Tsova-Tush Language Attitudes and Use
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Introduction
This poster provides updated information about the vitality of Tsova-Tush (Batsbi) [b], a Northeast Caucasian language spoken in the village of Zemo Alvani, Georgia. We re-estimate speaker numbers and report findings from a language use and attitude survey.

Survey Methods
Language vitality factors are understudied for Tsova-Tush. Only one sociolinguistic study has been carried out (Gigašvili 2016, 2014), which found that all Tsova-Tush speakers were bilingual in Georgian and that age negatively correlated with Georgian monolingualism. Tsova-Tush language attitudes and domains of use have not previously been studied.

To understand Tsova-Tush vitality, a language use survey was collected in Zemo Alvani in 2017, with 30 respondents (3.75%–7.5% of the estimated speakers). Survey results were analyzed using negative binomial and ordinal regression modeling and correspondence analysis combined with hierarchical clustering.

Results
Two types of generalized regression, ordinal and negative binomial, were used to model differences in the responses based on respondents' demographic groups.

1. Who is more likely to find transmission of Tsova-Tush to youth important? (ordinal regression)
   • Dependent variable: Importance of Tsova-Tush for youth (Not important at all, Somewhat important, Very important, or Crucial)
   • Independent variables: Age (centered), self rating of Tsova-Tush ability, native speaker of Tsova-Tush (0, 1), age of reported Tsova-Tush language use.

2. Who is more likely to report being a user of Tsova-Tush? (negative binomial regression)
   • Dependent variable: Count of domains where respondent indicated using Tsova-Tush by reported frequency (range 0–18)
   • Independent variables: Age (centered), native speaker of Tsova-Tush (0, 1), native speaker of Georgian (0, 1), and gender
   • Only age was significant predictor. The older one is, the more likely they report using Tsova-Tush.

Conclusions
We found that widely cited estimates of Tsova-Tush speakers dramatically overrepresent the size of the present-day speakership. Even supposedly current sources still publish a speaker count that is likely 50 years old and 4–8 times too high, while failing to indicate the age or the provenance of the information. Recent publication dates, when associated with old estimates, give a false impression about the size of vulnerable and rapidly changing endangered language populations.

Results from the language use survey presented a mixed picture of language use and attitudes.
   • Overall use: Older speakers were more likely than younger speakers to report using Tsova-Tush.
   • Domains of use: Older speakers reported using Tsova-Tush in a more diverse set of domains than younger speakers.
   • Only one sociolinguistic study has been carried out — Domains of use fell along a scale (see e.g., Blommaert 2007) where Tsova-Tush is used the least at translocal levels (doctor and work) and increasingly more often in more local levels.
   • Even in the most local levels, with spouse or parents, Tsova-Tush was either not used or used very seldom.

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References

Table 1: Available estimates for number of Tsova-Tush speakers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Simons &amp; Fennig 2018</td>
<td>3,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>Comrie 2008, Salminen 2007, unclear</td>
<td>3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Holiský &amp; Gajdušek</td>
<td>2,500–3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960s</td>
<td>Šavxelišvili 2001</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Harris &amp; Samuel 2011</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Acknowledgments
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Figure 1: Location of Zemo Alvani, Georgia where Tsova-Tush is spoken

Figure 2: Correspondence analysis of domains of Tsova-Tush use (A) and hierarchical clusters of domains (B)