The Role of Social Media in Maintaining Minority Languages: A Case Study of Chechen Language in Jordan

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Abstract

This study investigates factors motivating the Chechen people in Jordan to use their indigenous language in social media such as WhatsApp and Facebook. It also explores their attitudes towards using the Chechen language in social media. In order to achieve the aims of this study, the researchers have selected a sample that consists of 340 Chechen people who reside in the Jordanian cities and towns: Al-Suknah, Sweileh and Az zarqa. The instruments of the study were a sociolinguistic questionnaire and an open-ended interview. The findings reveal that Chechens use social media such as Facebook and WhatsApp to preserve the Chechen language and their culture. Also, Chechens of Jordan use their ethnic language to communicate with their friends who understand the Chechen language. Besides, the Chechen language has been used in whatsApp and Facebook to promote unity among family members. Moreover, many Chechen people use social media to communicate with other Chechen speakers regardless of familial ties. Results also indicate that Chechens of Jordan have a high positive attitude towards including the Chechen language in social media.

Keywords: Attitudes, Chechens of Jordan, Language Maintenance, Motivation, Social media

1. Introduction

Monolingual countries are quite rare and nearly all communities have more than one language that is spoken by a specific group of people. Also, a large number of languages have speakers in more than one region. Historically, there are a number of ways through which multilingual communities emerge viz. migration. Spolsky (1998) defines migration as "the voluntary or involuntary movement of people speaking one language into the territory of people speaking another". (p. 52). He also adds that conquest and the subsequent integration of speakers of varied languages into a single place have been the cause of multilingual societies. Multilingual communities have also been created by colonial policies. Mainly, language conflict is one of the results of multilingualism which obliges speakers of one language to adopt the language of the dominant group. In fact, immigrants face difficulties whether to continue using their mother tongue, to shift to the language of the majority, or use their ethnic language with the dominant language in a diaglosic situation. Mainly, several minorities in the globe have coexisted with majorities side by side in the same region for centuries, such as the Chechens who have been living in Jordan for about 120 years.

The term "minority" has been defined by Merriam Webster's Dictionary as "a part of a population differing from others in some characteristics and often subjected to differential treatment". Grenoble and Singerman (2014) state that a minority language refers to a language that is spoken by less than 50 % of the people in a specific region. It has been suggested that a specific language might be a minority in one area but a dominant language in another. Most immigrant languages are cases in point. For instance, Spanish is a dominant language in several countries but a minority language in the USA.

The Chechen group is one of the Vainakh people who have dwelt in the north Caucasus since early history. The Russian term "Chechen" is derived from the name of the village of Chechen-Aul. Jaimoukha (2005) records that Chechen, Kist (a vernacular of Chechen), Ingush and Tsova-Tushian shape the Nakh branch of the NE Caucasian language family, which encompasses more than 30 languages, the majority of them are spoken in Daghestan. It is believed that speakers of Chechen shape the greatest North Caucasian language community. Also, the Chechen language owns both official and literary status.

Jaimoukha (2005) records that the 1989 census revealed that 98.7 % of the Chechen people speak their mother tongue. However, throughout the Soviet era, people started using Russian.Currently, almost all Chechens are more proficient in Russian than in Chechen. In fact, many immigrant Chechens still maintain their mother tongue in Turkey and Jordan. However, a small number of the Chechen people in Syria are able to preserve their native language. With reference to orthography, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, UCLA (2014) records that the Arabic alphabets were used by the Chechen people. Then, in the early 1920s a Latin script was introduced by Khalit Oshaev ; however, the government obliges the Chechen people to adopt a Cyrillic transliteration in the middle of 1930s.However, in 1992, Zulai Khamidova, Edward Khachukaev and Vissarion Gugushvili introduced an amended version of the Latin script. In fact, there was certain inadequacies of the Cyrillic system and speakers in the Middle Eastern countries found difficulties in using it.It is worth noting that

the new alphabet is a direct transliteration of the older Cyrillic script into a Latin system based on the Turkish and Azeri spelling system. In fact, it is a Cyrillo-Latin writing system.

Dweik (2000) notes that the literature on migration reported three migrations for Chechens. The first migration was in 1865 when the Chechen people fled to Turkey, Syria and the Golan Heights. After the rebellion against the Russians, the second diaspora took place in 1877.The third escape happened in 1901 and this time the Chechen people fled to Jordan. They dwelt in Az Zarqa', Sweileh and Al-Sukna.

Kailani (2002) maintains that although the number of Chechens in Jordan is very small (i.e. 8,000), they have established a reputation of being very loyal to the Hashemite regime. They also have occupied the highest positions of the Jordanian government and military. This relation among the Hashemite regime and the Chechens of Jordan dates back   to the period when the Chechens and Circassians of Jordan hosted King Abdullah I when he arrived to Jordan from Al Hijaz and later built up his royal palace in Amman.

Pasikowska-Schnass (2016) points out that approximately half of the six thousand languages in the world are in danger of disappearing. In the European Union, 40 to 50 million speakers use one of its 60 minority languages, some of them are at severe risk. The European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages seeks to preserve the minority and regional languages.The charter concludes that some of the minority and regional languages are in danger of loss if they are not supported and protected.

Buszard-Welcher (2001) affirms that there are several types of media existing in our world such as T.V and radio as well as the internet-based media which might be pivotal in revitalizing and safeguarding heritage languages. Crystal (2000) adds that "information technology (IT) – and the Internet in particular – offers endangered languages which have been written down a fresh set of opportunities whose potential has hardly begun to be explored."(p. 142).

The internet and mobile devices are increasingly employed as tools to enhance the use of minority languages. Welcher (2012) states that several ethnic language speakers lean toward Twitter and Facebook to encourage ethnic language use and language learning. Similarly, Cunliffe, Morris and Prys (2013) state that social media are now employed to support "linguistic communities and revive weakened languages" (P. 340).

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The Chechens of Jordan is a large ethnic minority with their own unique culture and language. As a result of two languages in contact (i.e. Arabic and Chechen), language shift might be unavoidable. More specifically, one of the languages may prevail and the other may be displaced. While some indigenous groups preserve their linguistic and cultural uniqueness, others adjust to living in the new societies. The main aim of this study is to explore the role of social media (i.e. WhatsApp and Facebook) in language maintenance and revitalization. More specifically, this study aims to investigate factors motivating Chechens in Jordan to use their language in social media and their attitudes towards this use.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The aim of this paper is to investigate factors that motivate Chechens of Jordan to use their ethnic language in social media. It also aims to explore their attitudes towards using it in social media such as WhatsApp and Facebook.

1.3 Questions of the Study

In order to achieve the preceding aims, the researchers tried to answer the next questions: 1.What are factors motivating Chechen speakers to use their national language in social media? 2. What are the Chechens' attitudes towards using their minority language in WhatsApp and Facebook?

1.4 Significance of the Study

A plethora of works were carried out in Jordan addressing the topic of language maintenance and shift from different viewpoints (Dweik, 2000; Al-Khatib and Al-Ali, 2010; and AlKurdi, 2015). An analysis of the findings of the aforementioned articles and thesis on the ethnic language situations amongst the various minority groups- the Kurds, the Chechens, the Circassions and the Armenians- living in Jordan shows similarities and differences within these communities regarding language maintenance and/or shift. Previous studies illustrate that indigenous languages and cultural preservation among these groups are not similar. The Circassions and Chechens have showed clear-cut situations of language and cultural preservation, when in fact the Armenians and Kurds demonstrated clear instances of language and cultural shift. The similarities and/or differences among these communities prove the influence of a number of demographic and socioeconomic factors. The negative or positive attitudes towards the dominant language, the degree of contact with homeland, resistance to interethnic marriages and the residential closeness were documented to be vital reasons for either preserving or shifting of the ethnic languages of Jordan.

This study complements the aforementioned studies on the Chechens, extending its scope to concentrate on the role of texting and social media such as WhatsApp and Facebook as domains for the maintenance and reproduction of the Chechen language.

2. Review of Literature

This part is devoted to review some theoretical and empirical literature related to language maintenance, attitude and motivation.

Technology has breached our daily lives in the last decade. It has been suggested that the internet will play a crucial role in the future of ethnic and indigenous languages Buszard-Welcher (2001). Crystal (2000) suggests that a minority language can be promoted and maintained "if its speakers can make use of electronic technology" (p.141).

Today, 7,097 languages are spoken all over the world. According to Ethnologue (2018), about a third of these languages are currently endangered, with less than 1,000 speakers remaining. Approximately ninety –seven percent of the world's speakers use 4% of the world's languages, which include English, Mandarin, Hindi, Spanish, Arabic, and German.

On the other hand, nearly, 3 % of the world's people speak 96 % of the World's languages. It has been estimated that about half of the spoken languages will be lost by 2100. Unfortunately, a number of the aboriginal languages have not been recorded and documented, and if the speakers of these languages cease to use them, huge information about history, tradition, culture, customs, the environment, and the human brain will be lost.

Holmes (2000) provides a detailed description of the factors that may enhance language maintenance among ethnic groups. She suggests six factors that may contribute to language maintenance. First, the minority language will be preserved longer if its speakers consider it as a symbol of their ethnic identity. Second, if minority members live beside each other and interact daily, this might foster the preservation process. Third, the degree of contact with the homeland is another aspect which may help to preserve the language. Fourth, another aspect which may aid language maintenance is the use of heritage language at home with grandparents and unmarried relatives. Fifth, the maintenance of language occurs if members of the ethnic minority resist inter-ethnic marriage. Finally, the use of language in schools and worship places will increase the chances of language maintenance.

Buda (1992) provides two reasons that may explain the loss of languages:

The social and economic necessity of using the official or majority language of the host country, and the lack of opportunities for using the mother tongue, may lead to a loss of ability in the latter. This loss of language ability, extended over several generations, will result in the phenomenon of language shift (or transfer), in which the habitual use of one language by a minority group is replaced by the habitual use of another. This shift to the second language usually, but not always, involves the gradual disappearance of the first. (p.1)

Rayan and Deci (2000) state that self-determination theory concentrates on the human's innate tendencies and inherent psychological desires and needs that are the crucial elements for their own personality integration and self-motivation, as well as for the circumstances that enhance those positive processes. Researchers have found that there are three types of such needs: the needs for competence, autonomy and relatedness "that appear to be essential for facilitating optimal functioning of the natural propensities for growth and integration, as well as for constructive social development and personal well-being." (P. 68)

Motivation is greatly valued due to its consequences. It has been believed that motivation is of crucial role for teachers, parents, coaches, managers, religious leaders and health care providers. Motivation suggests that people are encouraged to move due to different factors. Humans might be motivated "because they value an activity or because there is strong external coercion". (P. 69)

Galla (2016) argues that technology and social media might be powerful tools to foster indigenous language learning and teaching. Technology can be used to connect and communicate members of the same community in distinct parts of the World.

Kramer, Callahan, and Zuckerman (2012) suggest that preserving ethnic culture is the main factor motivating developing countries to use global media.

Lackaff and Moner (2016) state that social media introduce a significant opportunity for societies to communicate with each other regardless of the place of residence. In other words, social media platforms permit speakers of indigenous languages to stay connected with each other whether they live in the same area or not.

Littlebear (1999) adds that we should keep indigenous languages alive because they contain all the unique references, all the unique humor and all the unique rituals. Greymorning (1999) stresses the fact that if we fail to preserve our ethnic language we might fail to safeguard our ceremonies and our own selves for the reason that language is the essence of our life, and it is the indigenous language that makes us strong and confident. Lackaff and Moner (2016) records that ethnic languages include useful information and this information may erode when speakers select host languages. They add that digital platforms help minority language community members to write their ethnic language by themselves. For instance, Aikuma, a mobile app, is designed to permit members of the community to register and translate their ethnic language anytime they want.

Rivron (2012) records that the Eton of Cameroon use their ethnic language in Facebook to protect their traditional culture and to support the use of their mother tongue outside its habitual contexts. Similarly, Lackaff and Moner (2016) add that ethnic language supports the transferring of culture to the next generations and offers a central structure for accepting a community's uniqueness and beliefs about life.

Cunliffe, Morris & Prys (2013) add that the selection of a specific language for a specific message might be influenced by the intended audience, the sender of the message and the message itself.

According to David Crystal, one of the main factors that promote minority language maintenance is the positive attitudes towards the ethnic language. Baker (1992) affirms that attitude is a mental disposition towards things. Attitude is also a predisposition towards social activities and a result of it. Petty and Cacioppo (1981) define the term attitude as "a general and enduring positive or negative feeling about some person, object, or issue" (p. 6). Furthermore, language attitudes have been defined by Crystal (1997) as "the feelings people have about their own language or the language of others." (p. 215). Similarly, Casesnoves (2010) affirms that attitude involves vital information for evaluating how speakers' perceptions and predispositions limit the social domains in which the indigenous language is used. To illustrate, Crystal (2000) argues that if minority language people think that it is their indigenous language which has kept them down, or that they were prevented from social advancement due to the fact that they were unable to speak the majority language, they will be antipathetic towards preservation and uncooperative when language maintenance plans are in place. Additionally, when this view is reinforced by young people themselves—who may as well view the old language as irrelevant or a burden, and think of the older generation who still speaks the indigenous language as backward or ignorant—it is only to be predictable that negative attitudes spread all over the community. Yilmaz (2016) reports that parents' positive attitudes towards the ethnic language play an important part in the children's success rate in preserving it.

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Moriarty (2009) tested the role of ethnic media in preserving the Irish language. Data were collected to discover the language attitudes of Irish university students. One hundred thirty university students volunteered to fill a questionnaire which was distributed to elicit data concerning students' experiences of and the meaning they associate to their mother tongue and TG4 channel. Moreover, a media diary and a focus group were used to elicit qualitative data. Results divulged that the accessibility of television in Irish is positively affecting language attitudes. The results also revealed that TG4 has aided to prevent the stigmatized image of the Irish language. Although a small number of the Irish respondents declared that TG4 Channel was a useful tool to increase students' consumption of their heritage language

Feng and Nza (2011) investigated the power of the heritage media on university students in an English society. Twenty Latino university students replied to a survey relating to the topic of inquiry. Results indicated that high positive attitudes have been reported by Latino university students toward using Spanish heritage media every day. Specifically, the respondents stated that the heritage media is a powerful tool for (1) saving heritage values and references, (2) enhancing a solid sense of belonging, (3) strengthening mother language skills, (4) talking with relatives and members of the same ethnic groups, (5) cooperating with the host community, and (6) adopting heritage and host cultures.

Szecsi and Szilagyi (2012) explored the opinions of immigrants as well as their children regarding the effect of social media on their daily lives. More specifically, the study aimed to gauge families' views of the role media play in preserving Children's ethnic language skills, relations with grandparents in the homeland, and cultural awarness. The data were collected by means of open-ended interviews and auto-ethnography. The study proved that media technology is of benefit to the improvement and preservation of the ethnic language, relations with grandparents and relatives, and the ethnic culture. More specifically, participants use social media to explore cultural norms and customs. Social media also help them to feel more "at home". Additionally, the majority of the respondents use social media not only to reinforce bonds with relatives and friends, but also to understand the Hungarian culture. Besides, social media such as Skype and emails proved helpful to bridge the time between visits to home land.

Sallabank (2013) assessed the attitudes and perceptions of majority group members towards the endangered dialect of Guernsey, Channel Islands. Questionnaires and interviews were employed to gain attitudinal data from 209 respondents.Results pointed out that there is a change in language ideology towards appreciation of the value of a bilingual or trilingual linguistic heritage. Currently, public rhetoric in Guernsey advocate the maintenance of the indigenous language, which causes a degree of official reinforcement.

Ni Bhroin (2014) investigated how minority language speakers are motivated to communicate in their indigenous languages. The behavior of 21 minority language speakers in social media was explored.More specifically, three categories of motivations: intrinsic, self-determined extrinsic and externally-determined extrinsic motivations. Results revealed that the majority of the speakers use the minority language to protect and promote their

indigenous language. It can also be noted that most of the participants use their indigenous languages to express things efficiently or to communicate with specific people.

Jongbloed-Faber et al. (2016) investigated the use of Frisian (i.e a minority language spoken in the Dutch province of Fryslân) on social media by Frisian youths. This study aimed to examine the use of the Frisian language on social media. It also intended to show the factors that influence the use of Frisian on social media by Frisian teens. Further, the researchers explored the attitude towards Frisian. A questionnaire was distributed to more than 2,000 Frisian teens whose ages were between 14 and 18 years. Findings indicated that the majority of Frisian speakers use it on social media. Results also showed that factors such as teens' peer group, language attitudes and writing proficiency play an important role for the use or non-use of Frisian on social media.

Galla (2016) investigated how indigenous speakers are motivated to maintain and use their ethnic language in social media. Eighty respondents representing forty-seven ethnic languages filled in a survey that represents individuals, institutions and organizations that support ethnic language minorities across the United States, Australia, Canada, Taiwan, New Zealand, Peru, Guatemala, Bolivia, Greenland, French Polynesia, Mexico and Russia. Findings showed that technology has offered new spheres for mother tongues to survive. Also, social media and technology can be used to accelerate learning the indigenous language. It allows speakers to share and access language materials that are related to the minority language and its culture.

Yilmaz (2016) identified the factors that lead immigrant's children to reject their mother tongue and to switch totally to English for everyday conversation when they begin schooling with native English speakers. Also, she studied the motivational factors that inspire them to (re)learn their mother tongue after a period of time. Four respondents from various ethnic backgrounds were interviewed. Findings revealed that participants are motivated to maintain their ethnic language because it plays a vital role in maintaining family relations and building a heritage community. She enhances the importance of maintaining the mother tongue as an essential aspect to preserve the heritage cultures, values, family unity and identity. She adds that losing ethnic language means losing identity. Also, maintaining family interaction can be one of the most important factors that motivate the immigrant people to use their ethnic language.

Viernes (2017) investigated the factors motivating people to use their minority languages in social media and their attitudes towards using their indigenous language in social media. Online questionnaires were used to collect the data for this study. Findings revealed that speakers had positive attitudes towards using minority languages in Social Media. Also, the majority of the participants affirm that they use their ethnic language in social media.

Putra (2018) tried to investigate the factors that influenced the decision to use or avoid Lampung in social media. Additionally, the attitudes of those speakers towards Lampung language revitalization efforts were investigated. Besides, their views towards the use of social media as a tool to support the maintenance of ethnic languages were explored. Findings proved that the respondents share ideas and posts in Lampung and code-switch in all the dialects they

know. Additionally, the majority of the respondents believe that technology and social media would be powerful tools to promote the use of Lampung. Moreover, all respondents use the Lampung language because it symbolizes their ethnic identity and affirms unity.

3. Methodology

A combined qualitative and quantitative research design has been used by the researchers. A purposively-selected sample of 340 Chechens from Jordan has been requested to respond to a language questionnaire. The 'social network' model that has been proposed by Milroy and Milroy (1978) has been adopted in this study. The researchers have approached the participants by the help of her friends who are members of the Chechen community. Three assistants have helped the researchers to forward the link of the questionnaire. The assistants have forwarded the link among their relatives, colleagues and neighbors. The chosen sample involved significant demographic variables such as gender, age and educational background…etc. (See Appendix A)

3.1 Instruments of the Study

Two instruments have been used in the current study, namely a sociolinguistic questionnaire and an-open-ended interview.

3.1.1 Open-Ended Interviews

The researchers conducted the interviews themselves by making appointments with the interviewees via phone calls. Ten interviewees were requested to respond to open ended interview questions. The participants are of different age, gender, occupations as well as education. The interviewees are cooperative and have provided a great amount of information about the Chechen community in Jordan. The researchers asked them "open- ended questions" to collect data about factors motivating the Chechen people to use the Chechen language in social media and their attitudes towards using the Chechen language in WhatsApp and Facebook. The researchers tried to transcribe and translate the dialogue after the interviews sessions.

3.1.2 The Sociolinguistic Questionnaire

The questionnaire has been created specifically to achieve the aims of the current study. The questionnaire has been pretested before send it to the sample. It has been written in English and Arabic with a cover letter that clarified the goals of the current study. The questionnaire has consisted of three parts and is mainly based on Qawar 2014; Lackaff and Moner 2016; Jongbloed-faber 2017; Velazquez 2017 and Viernes 2017.The researchers have added some statements and others have been changed to agree with the aims of the current study. (See appendix B)

4. Results and Discussion

Table 1. Means & Percentages for Factors Motivating the Chechen People to Use their Language in Social Media

No	I use the Chechen language in social media to ……	Means	Percentage	Level of

				agreement
1	stay connected with my Chechen culture.	3.89	77.8 %	High
2	express myself better than in Arabic.	3.39	67.8 %	Medium
3	preserve my indigenous culture.	4.14	82.8 %	High
4	preserve the Chechen language.	4.16	83.2 %	High
5	increase its visibility.	3.12	62.4 %	Medium
5	to communicate with other Chechen people- not members of your family.	3.77	75.4 %	High
7	promote unity.	3.8	76 %	High
8	communicate with friends who understand Chechen.	3.99	79.8 %	High
9	to receive and send messages to Chechen people.	3.14	62.8 %	Medium
12	fulfill my family's desire in using the Chechen.	3.4	68 %	Medium

Data from table (1) illustrate that 83.2 % of the Chechen speakers use Chechen in social media to preserve their indigenous language. This high percentage of using Chechen in electronic communications while there are other choices like Arabic and English suggests that they have positive attitudes towards their indigenous language and they view Chechen as a means to achieve other aims. This result matches with Szecsi and Szilagyi (2012) and Ni Bhroin (2014) who admit that media technology is of benefit to the development and maintenance of the heritage Language. This outcome is scarcely distinguishable from Lackaff and Moner (2016) who speculate that digital platforms help minority language community members to document their language themselves.

Moreover, findings reveal that 82.8 % of Chechen people use Chechen in social media to preserve their indigenous culture. This high trend might be attributed to the fact that culture contributes a sense of belonging. It brings families together and enables people to reconnect with relatives. This result goes in line with Szecsi and Szilagyi (2012) and Galla (2018) who affirm that new digital technologies and the internet in particular have produced chances for heritage language speakers who are aiming to safeguard the sacredness of their cultures, languages, values and traditions. Previous finding correlates favorably well with Rivron (2012) who records that the Eton of Cameroon use their ethnic language in Facebook to protect their traditional culture and to support the use of their mother tongue outside its habitual contexts. Similarly, this result fit well with Lackaff and Moner (2016) who maintain that ethnic language supports the transferring of culture to the next generations and offers a central structure for accepting a community's uniqueness and beliefs about life.

Based on Table (1), findings have uncovered that 79.8 % of Chechens in Jordan use Chechen in social media to communicate with their friends who understand the Chechen language. This suggests that if a Chechen person sends a Chechen message, the receiver will send a message in Chechen back. However, if the sender sends an Arabic message, the receiver will send the message in Arabic. This outcome correlates satisfactorily well with Cunliffe, Morris & Prys (2013) who report that the selection of a specific language for a specific message might be influenced by the intended audience, the person who sends the message and the message itself. This outcome is hardly distinguishable from Ni Bhroin (2014) who suggests

that most of the participants use their indigenous languages to communicate with specific people.

Data from Table (1) hint that 76% of the selected sample use the Chechen language to promote unity among family members. This is a plausible result because the large majority of Chechen parents in Jordan oblige their children to use the ethnic language at home. This result matches well with Lackaff and Moner (2016) who have found that the online use of the indigenous language can offer a touchstone for identity, empowerment and resistance. Also, this finding is totally consistent with Greymorning (1999) who stresses the fact that if we fail to preserve our ethnic language we might fail to safeguard our ceremonies and our own selves for the reason that language is the essence of our life, and it is the indigenous language that makes us strong and confident. Results of the interviews reveal that all the interviewees indicate that Chechen promotes unity among family members and relatives. Also, it promotes unity among the community members. This outcome goes hand in hand with Kwon (2017) who states that mothers believe that the heritage language works as a bridge that connects children with their grandparents in the homeland. Also, this result supports the ideas of Putra (2018) who affirms that all participants use the Lampung language because it symbolizes their ethnic identity and affirms unity.

Further analysis reveals that 75.4 % of the respondents use the Chechen language in social media to keep in touch with other Chechen people-regardless of familial ties. The interviews have shown that Chechens of Jordan use social networking sites and media in general to stay connected with homeland and receive information about Chechnya. This high percentage suggests that Chechens of Jordan visit Chechnya's websites and pages that connect Chechens all over the world with each other. Thus, these websites posts information associated with homeland and issues related to diaspora. Moreover, this implies that social media platforms permit members of the same indigenous language communities to stay attached with one another whether they are close or far. This was difficult before the introduction of the internet. Before the internet it was hard to use phones and mobiles because they were very expensive.Nowadays, access to the internet is available and anyone has the opportunity to communicate with his/her relatives and friends in any place throughout the world. This result has been found to be typical of Galla (2016) who argues that technology can be used to connect and communicate members of the same community in distinct parts of the World. This result lends support to Lackaff and Moner (2016) who state that social media introduce a significant opportunity for societies to communicate with each other regardless of the place of residence. In other words, social media platforms permit speakers of indigenous languages to stay connected with each other whether they live in the same area or not.

Additionally, 68% of the respondents indicate that they use their ethnic language in social media to fulfill their families' desire in using Chechen. This is plausible due to the fact that Chechens of Jordan are not allowed to use Arabic at home. This result may be explained to some extent the fact that the habitual use of Chechen offline contributes to its use online. This finding shares a number of similarities with Cunliffe, Morris and Prys (2013) who have found that there is a significant connection between the language used in social media and the language that is used in every day conversation.

It seems that 67.8 % of the participants affirm that they use the Chechen language in social media to express themselves better. This result suggests that the language we admire may have an influence not only on our ideas and thoughts, but on our unspoken preferences as well. It seems plausible to suggest that the Chechen language has essence that operates beautifully to express what the Chechen speakers need it to. It is manipulated for specific aims, with terms that have shades of meaning. This result is highly consistent with the interviewees who admit that Chechen is the means that they use to express their thoughts and feelings. Also, the vast majority of them hint that there are specific situations where it is hard to use another language and they switch between Arabic and Chechen. This outcome is barely distinguishable from Ni Bhroin (2014) who suggests that most of the participants use their indigenous languages to reveal and express their feelings and thoughts efficiently or to speak with people from specific ethnic group. This finding matches well with Cunliffe, Morris and Prys (2013) who suggest that some participants indicate that they use the language of the majority approximately the entire day but when they want to hint about something happened with them that day they use their heritage language.

Almost two-thirds of the respondents (62.8 %) indicate that they use Chechen to receive and send messages. This result suggests that the main purpose of social networking sites is to send and receive information. More specifically, to send and receive personal messages. This result is totally consistent with the interviewees who state that they use social media to forward and transfer messages.

Table 2. Percentages and Means for the Chechen's Attitudes towards the Use of the Chechen Language in Social Media

No	Statement	Mean	Percentage	Level of Agreement
1	The Chechen language should be used in social media.	3.97	79.4 %	High
2	If I see a post in a language I don't understand, I feel excluded.	2.2	44 %	Low
3	Facebook/Twitter/Whatsapp should be available in the Chechen language.	3.59	71.8 %	Medium
4	I feel excited when I find a post in the Chechen language in social media.	3.84	76.8 %	High
5	I admire using Chechen in different social media apps and websites.	3.76	75.2 %	High
6	Anyone living in Jordan should be able to understand Chechen.	2.87	57.4 %	Medium

Data from table (2) suggest that 79.4 % of the Chechen people hold a high level of agreement towards using the Chechen language in Whatsapp and Facebook. More specifically, the majority of the respondents believe that the Chechen language should be used in social media. It may be attributed to the fact that technology and social media in particular aid and facilitate the task of learning. Besides, social media provide them with news from homeland. Additionally, 76.8% of the participants feel excited when they find a post in the Chechen

language. It is probable that these posts remind them of their homeland. Also, they want to stay connected with their relatives and friends. In the same vein, the observed data reveal that 75.2 % of the Chechen speakers admire using Chechen in different social media settings. Similarly, 71.8 % of the participants suggest that Facebook/ Twitter/ WhatsApp should be available in the Chechen language. This finding may be ascribed to the fact that the Chechen people view their indigenous language as the coolest language in the world. These findings go hand in hand with Viernes (2017) and Feng and Naza (2011) who admit that speakers had positive attitudes towards using minority languages in Social Media. These results are in line with Moriarty (2009) who has found that the accessibility of television in Irish is positively affecting language attitudes and language practices of the participants. These outcomes agree with Putra (2018) who posits that the majority of the respondents believe that technology and social media would be powerful tools to promote the use of Lampung because it symbolizes their ethnic identity and affirms unity. Results of the Chechens' attitudes towards using their ethnic language in social media reveal that all the interviewees have agreed that social media platforms such as Facebook and WhatsApp are effective tools to expand their culture and they wish to use the Chechen language in everyday applications.

5. Conclusion

To sum up, this study concentrates on the factors motivating Chechens of Jordan to use their ethnic language in Facebook and Whatsapp. Also, it investigates participants' attitudes towards social media as powerful tools to preserve and revitalize the Chechen language. The evidence from this study suggests that social media is powerful tools that help and aid Chechens of Jordan to preserve and revitalize their ethnic language and culture. Also, in this study we have found that participants have positive attitudes towards using the Chechen language in social media.

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Appendix (A)

Demographic Characteristics of the Participants

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of the Participants

Gender		Total
Male	135	
Female	205	340
Age		
15-25	101	
26-36	134	340
37-47	52	
48-58	37	
59-69	14	
70 and above	2	
Place of Birth		
Al-Suknah	69	340
Sweileh	137	
Az Zarqa	71	
Other	63	
Education		
Less than Tawjihi	9	340
Tawjihi	85	
Diploma	53	
B.A	165	
M.A	23	
PhD	5	

Appendix (B)

The Sociolinguistic Questionnaire

1. **Gender**:   □ Male   □ Female
2. **Age**:   □ 15-25   □ 26-36   □ 37-47
             □ 48-58   □ 59-69   □ 70 years or older

3. **Place of residence**: ☐ Al-Suknah   ☐ Sweileh   ☐ other (Please specify) ………

4**. Place of birth** _____.

5. **Educational background**: ☐ less than Tawjihi   ☐ Tawjihi   ☐ Diploma

☐ B.A   ☐ M.A   ☐ Ph.D

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

I use the Chechen language in social media to ……	5	4	3	2	1
stay connected with my Chechen culture.					
express myself better than in Arabic.					
preserve my indigenous culture.					
preserve the Chechen language.					
increase its visibility.					
Communicate with other Chechen people –not family members					
promote unity.					
communicate with friends who understand Chechen.					
to receive and send messages to Chechen people.					
fulfill my family's desire in using the Chechen.					

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

No	Statement	5	4	3	2	1
1	The Chechen language should be used in social media.					
2	If I see a post in a language I don't understand, I feel excluded.					
3	Facebook/Twitter/Whatsapp should be available in the Chechen language.					
4	I feel excited when I find a post in the Chechen language in social media.					
5	I admire using Chechen in different social media apps and settings					
6	Anyone living in Jordan should be able to understand Chechen.					
5: Strongly Agree 4: Agree 3: Neutral 2: Disagree 1: Strongly Disagree						