at the last week of January of 2014. This group was selected purposively in order to respond to the questionnaire and to rate the approximate time to answer it. A week later, the same group was handed the same questionnaire to answer it again. This procedure was used to reach a high degree of reliability by insuring that the questionnaire leads to similar results after such repetition. The researcher used Cronbach alpha to measure the reliability of the questionnaire. The estimated result, 0.835, showed that the questionnaire items were consistent.

3.6 Procedures of the Study

The researcher followed these steps while conducting this research:

1. The researcher read some previous works about language use and language attitudes, language maintenance, language shift, the

historical and social background of the Assyrians and the situation of the Assyrians in their homeland and the immigrants around the world.

2. Depending on the readings of the previous works, the researcher determined the objectives and stated the questions of the study.
3. The researcher established a community profile to study the community of the Assyrians of Bethlehem from different angles. On the other hand, the researcher interviewed well known icons from the Assyrian community.
4. In accordance with the study questions, the researcher wrote a questionnaire then established its validity and reliability.
5. The researcher wrote a covering letter which explained the purpose of this questionnaire to the respondents and attached them together.
6. Before distributing the questionnaire, the researcher obtained an official approval from Middle East University in the form of a permission letter.
7. The collected returns were recorded, explained, analyzed depending on scientific methods. The results then were contrasted with the findings of other empirical and theoretical works so the resemblance and the difference could be sorted out.
8. The researcher extracted the conclusions from the findings and then drew suggestions for other future studies dealing with the same field.

9. The references were listed following the alphabetical order and according to the APA style along with the appendices.

Chapter Four

Findings of the Study

4.0. Introduction

This chapter sets forth the answers to the questions of the study which investigate the language situation among the Assyrians of Bethlehem.

These questions are:

1. In what domains do the Assyrians use Syriac and Arabic?
2. What are the Assyrians' attitudes towards Syriac and Arabic?
3. What factors have caused the Assyrians to either maintain or lose Syriac?

4.1. Findings of the First Question

In what domains do the Assyrians use Syriac and Arabic?

This question examines the language that respondents use in various domains such as family and relatives, friends, media and culture, church, neighborhood, workplace, schools, and emotional self- expressions. The respondents are requested to choose from the three choices presented to them, i.e. Syriac, Arabic, both languages.

Results reported in Table (1) below show that 90% of the respondents use Arabic with their parents while only 10% of them use

both Arabic and Syriac. Results also show that 96% of them use Arabic with their brothers and sisters and only 4% use both languages.

Table (1): Language Use at Home with the Family and Relatives

Questions: What language do you use when you speak with	Syriac %	Both Syriac and Arabic %	Arabic %	Total %
your father?	0	10	90	100
your mother?	0	10	90	100
your brothers and sisters?	0	4	96	100
your children?	0	8	94	100
your spouse?	0	5	95	100
your grandfather?	0	10	90	100
your grandmother?	10	6	84	100
your other relatives?	2	6	92	100
your relatives during a phone call?	0	8	92	100
your relative using social media websites?	0	10	90	100
at family meetings?	0	8	92	100

Results indicate that 94% communicate with their children using Arabic and 95% use it with their spouses. On the other hand, only 8% use both Arabic and Syriac with their children and 5% use them with their spouses.

Moreover, 90% of the respondents use Arabic with their grandfathers and 84% use it with their grandmothers while 10% use Syriac with their grandparents and 6% use both languages with their

grandmothers. When asked about the language used with other relatives and during family meetings, 92% of the respondents report using Arabic, 6% use both languages and only 2% use Syriac only. Regarding the language that is used during family meetings, results indicate that 92% use Arabic while only 8% use Syriac.

Concerning the language that is used with relatives on the phone and social media websites, results indicate that 92% of the respondents use Arabic when speaking to relatives on the phone while 8% both languages. Similarly, 90% of them use Arabic with their relatives and in social media websites whereas 10% use both languages.

Results reported in Table (2) below show that when the respondents are asked about the language they use when meeting friends, 96% of them report using Arabic and 90% use it with friends on the phone. Only 4% use Arabic and Syriac in friends meetings and only 10% use both Syriac and Arabic when talking with friends on the phone. Regarding socializing with friends on social media websites, 86% report using Arabic while 12% use both languages and 2% use Syriac.

Table (2): Language Use among Friends

Questions: What language do you use when you	Syriac%	Both Syriac and Arabic%	Arabic%	Total%
meet your friends?	0	4	96	100
talk to your friends during phone calls?	0	10	90	100
socialize with your friends using social media websites?	2	12	86	100

Results reported in Table (3) below indicate that 78% of the respondents use Arabic when asked about the language used in the TV channels they watch and 22% use both Arabic and Syriac. Results also show that 92% of the respondents listen to the radio stations that use Arabic while 8% listen to radio stations in Arabic and Syriac.

Table (3): Language Use and Media

Questions What language is used	Syriac%	Both Syriac and Arabic%	Arabic%	Total%
in the T.V channels you watch?	0	22	78	100
radio stations you listen to?	0	8	92	100
in the books you read?	0	20	80	100
in the websites you visit?	0	10	90	100
when you discuss general cultural topics, international and local news?	0	10	90	100
you write your personal letters?	0	6	94	100

Eighty per cent of the respondents read books in Arabic and 20% read books in Arabic and Syriac. When the respondents are asked about the language used in the websites they visit, 90% use Arabic and 10% use both Arabic and Syriac. Also, 90% use Arabic while discussing general topics and cultural news, however, 10% use both languages. Finally, results show that 94% of the respondents write personal letters in Arabic while only 6% use both languages.

Results reported in Table (4) below indicate that 52% of the respondents use Arabic when they talk to their fellow worshippers and 48% use both Arabic and Syriac. Again, when asked about the language they use to communicate with the priest in the church, 60% report using Arabic and 40% of them report using both Syriac and Arabic.

Table (4) Language Use in the Church

Questions: What language do you use	Syriac%	Both Syriac and Arabic%	Arabic%	Total%
when you talk to your fellow worshippers in the church?	0	48	52	100
when you talk to the priest or clergymen?	0	40	60	100
when you say your prayers in the church?	68	13	6	100
when you pray and supplicate outside the church?	26	40	34	100
in religious meetings outside the church?	0	20	80	100

On the other hand, 68% of the respondents indicate that they use Syriac when they pray in the church and 13% use both while only 6% use Arabic.

Furthermore, results show that 34% of the respondents use Arabic when praying outside the church, 26% use Syriac and 40% use both languages. Finally, 80% of them use Arabic in religious meetings outside the church while 20% use both languages.

Regarding language use in the neighborhood and workplace, results reported in Table (5) below indicate that 98% of the respondents use Arabic when they discuss general topics with their fellow workers whereas only 2% use both languages. Similarly, all respondents, 100%, indicate that they use Arabic to discuss business matters, talk to their neighbors and buy grocery.

Table (5) Language Use in the Neighborhood and Workplace

Questions	Syriac%	Both Syriac and Arabic%	Arabic %	Total%
What language do you use				
when you talk to your fellow employees on general topics?	0	2	98	100
when you discuss business matters?	0	0	100	100
when you talk with your neighbors?	0	0	100	100
when you buy your grocery?	0	0	100	100

Table (6) below indicates the responses about the language they use at school. Results show that all respondents, 100%, use Arabic when talking with their teachers, when discussing educational matters with their fellow students and when discussing general topics with their classmates outside or inside the classroom.

Table (6) Language Use at School

Questions: What language do you use when you	Syriac%	Both Syriac and Arabic%	Arabic%	Total%
talk to your teachers?	0	0	100	100
discuss educational matters with your fellow students at school/ university?	0	0	100	100
discuss general topics with your fellow students?	0	0	100	100
talk with your fellow students at the school yard about general topics?	0	0	100	100

Results reported in Table (7) below show how the respondents use language in emotional situations. Although 82% of them use Arabic, 10% choose both languages and 8% choose Syriac. Moreover, 66% of them use Arabic to express anger whereas 24% use both languages and 10% choose Syriac.

When asked about the language they use when they are stressed, 80% of them indicate that they use Arabic while 6% indicate the use both languages and only 4% indicate the use of Syriac. Finally, 92% indicated that they dream in Arabic and only 8% choose both languages.

Table (7) Language Use for Emotional Expression

Questions: What language do you use when	Syriac%	Both Syriac and Arabic%	Arabic%	Total%
you express happiness?	8	10	82	100
you express anger?	10	24	66	100
you are confused or stressed?	4	6	80	100
you dream?	0	8	92	100

4.2 Findings of the Second Question

What are the Assyrians' attitudes towards Syriac and Arabic?

This question deals with the respondents' attitudes and feelings towards both Syriac and Arabic. Three choices are presented to the respondents: Syriac, Arabic, both languages

Results reported in Table (8) show that when the respondents are asked to choose the most beautiful language, 30% choose Syriac, 30% choose Arabic, and 40% think that both languages are equally beautiful. Then, when asked about the language they think to be more poetic, 30% choose Syriac, 40% choose Arabic and 30% choose both languages. Moreover, while 50% think Syriac is more prestigious than Arabic, 30% choose Arabic and 20% think both languages are evenly prestigious.

Moreover, 40% of the respondents consider the language that reflects their nationality and identity. However, 50% of them choose both languages while only 10% choose Arabic. Also, it is indicated that

half of the respondents consider Syriac the easiest to learn and 20% consider Arabic the easiest whereas 30% choose both languages. When the respondents are asked to choose the language they think is the most suitable for religious practices, 52% choose Syriac and 24% choose Arabic while another 24% think that both languages are equally suitable for religious practices.

Table (8) Language Attitudes

Which language is	Syriac%	Arabic%	Both languages%	Total%
the most beautiful?	30	30	40	100
the most poetic?	30	40	30	100
the most prestigious?	50	30	20	100
a reflection of your nationality and identity?	40	10	50	100
the easiest for you to learn?	50	20	30	100
the most suitable for your religious practices?	52	24	24	100
preferable to use in daily speech?	0	96	4	100
the language of your childhood?	0	92	8	100
more attached to your sentimental life?	42	18	40	100
more important for acquiring knowledge?	2	80	18	100
more important for doing business?	0	95	5	100
more important for pursuing your education?	0	98	2	100
more important for creating new relationships in the community?	4	86	10	100
more important while communicating with your family?	6	92	2	100
more useful while running errands?	0	100	0	100
more efficient to use in governmental institutions?	0	100	0	100
more efficient for documentation?	8	90	2	100
more useful while communicating with other Assyrians in other parts of the world?	42	30	28	100

When the respondents are asked about the language they prefer to use in their daily speech, 96% choose Arabic while only 4% prefer to use

both languages. Likewise, 92% of them believe that Arabic is their childhood language whereas 8% choose both languages.

As it is indicated in Table (8), 42% consider Syriac to be more attached to their sentimental life while 18% choose Arabic and 40% consider both languages are equally attached to their sentimental life. Eighty percent of them deem Arabic to be more important as a means of acquiring knowledge; 18% think that both languages are evenly important while 2% only choose Syriac.

Ninety-five percent believe that Arabic is more important for business while the remaining 5% choose both Arabic and Syriac. Similarly, 98% deem Arabic to be more important in pursuing education and only 2% choose both languages.

When the respondents are asked to choose the language they think is more important to make new relationships in the community, 86% select Arabic and 4% select Syriac while 10% see that both languages are important in this domain. When they are asked about the language they think is more important in communicating with their families, 92% think that Arabic is more important whereas (6%) think Syriac while, 2% think that both languages are evenly important in this domain.

Furthermore, 100% of the respondents perceive Arabic as the language that is more useful for running errands and more efficient at governmental institutions. The respondents are asked also about the language they think is more important for documentation. Results indicate that 90% of the respondents consider Arabic to be more important. On the other hand, 8% consider Syriac more important and 2% consider both languages equally important.

Finally, the respondents are asked about the language they think is more important to communicate with other Assyrians in other parts of the world .Results indicate that 30% choose Arabic; 42% choose Syriac and 28% think that both languages are important.

4.3 Findings of the Third Question

What factors have contributed to shifting towards Arabic and to the gradual loss of Syria?

In order to obtain the results of this question a tables is set with number of factors which either support the use of Arabic over Syriac. Three choices are presented to the respondents: Agree, Neutral, disagree.

Table (9): Factors Contributed to Shifting towards Arabic and to Gradual Loss of Syriac

Factors contributed to shifting towards Arabic and to gradual loss of Syriac	Agree%	Neutral%	Disagree%	Total%
My parents don't use Syriac at home.	82	6	12	100
External marriage from people who don't belong to the Assyrian community.	56	30	14	100

The weak social ties among the Assyrians.	40	10	50	100
The Assyrians are scattered all over the area and don't live in one neighborhood.	30	30	40	100
The lack of newspapers that are written in the Syriac language.	84	10	6	100
The relatively small number of the Assyrians in Bethlehem.	56	0	44	100
The lack of T.V channels and radio stations that broadcast in Syriac.	94	0	6	100
Living in Palestine most of my life makes Arabic my first language.	100	0	0	100
Arabic is my childhood language.	96	4	0	100
Arabic facilitates and supports my occupational status.	90	10	0	100
Being a Palestinian of an Assyrian origin demands to learn and use Arabic because it is the official language of Palestinians.	100	0	0	100

Results reported in Table (9) above shown the factors that may have contributed to using Arabic over Syriac. Eighty-two percent of the respondents find the fact that their parents do not use Syriac at home has encouraged them to shift towards Arabic while 12% disagree and only 6% are neutral.

When the respondents are asked whether external marriages have played a role in shifting towards Arabic, 56% agree and 30% are neutral while 14% disagree with the statement. Also, 40% of them find that the weak social ties among the Assyrians in Bethlehem play a role in shifting towards Arabic while 10% are neutral and 55% disagree.

Also, 30% believe that because Assyrians are scattered all over, that has influenced shifting from Syriac to Arabic and 40% disagree and

30% are neutral. On the other hand, while 84% of the respondents believe that the lack of newspapers written in Syriac is one of the reasons for shifting from Syriac to Arabic, 6% disagree while 10% are neutral.

Moreover, 56% believe that the small number of the Assyrians living in Bethlehem has led to language shift but 44% think the opposite. Also, 94% of the respondents agree that the lack of spoken Syriac in media especially in T.V channels and radio stations contribute to shifting towards Arabic and only 6% think the opposite.

When the respondents were asked whether they agree that Arabic is their childhood language 96% of the respondents agreed while 4% were neutral.

Results also indicate that 100% of the respondents agree that living most of their lives in Palestine has a major role in shifting towards Arabic and makes it their first language. Likewise, 100% of them think that Arabic is the language of their childhood.

Furthermore, 90% think that learning Arabic supports their financial situation and facilitates their occupational status while 10% are neutral. Finally, 100% of the respondents agree that learning Arabic is obligatory in a sense because it is the official language of the country.

4.4 Findings of the Interviews

The researcher conducted five interviews with key figures in the Assyrian community in Bethlehem in order to obtain answers concerning the three questions of the study. The researcher conducted the interviews personally in Arabic but an assistant transcribed them and then the researcher translated them into English.

The first interviewee was his Grace Boutros Ne'meh, the Bishop of St Mary's Syrian Orthodox Church in Bethlehem. The Bishop expressed an overall pride in the Assyrian history and culture. According to him, although Syriac is no longer used in daily speech anymore, the Assyrian community highly appreciates their language as it is one of the most ancient languages in history and the language of Christ.

Also, the Bishop highlighted the efforts that the church exerts in collaborating with Mar Afram school to teach the Syriac language to the new generations. He has emphasized the importance of the Sunday prayers where the service is performed in Arabic and Syriac.

The Bishop expressed his deep sorrow for the bad economic and political situations which encouraged the younger generations to immigrate to other countries where they no longer are attached to the Assyrian language and culture.

The second Interviewee was Mr. Afram Abdo, an activist in St Mary's Syrian Orthodox Church. He confirmed that Syriac is not used any longer except in religious occasions. From his point of view, all the Assyrians in Bethlehem think highly of their language and origin. Moreover, many Assyrian families support the idea of revitalizing the language and make sure their children know how to pray in Syriac and to be involved in the church activities in order to stay in touch with their Syriac origins.

The Third Interviewee was Mr. Khaliel Kindo, an owner of a gas station in Bethlehem. To him and his family, although Syriac is confined to the church, they make sure that his children learn Syriac at school and he expresses his pleasure to see the Syriac language becomes a part of their childhood.

According to him the Assyrians are proud of their Syriac origins but they are Palestinian citizens just like any Palestinian from any other origin and they consider the Palestinian cause one of their concern.

The Fourth Interviewee was Mr. George Dali, a business man who lives with his family in Biet Jala. He attributes the limited use of Syriac to economic reasons. According to him, when the Assyrians first came to Palestine as immigrants they suffered from poor economic conditions which obliged them to assimilate in the society so they can

find job opportunities. As a result their attention was drawn away from the educational matters and so they didn't focus on teaching and learning the language to their children which caused a gradual loss of the language.

Chapter Five

Discussion, Conclusions and Recommendations

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a discussion of the findings of the questions of the study. It also illustrates the results by comparing them with results of other related studies.

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

Results related to the domains of language use lead to the conclusion that Syriac is no longer used at home. Arabic is the dominant language now. It is used in all life aspects with slight use of Syriac in certain domains. Results reported in Table (1) regarding language use at home with family and relatives show that the vast majority, 90%, depend on Arabic when communicating with their family and relatives. A small number of them, 10% use some Syriac expressions or words especially with few members of the family such as their grandparents. This can be explained by the fact that neither their fathers nor mothers are familiar with Syriac.

Results in Table (1) show that Arabic dominates the communication among friends whether it is a direct communication or via phone calls and social media websites.

Results reported in Table (3) show that the Assyrians of Bethlehem depend mainly on Arabic resources in the media domain. The Assyrian community in Bethlehem is familiar with some Syriac TV and radio channels. However, they depend on the Arabic one to keep up with the latest local and world news. Likewise, Results show that Arabic is the language used for reading books or writing personal letters.

Results reported in Table (4) show that a slight variation can be noticed with the results. Compared with other domains, Syriac is mostly used in the church and for religious reasons. 40% of the respondents use Syriac along with Arabic to pray in and outside the church and they also use it to communicate with the priest and with other worshippers. Moreover, 68% of the respondents use Syriac when they say their prayers in the church whereas only 26% of them use Syriac when they pray outside the church. This can be explained by the fact that the Assyrian church depends on Syriac during the service. It is important to note that the worshippers memorize the prayers in Syriac by heart without understanding its' meaning. So, because most of the worshippers are not familiar with Syriac the prayers are translated to Arabic. These results

agree with Kloss (1966) who considered the factor of religious-societal insulation to be “so powerful as to enable those groups endowed with it to resist assimilation on the ground of this one circumstance.”(p.206).

Results shown in Table (5) indicate that the Assyrians of Bethlehem use Arabic in their work place and in their neighborhood. The result clearly shows that Arabic is the dominant language when they communicate with their fellow employees to discuss business matters or general topics. Also it is the language used in the neighborhoods they reside in. This can be justified by the fact that many Assyrians work in institutions and run their businesses with Palestinians from other Arab origins or other ethnic backgrounds . Actually , many Assyrians nowadays reside in mixed neighborhoods. Therefore, using Arabic to them is more practical.

Also, results shown in Table (6) indicate that Arabic is the only language the Assyrians use at schools and universities. Although many Assyrians send their children to Mar Afram Assyrian School in Beit Jala, they use Arabic with all their teachers and classmates. This can be explained by the fact that Syriac is not language of instruction in the school and the teachers there do not speak Syriac. However, Syriac language is taught as a school subject for an hour per week.

Results in Table (7) indicate that Arabic is the language that is mostly used to express different emotions such as happiness, anger, stress or the language used in their dreams. However, there is a slight use of Syriac which can be justified by the fact that some Assyrian use Syriac to curse when they are stressed and angry or for praying when they are overwhelmed with happiness.

Those results matches the findings of Holmes (2001) as he maintained the reasons for the choice... of one direct rather than another involve the same kind of social constructions- the participants, the social settings, and the topic or the purpose of the interaction" (p.6).

These results support the findings of Holmes (2001), Vakhtin (1998), Al- Refaee (2013) who maintained that if the ethnic language is not used in various life domains then the language shift will take place. Similarly the results match the findings of Al-Khatib (2001) who reported that "the Armenians of Jordan are experiencing a gradual shift towards Arabic." (p.152) as Arabic is the language used mainly in most social domains, whereas Armenian language is used in very restricted situations and mostly by the elderly.

However the results are not in line with Dweik (1986) who reported that the Assyrians of Jerusalem maintained their language. This contradiction supports the fact that the lack of educational institutions that

support and encourage learning Syriac contributed to language shift.

The results contradict with Al-Nahar (2009) who has concluded that the Armenians of Jordan maintained their language and had high proficiency in both languages: Arabic and Armenian.

Similarly, these results oppose Al-Obaidi (2013) who concluded that the Chaldo-Assyrians in Baghdad maintain their language and they are still using it in different social domains. This result also agrees with Fishman (1966) who indicated that “the antecedent, concurrent or consequent psychological, social and cultural processes” (p. 424) have a key role in maintaining an ethnic language.

Likewise, This result agrees with Weinreich (1974) who believed that the extra-linguistic factors, like religion, play a crucial role in affecting linguistic divisions between languages. He also suggested that "the language usefulness in communication, a development of the emotional involvement in the language, the function of the language in the society and literary and cultural value that the language exerts." (p. 77) have a great effect on the processes of language maintenance and language shift.

5.2. Discussion of the Findings Related to Language Attitudes

Results reported in Table (8) indicate that The Assyrians in Bethlehem believe that both languages are beautiful and poetic. They also think that Arabic is more useful for acquiring knowledge and pursuing their education. However, some of the participants,30%, insisted that Syriac is more beautiful and poetic than Arabic because Syriac is one of the oldest languages in the world and it is more related to their Christianity.

The massive majority, 96% , prefer to use Arabic in their daily life and think of Arabic as the language of their childhood. Also, the majority believe that Arabic is more efficient for doing business and forming new relationships in the community. Many Assyrians in Bethlehem also believe that Arabic is more important when communicating with their families and to use for documentation in governmental institution.

The results agree with Lewis (1985) who stated that the openness in the community to other cultures and ethnic languages encourages the acceptance of the majority language.

These results are in line with Storm (2009) who stated that the negative attitudes and the lack of pride and interest towards the culture and the language was a factor that made Ndengeleko a stigmatized

language in Tanzania. Also, these results corresponds with Fishman (1966) who maintained that “the behavior toward language in the contact setting” (p.424) is a key factor that enhances the use of an ethnic language.

The results do not agree with Kittaneh (2009) who reported some factors as being responsible for Arabic language maintenance among the Arab Palestinians of 1948 and some of these factors are "the habitual use of Arabic in a variety of situations and locations such as home, school and media, the internal marriage and the tight-knit community, the existence of institutions such as homes, mosques, political parties, village councils, etc..., the feeling of oppression and discrimination and the Israeli social segregation policies." (pp.108-9)

5.3. Discussion of the Findings Related to the Factors that Contributed to Shifting Towards Arabic and for Gradual Loss of Syriac

The results in Table (9) concerning the factors which contributed to shifting towards Arabic show that the massive majority, 100%, believe that living in Palestine where Arabic is the dominant language forced them to shift towards Arabic in order to obtain jobs and live in peace and harmony in Palestine. Also, 100%, of the respondents believe that their

residency in Palestine as citizens demands them to use and learn Arabic since it is the official language of the country.

94%, believe that the lack of channels and radio stations that broadcast in Syriac contributed in shifting towards Arabic. Furthermore, 90% of the respondents approved that Arabic facilitates and supports their occupational status. 82%, believe that their parents' use of Arabic played a role in shifting from Syriac to Arabic. 56%, believe that external marriages and week social relationships among the Assyrians contributed to this language shift.

The results agree with Park and Sarkar (2007) who reported that Korean immigrant parents in Montreal believed that having a high level of proficiency in the Korean language is essential for their children in order to preserve their cultural identity. This helped them to have better economic opportunities, and to communicate with their grandparents more efficiently. However, the findings of this study showed that the Assyrian parents are not proficient in Syriac.

This result agrees with Weinreich (1974) who believed that the extra-linguistic factors, like religion, play a crucial role in affecting linguistic divisions between languages.

5.4. Conclusions

After analyzing the results of the questionnaire, the interviews and going through the community profile, it is clear that the Assyrian community in Bethlehem is witnessing a language shift towards Arabic. However, Regardless of their respect and their sense of belonging to Palestine they are still proud of their ethnicity.

They believe that their first priority when they first arrived Palestine were peace, security and earning their living. Therefore, their efforts were not focused on passing the Syriac language to other generations. The Assyrians of Bethlehem have positive attitudes towards both languages and they attempt to revitalize the language and pass it to younger generations.

5.5. Recommendations for Future Research

The researcher recommends other researchers to investigate the language situation among the Assyrians in Europe and especially in Sweden due to the fact that many Palestinian Assyrians immigrated there. Also, it is recommended to investigate other ethnic minorities in other parts of the Arab world.

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Appendix (A)

The English Pilot Questionnaire

Interview Questions Related to Community Profile

Dear participants;

I am, Yafa Mohammad Ayyash, a graduate student at Middle East University, English language and literature Dept., in Amman-Jordan. I am conducting a study on the language situation among the Assyrians of Bethlehem which is a requirement to obtain my MA degree in English language.

I would like to express my gratitude in advance for your participation in answering these questions about the Assyrian community in Bethlehem.

1. Where did the Assyrians of Bethlehem come from?
2. When did they come to Palestine?
3. What reasons made them come to Palestine?
4. What other areas in Palestine that the Assyrians live in?
5. Are there any Syriac schools in Bethlehem?

6. What is the religious background of the Assyrians of Bethlehem?
7. Are there any Syriac religious centers or Syriac churches in Bethlehem?
8. Is there any Syriac cultural or sport clubs in Bethlehem?
9. Are there any Assyrian charity associations in Bethlehem?
10. Are there any women Assyrian associations in Bethlehem?
11. Are there any Assyrian cultural associations other than the clubs in Bethlehem?
12. Are there any religious associations which deal with the Assyrians' matters in Bethlehem and in Palestine?
13. Name some of the occasions and festivals they celebrate?
14. Are there any Syriac musicians in Bethlehem?
15. What kind of jobs do the Assyrians of Bethlehem have?
16. What kind of businesses do they run?

17. Are there any written Syriac newspapers or journals in Bethlehem?
18. If such media is found, does it shed light on the Assyrians life in Palestine?
19. Are there any printing presses to publish this knowledge in Syriac in Bethlehem and in Palestine? If yes name them.
20. Are there any Syriac radio stations in Bethlehem?
21. Are there any Syriac restaurants in Bethlehem?
22. Do the Assyrians of Bethlehem live in specific neighborhoods? If yes name them and if no name the areas they live in?
23. How strong are the social relationships among the Assyrian of Bethlehem?
24. What is the rate of external marriages among the Assyrians of Bethlehem?
25. What other languages do the Assyrians of Bethlehem use?
26. What are the dialects that have emerged from the Syriac language?
27. Is there a classical written the Syriac language that is taught in schools?

28. Have you learned Syriac? If so, where at?

29. If yes, what is your level of proficiency in

- Listening.....
- Speaking.....
- Reading.....
- Writing

(poor, good, accepted)

30. Are there any social, political, literary, or religious key figures among the Assyrians of Bethlehem and of Palestine?

31. Does the Syriac community in Bethlehem and in Palestine suffer from reverse immigration? If so, what are the reasons and where do they immigrate to?

32. In your opinion is the Syriac language still preserved and used in Palestine?

- Respondents' demographic background

1. How old are you?
3. Where were you born?
4. What is your educational level?
5. What is your occupation?
6. What is your marital status?

Appendix (B)

The Arabic Pilot Questionnaire

أسئلة المقابلات المتعلقة بمجتمع الدراسة

اعزائي المشاركون،

انا الباحثة يافا محمد عياش، احد طلبة الدراسات العليا في جامعة الشرق الأوسط قسم اللغة الانجليزية و ادبها، عمان – الاردن. اقوم بإعداد دراسة لغوية اجتماعية بعنوان "الوضع اللغوي للسريان الفلسطينيين في بيت لحم"، وذلك كمتطلب لنيل درجة الماجستير في اللغة الانجليزية. أود التعبير مسبقا عن شكري وامتناني لمساعدتكم إياي في الإجابة عن الأسئلة التالية المتعلقة بالمجتمع السرياني في فلسطين. واقبلوا فائق الاحترام

1. من اين جاء السريان الى فلسطين؟

2. متى قدم السريان الى فلسطين؟

3. ما الاسباب التي دفعتهم للقدوم الى فلسطين؟

4. ما هي المناطق التي يتواجد فيها السريان في فلسطين؟

5. هل هناك أية مدارس سريانية في بيت لحم خاصة و فلسطين عامة ؟ اذكرها.

6. ما الطوائف الدينية للسريان في بيت لحم خاصة و فلسطين عامة ؟ اذكرها.

7. هل هناك أماكن أو مراكز دينية أو كنائس سريانية في بيت لحم خاصة و فلسطين عامة ؟
اذكرها.

8. هل هناك نوادٍ ثقافية رياضية سريانية في بيت لحم خاصة و فلسطين عامة؟ أذكرها.

9. هل يوجد اي مؤسسات دينية تهتم بأمور السريان في منطقتك ؟ ان اجبت بنعم فأرجو منك ذكرها و أن توضح دورها بإيجاز؟

10. هل يوجد جمعيات خيرية تخص السريان في بيت لحم خاصة و فلسطين عامة ؟ ان اجبت بنعم فأرجو منك ذكرها و أن توضح دورها بإيجاز.

11. هل يوجد جمعيات تخص المرأة السريانية في بيت لحم خاصة و فلسطين عامة ؟ ان اجبت بنعم فأرجو منك ذكرها و أن توضح دورها بإيجاز.

12. هل يوجد اي مؤسسات ثقافية غير الاندية مخصصة للسريان في بيت لحم خاصة و فلسطين عامة ؟ ان اجبت بنعم فأرجو ان تذكرها.

13. اذكر بعض الاحتفالات والمهرجانات التي تحتفلون بها؟

14. هل هناك موسيقيون سريان يعزفون في بيت لحم خاصة و فلسطين عامة ؟ أذكرهم.

15. ما الوظائف التي تعملون بها في بيت لحم خاصة و فلسطين عامة ؟

16. ما الأعمال التجارية التي تديرونها في بيت لحم خاصة و فلسطين عامة ؟

17. هل هناك صحف أو مجلات تصدر باللغة السريانية في بيت لحم خاصة و فلسطين عامة ؟
اذكرها.

18. هل يوجد مصادر ورقية (كتب , مجلات , صحف) تتحدث عن سريانيي فلسطين؟ ان اجبت بنعم فأرجو ان تذكرها.

19. هل يوجد مطابع لنشر المعرفة باللغة السريانية في بيت لحم خاصة و فلسطين عامة؟ ان اجبت بنعم فأرجو ان تذكرها.

20. هل يوجد محطات اذاعية باللغة السريانية في بيت لحم خاصة و فلسطين عامة؟ ان اجبت بنعم فأرجو ان تذكرها.

21. هل هناك أي مطاعم سريانية في فلسطين؟ اذكرها.

22. هل يسكن سريانيو بيت لحم خاصة و سريانيو فلسطين عامة في اماكن سكن (حارات) خاصة بهم؟ ان اجبت بنعم فأرجو ان تذكرها. و ان اجبت بلا فأرجو منك ان تذكر المناطق التي يسكنونها؟

23. ما مدى قوة الروابط الاجتماعية بين السريان فلسطين؟

24. ما هي نسبة الزواج الخارجي لدى المجتمع السرياني في بيت لحم خاصة و فلسطين عامة (زواج السريان من غير السريان)؟ (قليل جدا , قليل , متوسط , كثير)

25. ما هي اللغات الاخرى التي يتحدث بها السريان في فلسطين؟

26. ما هي اللهجات المنبثقة عن اللغة السريانية؟

27. هل هناك لغة سريانية فصحي و مكتوبة يتعلمها الطلاب في المدارس؟

28. هل تعلمت اللغة السريانية؟ ان اجبت بنعم فأين تعلمتها؟

29. ما هي درجة اتقانك لها

- فهما.....

- محادثة

- قراءة

- كتابة

(ضعيف , جيد , ممتاز)

30. هل هناك شخصيات سياسية او ادبية او اجتماعية او دينية مشهورة و ذات تأثير من اصل سرياني في فلسطين؟

31. هل يعاني المجتمع السرياني في بيت لحم خاصة و فلسطين عامة من هجرة الشباب السرياني ؟ ان اجبت بنعم فأرجو منك ذكر المناطق التي يهاجرون اليها وأسباب هذه الهجرة.

32. برأيك هل اللغة السريانية لا تزال مستعملة بين السريان الفلسطينيين؟

- بيانات المشاركين في تعبئة هذا النموذج:

1. العمر:

2. الجنس:

3. مكان الولادة:

4. التحصيل العلمي:

5. العمل :

6. الحالة الاجتماعية:

Appendix (C)

The English Sociolinguistic Questionnaire

Cover page

Dear participants;

I am, Yafa Mohammad Ayyash, a graduate student at Middle East University, English language and literature Dept., in Amman-Jordan. I am conducting a study on the language situation among the Assyrians of Bethlehem in specific, and Palestine In general.

I would like to express my gratitude in advance for your participation in answering this questionnaire. By filling this form, you will be providing us with various data about your social and linguistic background along with other information related to the situations where you use either Arabic or Syriac. Finally, you will be asked about the factors that contribute to using Syriac and preserving it or the factors that contribute to shifting towards Arabic.

Kindly, note that the data will be kept confidential and used solely for the purpose of academic research.

Your questions and suggestions are welcomed

<yafa .ayyash@hotmail.com>

Section one: Demographic Data: Personal Information and Social Background

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

1. **Gender** Male () Female()

2. **Age:** 10-14() 15-19()

20-29() 30-39()

40-59() older than 60

()

3. **Marital status**

Single () Engaged() Married ()

Widowed () Divorced ()

4. **Occupation**

Business () Education ()

Medical field () Civil service ()

Handicraft field () Student()

No occupation () Other:

5. **Education**

1. Elementary() 2. Intermediate ()

3. secondary () 4. Diploma ()

5. Bachelor degree() 6. Master ()

7. Ph.D ()

6. **Residency**

- Assyrian neighborhood ()

- Mixed neighborhood ()

- Arab neighborhood ()

7. **Social activities**

- Do you attend the Assyrian church services? Yes () No ()

- Do you attend Assyrian parties or national festivals? Yes () No ()
- Do you participate in Assyrian social activities? Yes () No ()

In the following questions, please rate your ability in understanding, speaking, reading and writing both languages Arabic and Syriac. Please tick (√) the answer that applies to you.

Questions	Excellent	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor
How do you rate your proficiency in					
understanding Syriac?					
reading Syriac?					
writing Syriac?					
speaking Syriac?					
understanding Arabic?					
reading Arabic?					
writing Arabic?					
How proficient are your children in speaking Syriac?					

Section two: 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.

1. Language use at home with the family and relatives

Questions	Syriac	Both Syriac and Arabic	Arabic
• What language do you use when you speak with			
your father?			
your mother?			
your brothers and sisters?			
your children?			
your spouse?			
your grandfather?			
your grandmother?			
your other relatives?			
your relatives during a phone call?			
your relative use of social media websites?			
at family meetings?			

(2) Language with your friends

Questions	Syriac	Both Syriac and Arabic	Arabic
What language do you use when you			
meet your friends?			
talk to your friends during phone calls?			
socialize with your friends using social media websites?			

(3) Language use in culture and media fields

Questions	Syriac	Both Syriac and Arabic	Arabic
What language is used			
in the T.V channels you watch?			
radio stations you listen to?			
in the books you read?			
in the websites you visit?			
when you discuss general cultural topics, international and local news?			
you write your personal letters?			

(4) Language use in the church

Questions	Syriac	Both Syriac and Arabic	Arabic
What language do you use			
What language do you use			
when you talk to your fellow worshippers in the church?			
when you talk to the priest or clergymen?			
when you say your prayers in the church?			
when you pray and supplicate outside the church?			
in religious meetings outside the church?			

(5) Language use at neighborhood and workplace

Questions	Syriac	Both Syriac and Arabic	Arabic
What language do you use			
when you talk to your fellow employees on general topics?			
when you discuss business matters?			
when you talk with your neighbors?			
when you buy your grocery?			

(6) Language use at school

Questions	Syriac	Both Syriac and Arabic	Arabic
What language do you use when you			
talk to your teachers?			
discuss educational matters with your fellow students at school/ university?			
discuss general topics with your fellow students?			
talk with your fellow students at the school yard about general topics?			

(7) Language use for emotional expression

Questions	Syriac	Both Syriac and Arabic	Arabic
What language do you use when			
you express happiness?			
you express anger?			
you are confused or stressed?			
you dream?			

Section three: Language Attitudes.

This part seeks your opinion and attitudes towards both languages Arabic and Syriac. Please choose the suitable answer by putting (√) in the proper box.

Which language is	Syriac	Arabic	Languages
the most beautiful?			
the most poetic?			
the most prestigious?			
a reflection of your nationality and identity?			
the easiest for you to learn?			
the most suitable for your religious practices?			
preferable to use in daily speech?			
the language of your childhood?			
more attached to your sentimental life?			
more important for acquiring knowledge?			
more important for doing business?			
more important for pursuing your education?			
more important for creating new relationships in the community?			
more important while communicating with your family?			
more useful while running errands?			
more efficient to use in governmental institutions?			
more efficient for documentation?			
more useful while communicating with other Assyrians in other parts of the world?			

Section Four: Factors that Contribute to Shifting towards Arabic.

If you believe that Syriac is not used in daily life, what are the factors that may have led to such a result. Please choose the suitable answer by putting (√) in the proper box.

Factors contributed to shifting towards Arabic and to gradual loss of Syriac	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
My parents don't use Syriac at home.			
External marriage from people who don't belong to the Assyrian community.			
The weak social ties among the Assyrians.			
The Assyrians are scattered all over the area and don't live in one neighborhood.			
The lack of newspapers that are written in Syriac.			
The relatively small number of the Assyrians in Bethlehem.			
The lack of T.V channels and radio stations that broadcast in Syriac.			
Living in Palestine most of my life makes Arabic my first language.			
Arabic is my childhood language.			
Arabic facilitates and supports my occupational status.			
Being a Palestinian of an Assyrian origin demands to learn and use Arabic because it is the official language of Palestinians.			

Thank you

Appendix (D)

The Arabic language questionnaire

استبانة لغوية اجتماعي

أعزائي المشاركين،

أنا الباحثة يافا محمد عياش، طالبة ماجستير في جامعة الشرق الأوسط قسم اللغة الإنجليزية و ادابها، عمان – الأردن. اقوم بإعداد رسالة ماجستير بعنوان **الوضع اللغوي للسريان في بيت لحم**

خاصة وفي فلسطين عامة.

في البداية أود التعبير مسبقا عن شكري لمشاركتكم في تعبئة هذه الاستبانة.

عند الاجابة عن هذه الاستبانة ستقوم بتزويدنا ببيانات مختلفة حول خلفيتكم الاجتماعية و اللغوية ومعلومات أخرى متعلقة بالمواقف التي تستعملون بها اللغة السريانية و اللغة العربية , وأخيرا العوامل التي تدعم استخدام اللغة السريانية والمحافظة عليها او تعمل على عدم استمرارها في مجتمعكم.

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

واقبلوا فائق الاحترام

لمزيد من الاستفسارات و الاقتراحات أرحب باستقبالكم على البريد الإلكتروني

Yafa.ayyash@hotmail.com

الجزء الأول : المعلومات الشخصية والخلفية الاجتماعية و اللغوية:

الرجاء وضع إشارة (√) امام الإجابة التي تناسبك

1. الجنس

ذكر () أنثى ()

2. العمر:

() 14 -10 () 19 -15
() 29-20 () 39-30
() 59-40 () اكبر من 60

3. الحالة الاجتماعية

أعزب/عزباء () خاطب/خاطبة ()
متزوج/متزوجة () مطلق / مطلقة ()
ارمل / أرملة ()

4. العمل

الأعمال التجارية () التعليم ()
الطب () وظيفة حكومية ()
الحرف اليدوية المهنية () طالب ()
أخرى..... عاطل عن العمل ()

5. التحصيل العلمي

أساسي () ثانوي ()
دبلوم () بكالوريوس ()
ماجستير () دكتوراه ()

6. مكان السكن

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

7- هل تذهب إلى الكنيسة؟ نعم () كلا ()

8- هل تشارك في نشاطات السريان الاجتماعية؟ نعم () كلا ()

9- هل تشارك في النشاطات و الاحتفالات الدينية؟

نعم () كلا ()

10- هل تعلمت اللغة السريانية ؟ إذا أجبت بنعم فأين تعلمتها؟

- البيت ()
- الكنيسة ()
- المدرسة ()
-أخرى ()

12_ ما اللغة الام لوالدتك؟

-العربية () - السريانية () - اخرى ()

13_ ما اللغة الام لوالدك؟

-العربية () - السريانية () - اخرى ()

الأسئلة التالية مخصصة لمعرفة درجة اتقانك لكلا اللغتين العربية و السريانية. أرجو منك قراءة الأسئلة التالية ثم ضع اشارة (√) في المربع المناسب.

الاسئلة	ممتاز	جيد جدا	متوسط	مقبول	ضعيف
كيف تصنف قدرتك على فهم اللغة السريانية؟					
كيف تصنف قدرتك على قراءة اللغة السريانية؟					
كيف تصنف قدرتك على الكتابة باللغة السريانية؟					
كيف تصنف قدرتك على التحدث باللغة السريانية؟					
كيف تصنف قدرتك على فهم اللغة العربية؟					
كيف تصنف قدرتك على قراءة اللغة العربية؟					
كيف تصنف قدرتك على الكتابة باللغة العربية؟					
كيف تصنف قدرتك على التحدث باللغة العربية؟					

(3)

اللغة العربية	كلتا اللغتين	الغة السريانية	الاستخدام اللغوي في مجال الاعلام و الثقافة:
			ما هي اللغة المستخدمة
			في القنوات التلفزيونية التي تشاهدها؟
			في القنوات الاذاعية التي تستمع اليها؟
			الكتب التي تقرأها؟
			المواقع الالكترونية التي تتصفحها؟
			خلال مناقشتك لمواضيع ثقافية عامة او الاخبار العالمية او المحلية؟
			عند كتابة رسائلك الشخصية؟

(4)

اللغة العربية	كلتا اللغتين	الغة السريانية	الاستخدام اللغوي في الكنيسة و عند ممارسة الشعائر الدينية:
			ما هي اللغة التي تستخدمها
			عند التحدث مع المصلين في الكنيسة؟
			عند التحدث مع رجل الدين في الكنيسة؟
			عند اداء الصلاة في الكنيسة؟
			عند الدعاء او اداء الصلاة خارج نطاق الكنيسة؟
			خلال التجمعات الدينية او رجل الدين خارج نطاق الكنيسة؟

(5)

اللغة العربية	كلتا اللغتين	الغة السريانية	الاستخدام اللغوي في مكان العمل و الحي الذي تسكنه:
			ما هي اللغة التي تستخدمها
			عند التحدث مع زملائك في مكان العمل في امور عامة؟
			عند مناقشة امور متعلقة بطبيعة العمل؟
			عند التحدث مع جيرائك او باقي سكان الحي الذي تسكنه؟
			عند شراء حاجياتك؟

(6)

اللغة العربية	كلتا اللغتين	الغة السريانية	_ الاستخدام اللغوي في مكان الدراسة:
			ما هي اللغة التي تستخدمها عند التحدث مع معلمك في الصف؟
			عند التحدث مع زملائك في المدرسة/الجامعة في مواضيع متعلقة بالدراسة؟
			عند التحدث مع زملائك في المدرسة/الجامعة في مواضيع عامة؟
			عند التحدث مع زملائك في ساحة المدرسة؟

(7)

اللغة العربية	كلتا اللغتين	الغة السريانية	_ الاستخدام اللغوي للتعبير العاطفي: ما هي اللغة التي تستخدمها
			للتعبير عن أقصى مشاعر السعادة و الفرح؟
			للتعبير عن غضبك و سخطك؟
			عندما تكون مرتبكا او خائفا؟
			في احلامك او عندما تكون شاردا الذهن؟

الجزء الثالث: الاتجاهات اللغوية

هذا الجزء مخصص لمعرفة رأيك و ميولك لكلا اللغتين العربية و السريانية. ارجو منك و ضع اشارة (√) في المربع المناسب لإجابتك.

كلاهما	السريانية	العربية	أي لغة هي الأكثر جمالا؟
			الأكثر شاعرية و أدبية؟
			الأكثر عراقية و أصالة؟
			الأكثر تعبيراً عن وطنك و قوميتك؟
			الأسهل للتعلم؟
			الأسهل لتأدية الشعائر الدينية؟
			التي تفضل استخدامها في معاملاتك اليومية؟
			لغة طفولتك؟

			الاكثر ارتباطا بوجدانيتك؟
			التي تساعدك في اكتساب المعرفة و الثقافة؟

الجزء الرابع : العوامل التي ادت الى عدم المحافظة على اللغة السريانية. اذا كنت تعتقد ان اللغة السريانية غير مستخدمة في الحياة اليومية للسريان , فما هي العوامل التي ادت الى ذلك؟

لا اوافق	محايد	اوافق	العوامل التي تؤدي الى عدم المحافظة على اللغة السريانية بين سرياني فلسطين و بالتالي تؤدي الى فقدانها
			عدم اهتمام الاهل باستعمال اللغو السريانية خاصة في البيت وهيمنة اللغة العربية مكانها.
			الزواج من اشخاص لا ينتمون للمجتمع السرياني اي من طوائف اخرى تتحدث لغات اخرى.
			ضعف العلاقات الاجتماعية بين السريان.
			انتشار اماكن سكن السريان في مناطق مختلفة داخل المدينة الواحدة.
			عدم وجود صحف يومية ناطقة باللغة السريانية.
			عدم وجود محطات اذاعية وتلفزيونية ناطقة باللغة السريانية.
			العدد القليل نسبيا للسريان في بيت لحم وغيرها من المناطق الفلسطينية.
			عيشي أغلب سنوات حياتي في فلسطين جعل من العربية لغتي الام.
			اللغة العربية هي لغة طفولتي.
			اللغة العربية متطلب لحصولي على وظيفة جيدة و تحسين وضعي الاقتصادي.
			مواطنتي في فلسطين حيث اللغة العربية هي اللغة الرسمية للدولة يشجعني على تعلم اللغة العربية.

اشكر لكم تعاونك

Appendix E

Panel of experts

	Professor Name	University
1.	Prof. Abd Alra'of Zuhdi	Middle East University
2.	Prof. Ibrahim Abu Shihab	Al- Zaytoonah University of Jordan
3.	Prof. Isam Al- Kayed	Al Israa' University
4.	Prof. Salah Al- Najjar	Al- Zaytoonah University of Jordan