

Can we understand one another?

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About the publisher:

Alternative Dispute Resolution Center is a Mitrovica region - based organization whose work is focused on mediating access to justice and on encouraging communication and mutual understanding between communities.

The ADRC works to mediate court, prosecution, and self - referred disputes/cases, intervening in a low-cost and time-efficient manner to address the legitimate grievances of conflicting parties. Recognized by the legislative act any agreement reached in the process of mediation has executive power.

Along with the provision of mediation services, ADRC also contributes to the wider reconciliation initiatives and commitments in the Mitrovica region by building human potentials for dialogue and negotiation and by providing a framework for inter-ethnic engagement.

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Public Opinion Research

“Can we understand one another?”

This public opinion research was conducted in the framework of the project “Mediation Center Mitrovica” funded by:



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The most important results:

37.9% of Kosovo Albanians from South Mitrovica feel bad or relatively bad when they hear Serbian language.

40.8% of young Serbs, aged 16-25 feel bad or relatively bad when they hear Albanian.

Only 13.9% of residents of South and North Mitrovica speak each other's languages.

65.3% of Kosovo Albanians from South Mitrovica who are older than 45 state that they speak Serbian.

23.70% of Albanian and Serb respondents from South and North Mitrovica would learn the language of the other community.

64.30% of Albanian and Serb respondents from South and North Mitrovica do not think that Serbian and Albanian should be compulsory subjects in schools.

48.70% of Albanian and Serb respondents from South and North Mitrovica know what the official languages in Kosovo are.

A quarter of the respondents do not know that the institutions are obliged to translate all the documents in both official languages.

Almost 60% of respondents from the municipalities of North Mitrovica and South Mitrovica do not feel safe speaking their mother tongue in the areas in which their community is in the minority.

52.% of Serb respondents would accept having an Albanian as a friend.

36% of Albanian respondents would accept having a Serb as a friend.

55.1% of young Serb respondents from North Mitrovica would not mind having an Albanian as a friend, only 29.1% of young Albanians from South Mitrovica share this opinion.

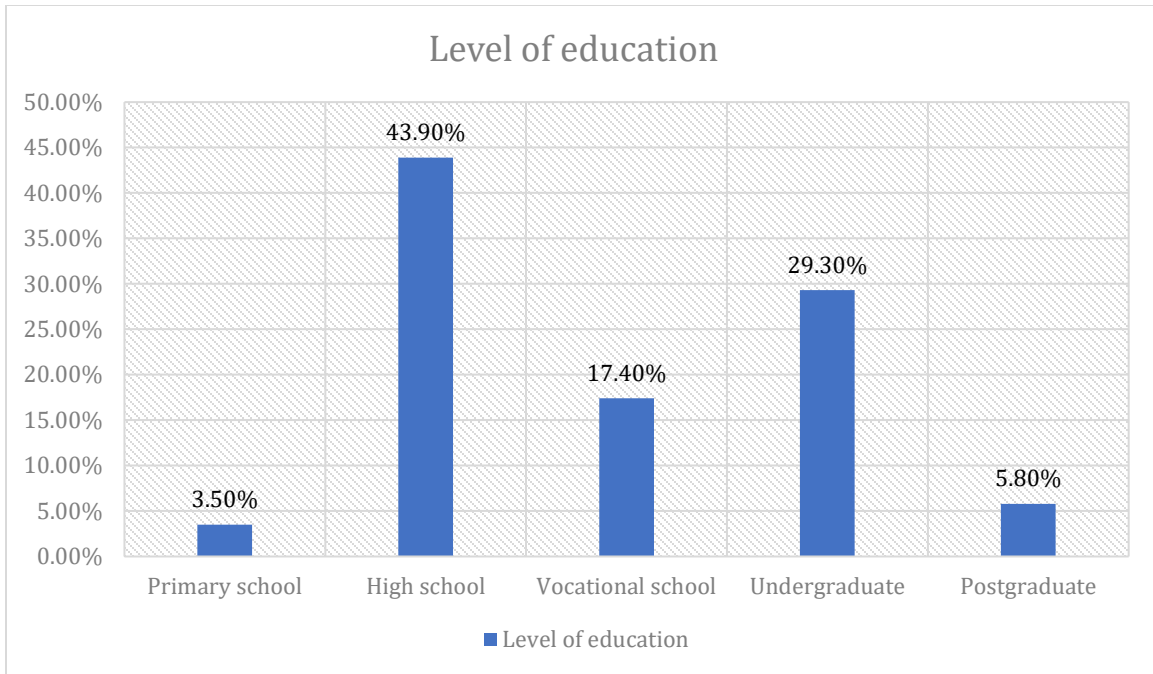
About the research:

The research on the distinctions of the communication between Kosovo Albanians and Kosovo Serbs intends to assess the existing level of interaction in Mitrovica region, examine the role the language plays in inter-ethnic communication and ascertain its share in the community-based polarization and preservation of ethnic identity. The research was conducted as part of the “Challenging Narratives” component of the project “Mediation Center Mitrovica”. It draws upon a mixture of qualitative and quantitative methods of public opinion research.

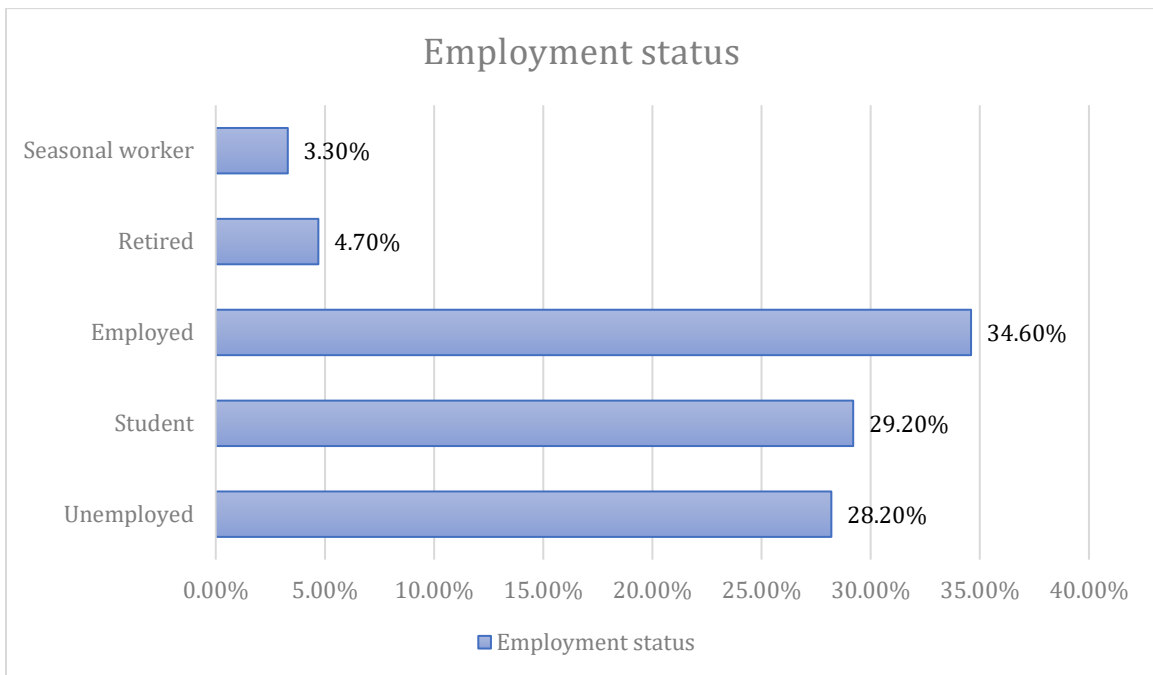
In the period between 4th and 18th of May 2018, Alternative Dispute Resolution Center collected 1000 questionnaires on the territory of the municipalities of South and North Mitrovica. The research focused on the perception of the Serbian and Albanian languages as one of the factors of division in the wider context of inter-ethnic relations in Kosovo. The primary target groups of the research were Serbs and Albanians. The questions attempted to examine the perceptions of the communities towards their own language and the language of the “other community”, they also examined the perception of the respect of the language rights by Kosovo institutions and the readiness of the two communities to learn each other’s languages. The questionnaires targeting Serb respondents were composed of 33 and the questionnaires that targeted Albanian respondents were composed of 34 questions. The second part of the survey, the qualitative part included: 4 focus groups. In addition, 6 short interviews were filmed with the community leaders of the Serbian and Albanian community.

Description of the sample:

The average age of the respondents in this survey was 32.79, the youngest respondent was 16 and the oldest was 82. A total of 463 respondents live in the municipality of South Mitrovica and the remaining 537 live in the municipality of North Mitrovica. Albanians comprise 486 (48.6%) of the sample, Serbs comprise 492 (49.2%) and 22 (2.2%) of the respondents were of other ethnicities. A total of 493 (49.3%) of the respondents were women, 480 (48%) were men and 24 (2.4%) did not want to specify their sex. Majority of the participants (43.9%) graduated from high school.



Third of the respondents were employed.



The importance of the language to the identity

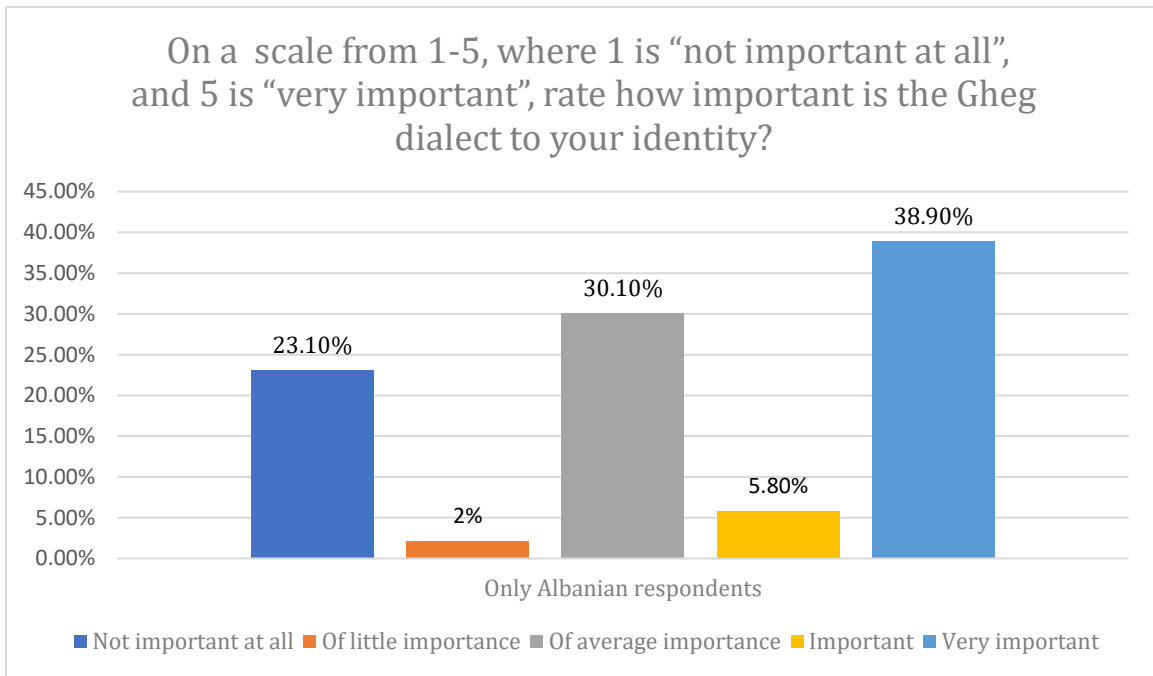
The mother-tongue is said to be a particularly important aspect of ethnic identity (Fishman, 1991). Language has been said to constitute a marker of larger social categories, such as the nation

(Windisch, 2004). The narratives of these nations are, inter-alia, determined and represented by the language in use. In that sense, language is a product of the thought and behavior of a society. However, the opposite is also true: language can also define social structures and influence behaviors within these structures. This is the view that is behind the Whorfian hypothesis. It can therefore be argued that language and society influence each other through a co-dependent relationship.

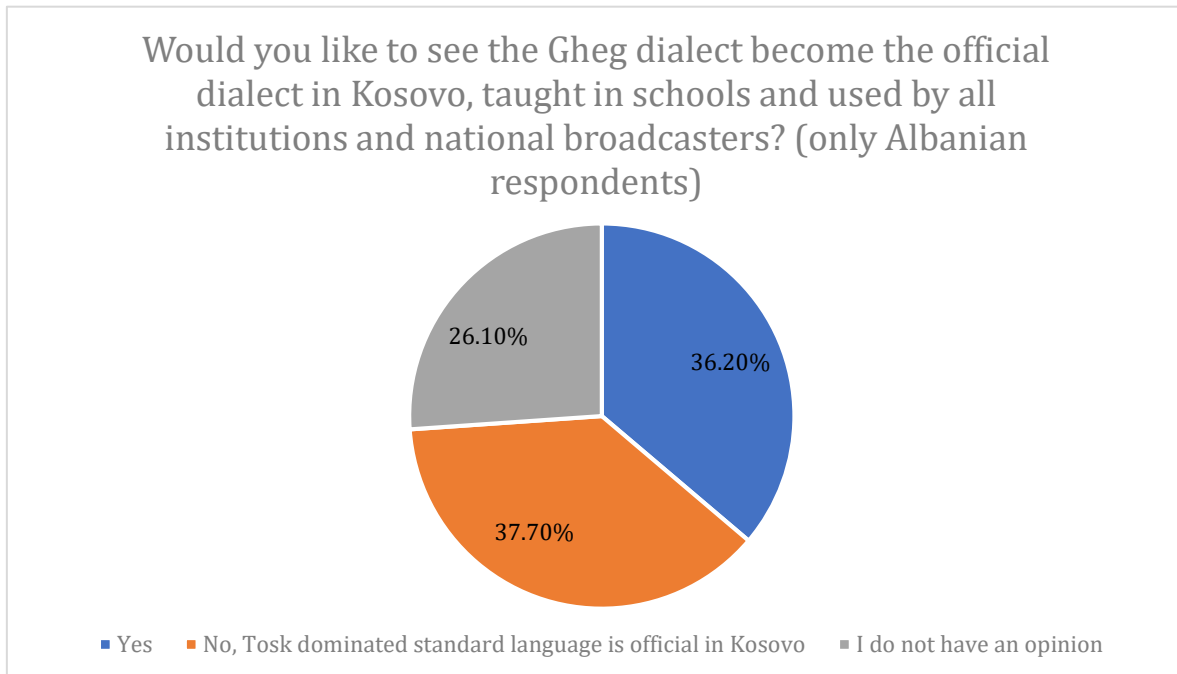
These trends are also exemplified in the geographical location covered by the research that was undertaken. For both the Albanian and Serbian community of Kosovo, language plays an important role in constructing their identities and behaviors towards one another. The Albanian and Serbian languages have linguistic nuances, nuances that add a layer to intra and inter - community debates.

The Albanian language has two major dialects, Gheg and Tosk. In formal addresses, Kosovo Albanians use the standard language dominated by the Tosk dialect and a mixture of the standard language and the Gheg dialect in their private interactions. Serbs use two different alphabets, Cyrillic and Latin. Although both official and equally used, the Cyrillic alphabet is shared by Serbs and other Slavic nations, like Macedonians, Bulgarians, and Russians and it is considered to be more traditional.

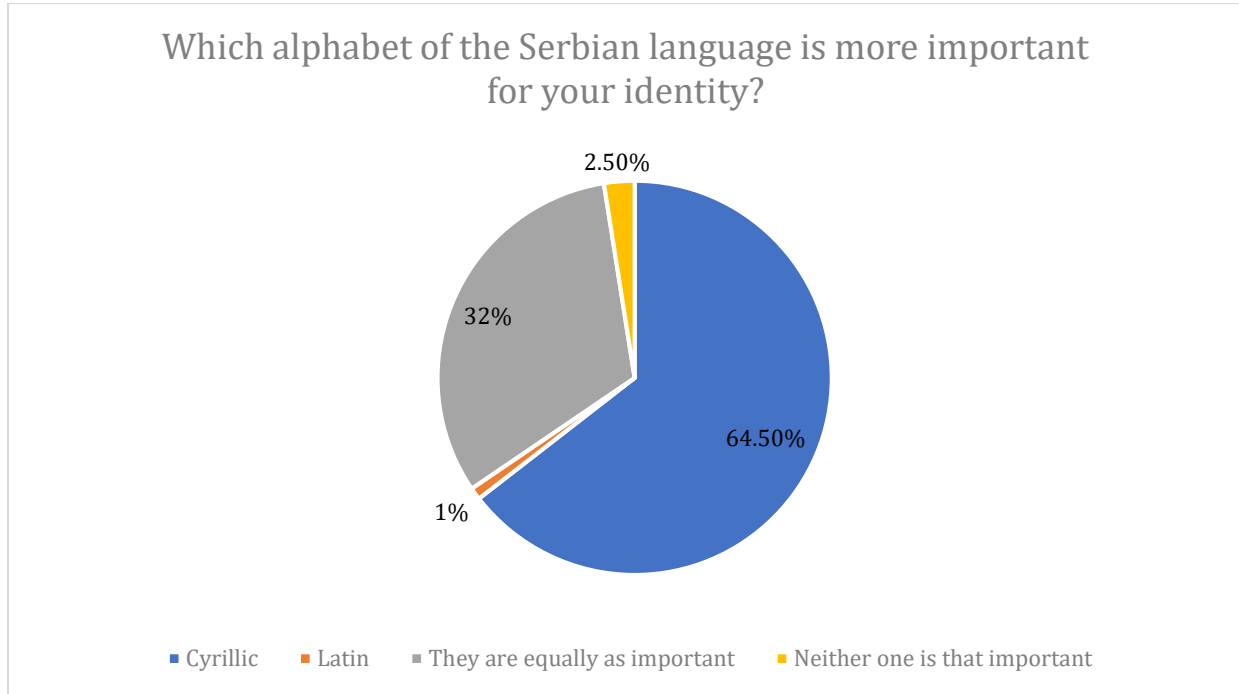
As part of this research project, members of the Albanian community were asked to also examine their relationship to their own language and its two main dialects: Gheg and Tosk. More than third of Albanian respondents stated that the Gheg dialect is very important to their identity. On a scale from 1-5 the measure of the importance of the Gheg dialect to Kosovo Albanian identity in Mitrovica, the average grade is 3.35.



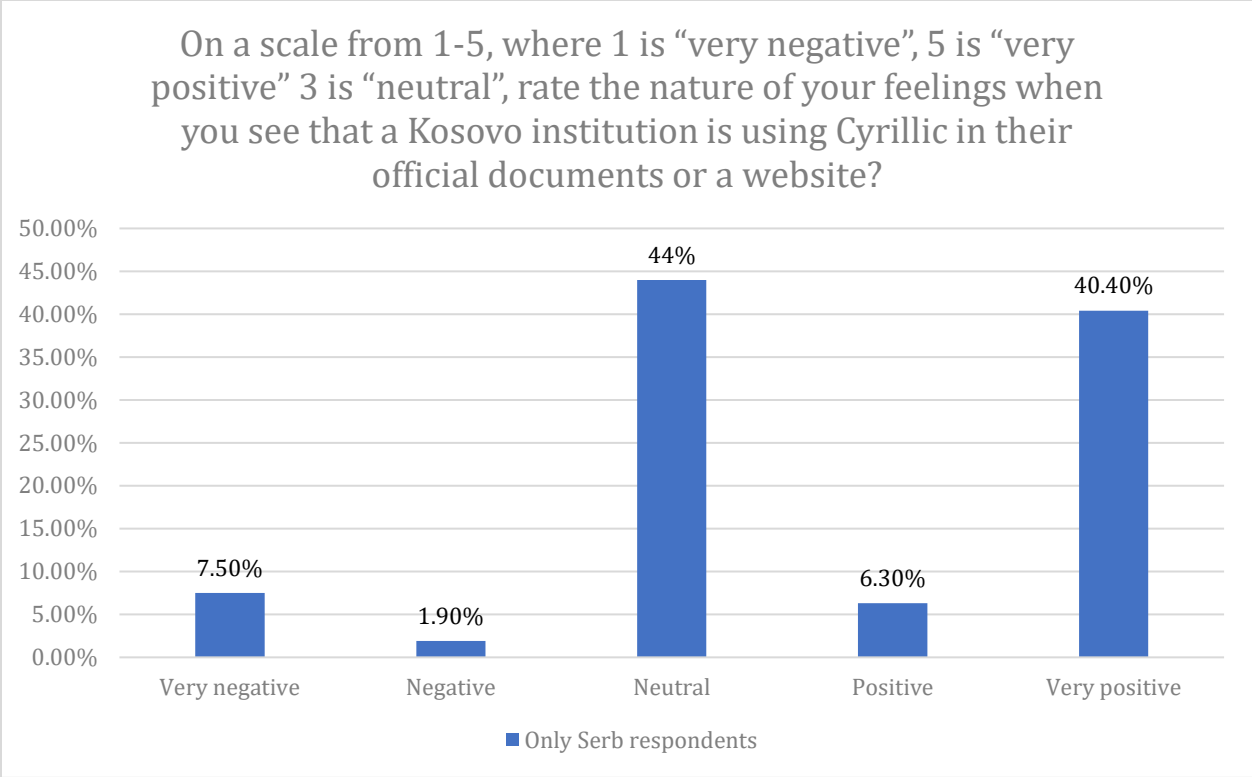
One of the questions asked to the Kosovo Albanian respondents was whether they would like Gheg dialect of the Albanian language to be in official use in Kosovo. The opinions of the ethnic Albanian citizens of North and South Mitrovica are very divided. There was almost an equal number of respondents wanting Tosk dominated standard language to remain in official use (182) and wanting Gheg to become official (182). The remaining respondents (126) stated that they do not have an opinion on this issue.



The Serb community is less divided on the importance of a specific alphabet to their identity, with the vast majority (64.5%) finding that the Cyrillic alphabet is more important to their identity than the Latin alphabet.



In accordance with these results, the Serb respondents predominantly (46.70%) state that they feel either positive or very positive when they see Kosovo institutions use Cyrillic alphabet. When elaborating as to why they feel a certain way, the majority of those who feel positive state that it shows respect for the Serbian language. Those who have neutral feeling explain that the alphabet is not as important as the correctness of the language would be, or they simply do not have an interest in what Kosovo institutions do, as they do not feel them as their own. They maintain that the quality of translation of official documents needs to be improved. Finally, the respondents who state that they have negative feelings towards Kosovo institutions using Cyrillic alphabet either claim that this is not the practice, or they see it as appropriation of Serbian identity.



Perception of the language of “the other”

Serbo-Albanian relations are among the most strained relations in the region of the Western Balkans and the municipalities of North and South Mitrovica are the epicenter of these relations. The two municipalities were once a part of one city which got split along the lines of the river Ibar in early 2000s. The river represented the line of physical, ethnic and political division which lasts to this day. Only a small percent of Kosovo Albanians remained to live in the northern municipality, while there are no Kosovo Serbs living in the southern municipality, except in the disputed villages on the administrative border of the municipalities.

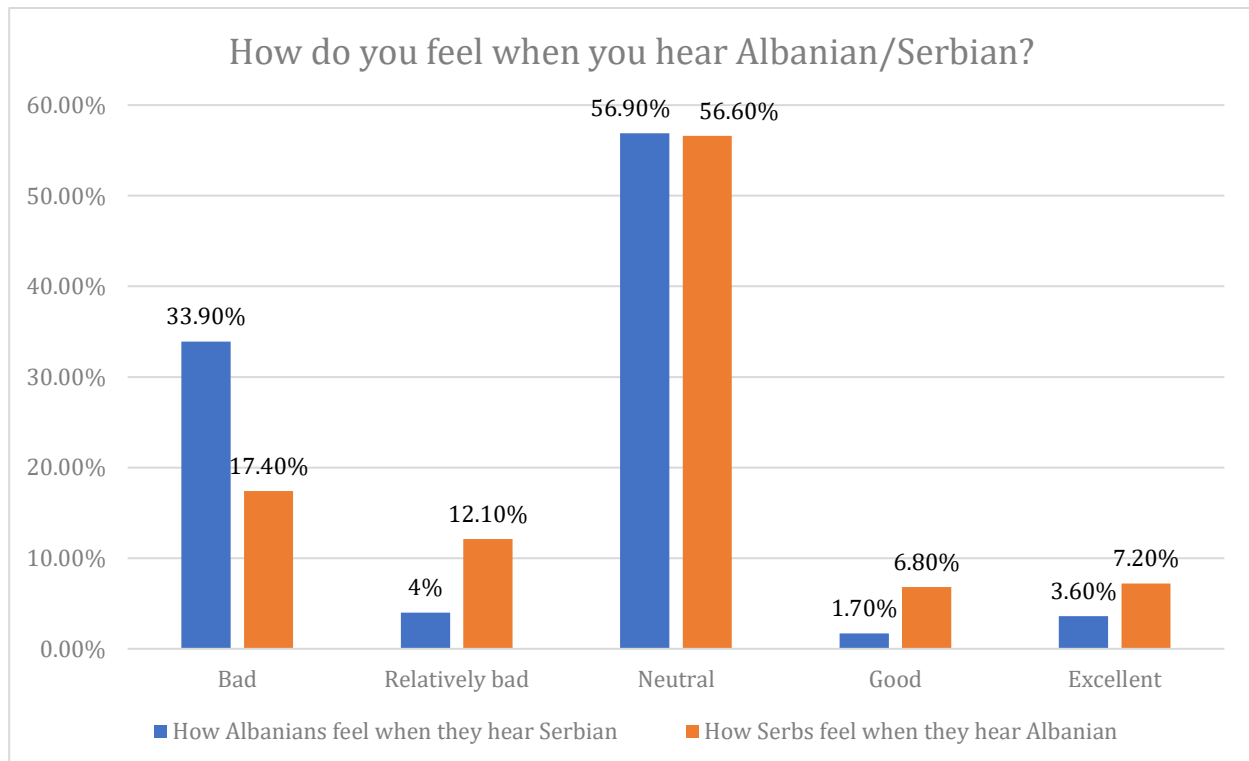
In addition to being very dissimilar, the Albanian and Serbian language are also perceived as means of domination. The qualitative research has shown that the two communities relate the act of learning the other language as the act of subordination or giving in to the other community. Some of the Albanian respondents in the focus groups even described the act of learning the Serbian language as “re-occupation” and “giving up parts of sovereignty”.

The Serb respondents in the focus groups, on the other hand, stated that they feel frustration upon hearing Albanian resulting from the lack of understanding for what is being said. Others also related it to the feeling of unease or not being safe, especially in the direct aftermath of the war. Now,

as the level of contact is increasing, almost half of the Serb respondents in the focus groups say that for those who plan on staying in Kosovo, learning the Albanian language is going to become a necessity.

One of the older Serb respondents reminisced about the time when Albanian was taught in schools and they said that the institutionalized learning was never very successful as neither the children, nor their parents or teachers deemed it an important and necessary thing. The respondents stated that the learning of the Albanian language in schools was more of a formality. They added that only the people who had regular contacts with Albanians knew Albanian well. This person also stated that in the Yugoslav era, public servants who knew both languages had an addition to their salary to encourage others to also learn both languages.

While the majority of the former neighbors feels neutral when they hear the language of the other community, the percentages of those who have negative feelings are still alarming and, in the case of Kosovo Albanians, do over a third of the respondents (37.90%). However, when broken down to age groups, young Serbs, aged 16-25 score even higher with as much as 40.8% stating that they feel bad or relatively bad when they hear Albanian. The most tolerant towards the language of the other community are people that are aged 46 or above (71% of Albanians and 66% of Serbs) and who have experienced the joint life of Serbs and Albanians. The women of both ethnic groups are slightly more tolerant than men.



Throughout the data collection, in both qualitative and quantitative part of the research, both ethnic groups often use a syntagma “language of the enemy” or justify the need to learn the other language by stating that you must know the language of your enemy in order to understand your enemy.

For example, an Albanian respondent said that they would learn the Serbian language, but that they would not speak it. “If the person in front of me knows English, then we can exchange in English. If not, then I wouldn’t engage in a conversation with them in Serbian,” said the respondent. Another Albanian respondent explained that there exist narratives that portray Serbs as “demons and violent creatures”, which according to them is a concept that exists in both communities.

The following table shows the segregation of the answers according to ethnicity and age groups.

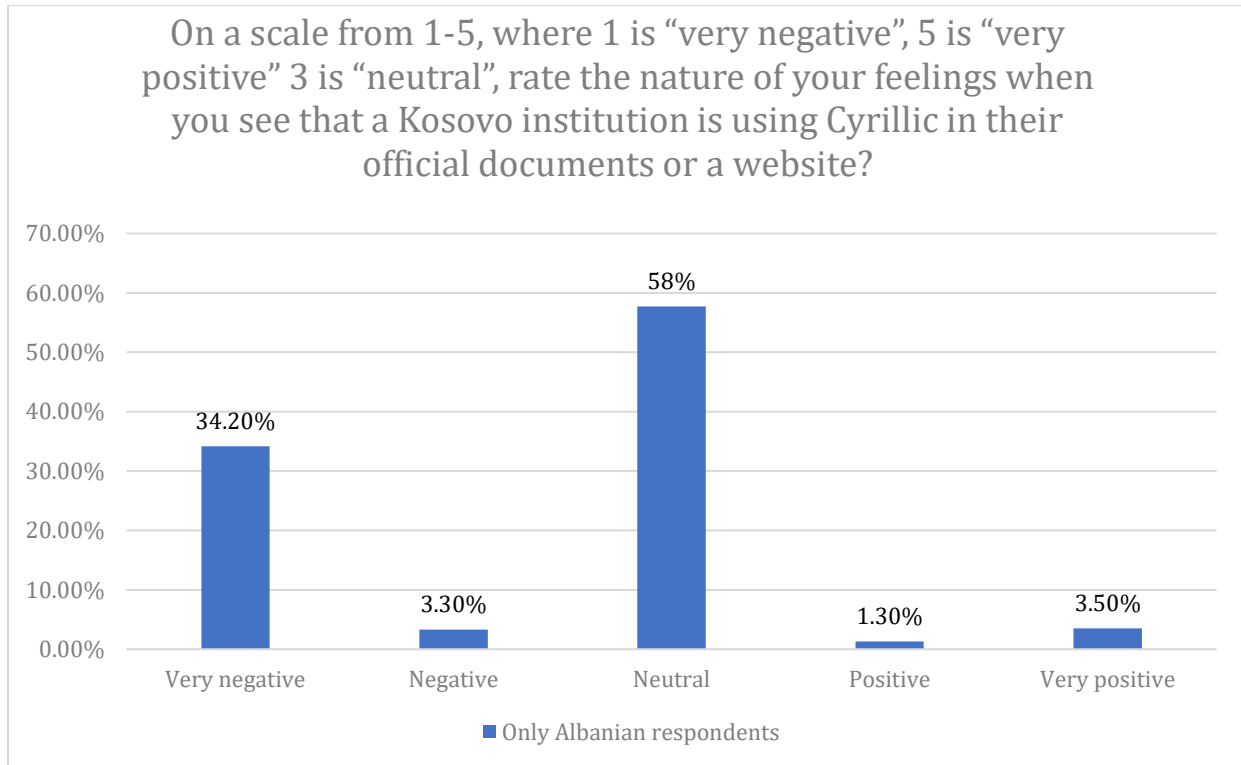
		Bad	Relatively bad	Neutral	Good	Excellent
16-25	Albanian	33.3%	4.1%	58.5%	1.2%	2.9%
	Serb	20.1%	20.7%	49.5%	4.9%	4.9%
26-45	Albanian	36.2%	5.1%	51.5%	2.6%	4.7%
	Serb	16.4%	8.5%	59.2%	9.5%	6.5%
46-90	Albanian	26.8%	0%	71%	0%	1.4%
	Serb	13.4%	4.1%	66%	4.1%	12.4%

The perception of the Cyrillic alphabet by the Albanian community is similar to the perception of the Serbian language in general, with 57.7% of respondents who are Albanian state that they feel neutral to the fact that some Kosovo institutions use Cyrillic alphabet, whereas 37.7% feel negative or very negative.

Albanian respondents in the focus groups were asked to try and explain the sources of the negativity towards the Cyrillic letters. While some respondents gave the general explanation that the roots of the discomfort towards these letters lies in the “recent history”, others had a more negative perception of the Cyrillic, even perceiving it as a “nationalistic element”.

For example, one of the respondents stated that in the 80s, by using “Cyrillic and other nationalistic elements, the system tried to deepen the differences”. This respondent believed the purpose of the language is to enable communication and connect people and therefore should be kept simple. He also perceived the use of Cyrillic in the 80s as an attempt to raise the Serbian community in Kosovo above others.

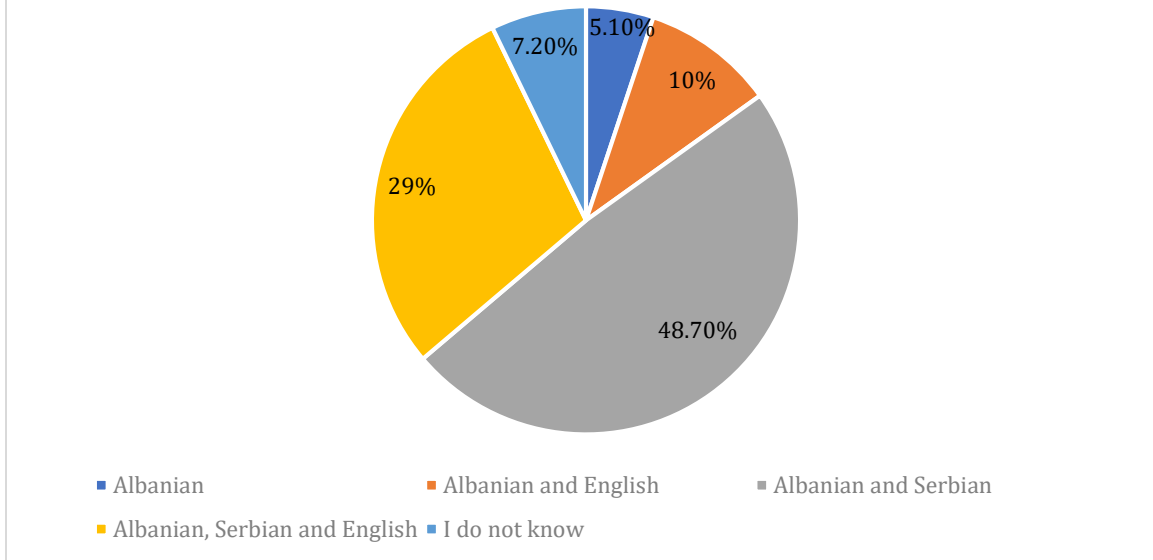
Another respondent stated that even though they do not have a negative perception of the Serbian language itself, they do perceive Cyrillic letter as “aggressive”, even reminiscent of the unpleasant experiences of the '98 and '99.



Institutions and the language

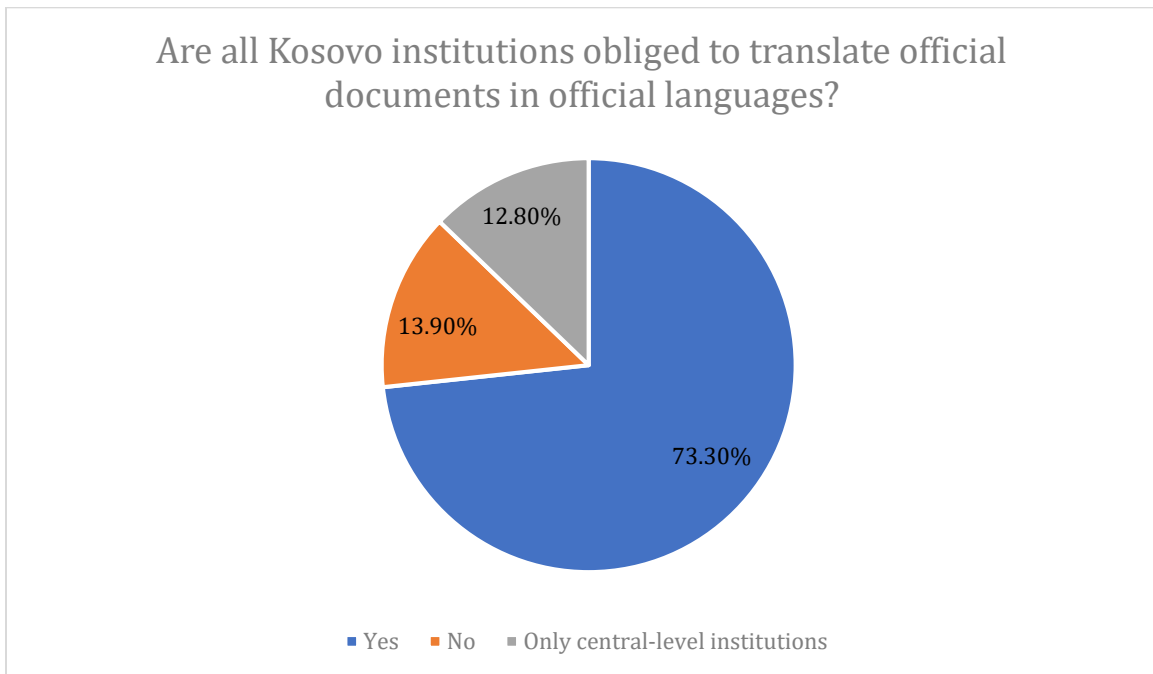
Albanian and Serbian are the two official languages in Kosovo, with equal status and rights. However, Serbian language speakers experience difficulties in using their language in the institutions daily, whereas the poor quality of translation of laws and official documents is corroborated with strong evidence. The quality of translation of documents into the Serbian language is often so substandard that Serbian language speakers resort to reading laws and other official documents in English. Therefore, there is some conviction amongst the communities that English is the third official language in Kosovo. In fact, almost a third of our respondents shared this opinion (32.2% of Serbs and 25.5% of Albanians). A higher percentage of Albanians (55.8%) than Serbs (42.2%) know that Albanian and Serbian are the two official languages in Kosovo. The percentage of those who knew the correct answer increased with the level of education in each ethnic group. Young Serbs (16-25) are the least informed, with only 35.6% knowing what Kosovo’s official languages are.

How many official languages are there in Kosovo?



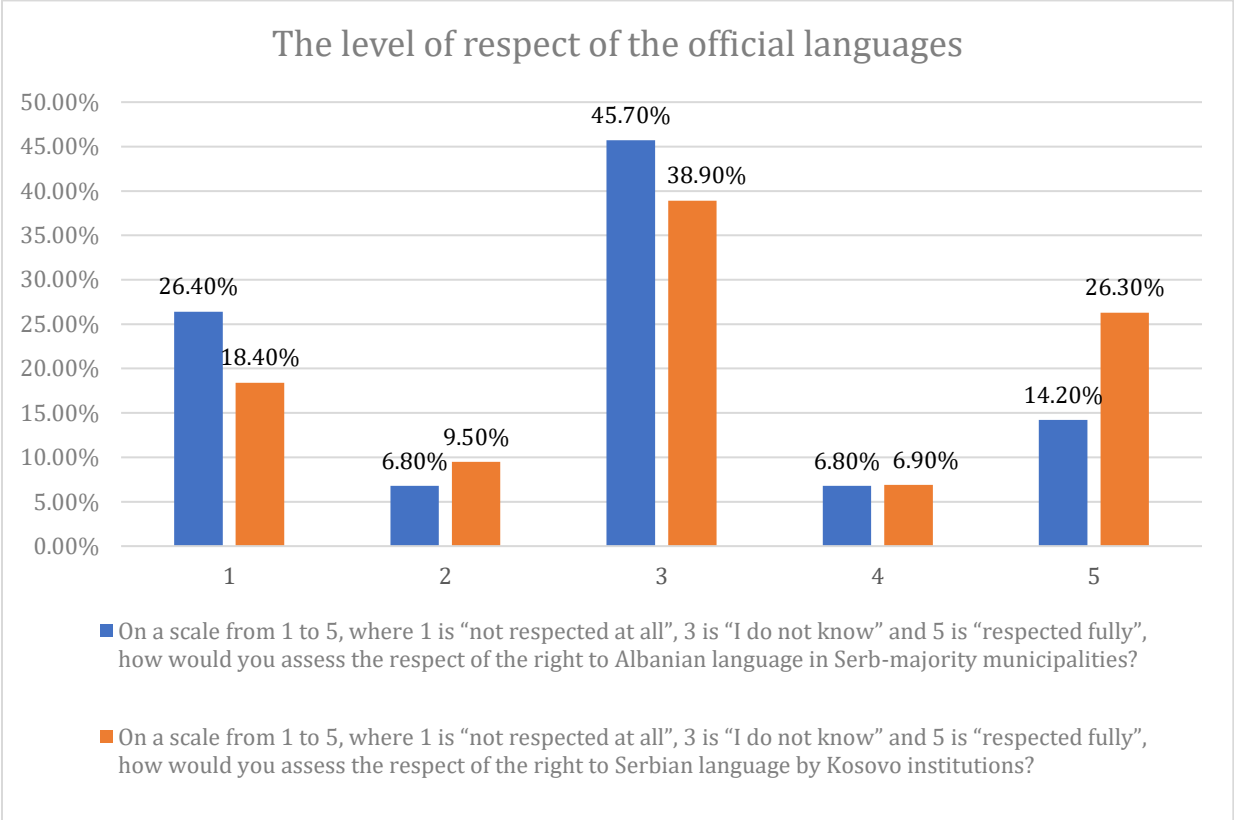
The questions were also designed to examine people’s understanding of the status of the official languages in Kosovo. Interestingly, a quarter of the respondents do not know that the institutions are obliged to translate all the documents in both official languages.

Are all Kosovo institutions obliged to translate official documents in official languages?

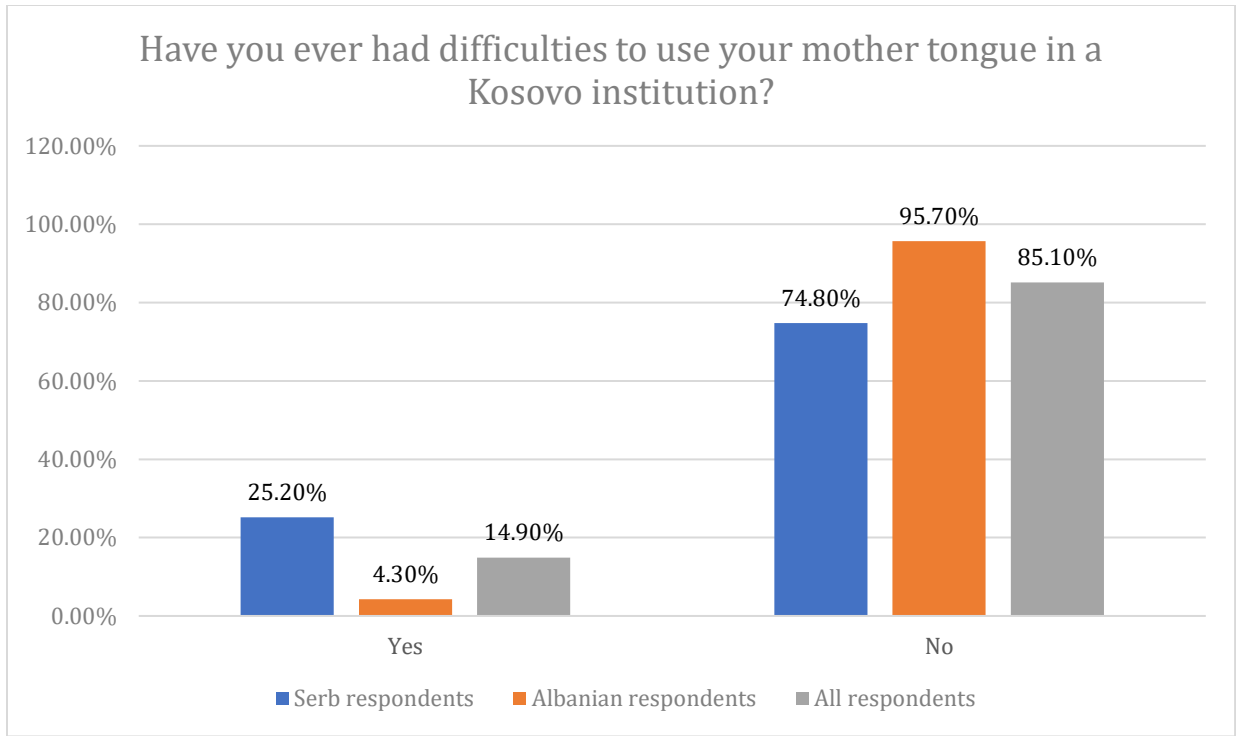


The respondents were also asked about their perceptions of the level of respect of the Albanian in Serb majority areas and the respect of the Serbian language by Kosovo institutions. The

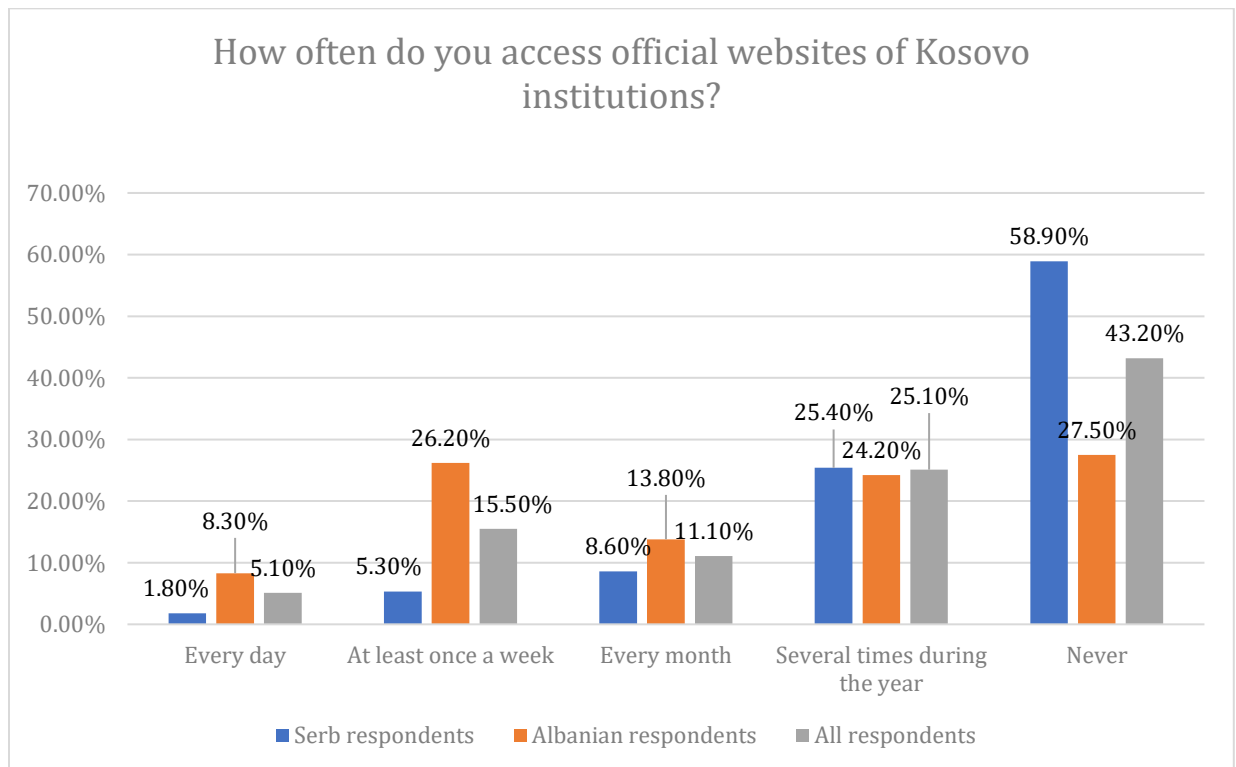
respondents were asked to grade the respect of the official languages from bad to excellent on a scale ranging 1-5. The respect of the Albanian language in Serb majority areas was graded with an average grade of 2.76, whereas the respect of the Serbian language by Kosovo institutions was graded with an average 3.13. The perceptions of the “opposite communities” are significantly different, with Serbs evaluating the respect of the Serbian language by Kosovo institutions with 2.44 and evaluating the respect of the Albanian language in Serb-majority areas with 2.9. Albanians graded the use of the Serbian language with 3.8 and the respect of the Albanian in Serb-majority areas with 2.5.



While perceptions suggest that both ethnic groups feel that their language rights are threatened, the practical experience shows that Serbian language speakers experience more difficulties in interacting with institutions. A quarter of Serb respondent stated that they have had difficulties using their mother tongue in Kosovo institutions.



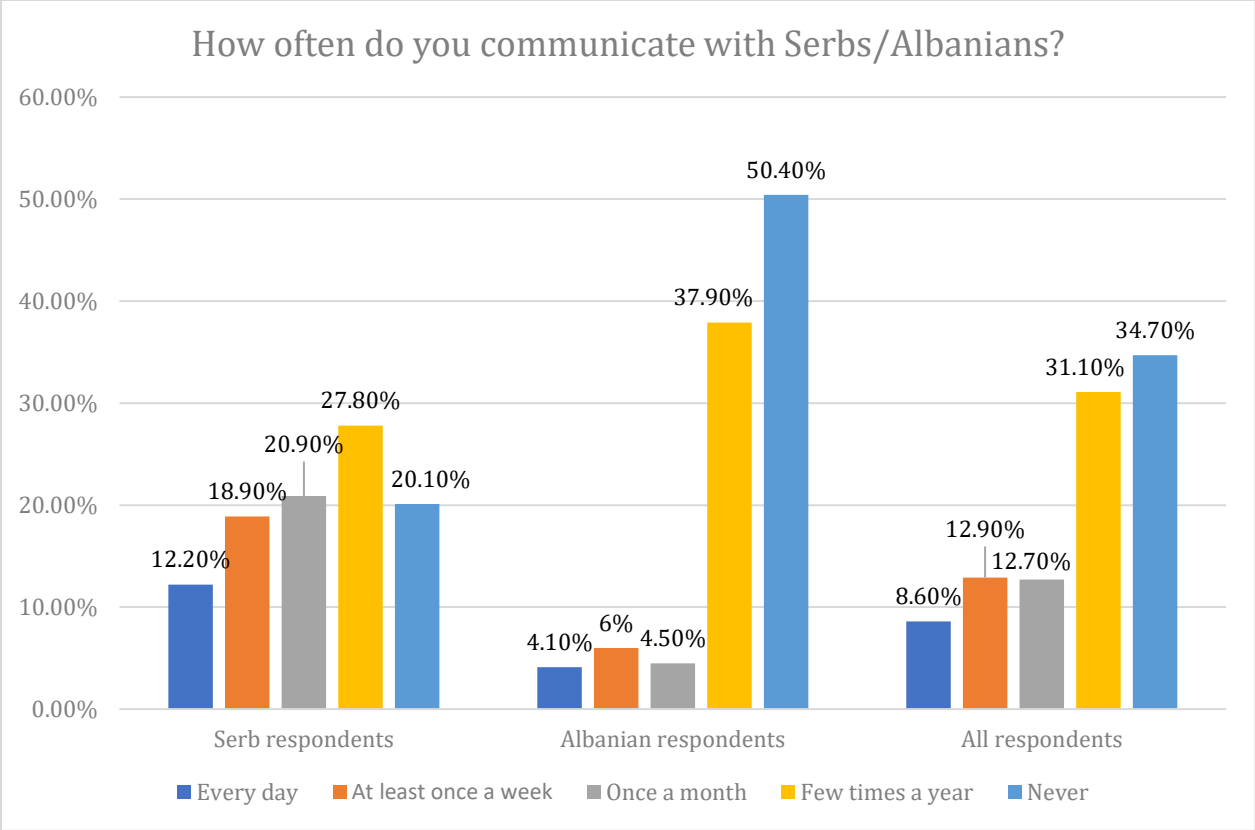
The research showed that 60% of Serb respondents do not use the websites to obtain information on Kosovo institution, which is in line with the perception that the majority of official websites of Kosovo institutions have a poor-quality translation and often, no translation at all.



How do Albanians and Serbs communicate?

In general, the inter-ethnic relations between residents of North and South Mitrovica are strained and not as frequent as might be expected from the communities that live in such proximity. As much as a third of our respondents stated that they never communicate with the members of the other community. The percentage of people that never interacts with the other community is considerably larger with Albanian respondents (50.4%) than Serb respondents (20.1%) which is understandable given that North Mitrovica has several multiethnic neighborhoods. Among those who communicate on a daily basis with the other community¹, the highest percentage of reported interaction is with Kosovo Serbs aged 26 to 45 (16.9%). The highest reported interactions with Serbs is among Albanians in the same age group (6.4%). However, Albanians in this age group also have the highest percentage of respondents who state that they never have interactions with Serbs (58.1%). On the other hand, among the Serb respondents, it is the age group of 16-25 that measures the highest percentage of those who do not communicate with Albanians at all (26.1%). Finally, men in both ethnic groups communicate more frequently than the women. Serb men communicate with Albanians twice as much as Serb women.

¹ The question posed in the questionnaires targeting Kosovo Serb community was: "How often do you communicate with Albanians", whereas the question posed to Albanians was: "How often do you communicate with Serbs".

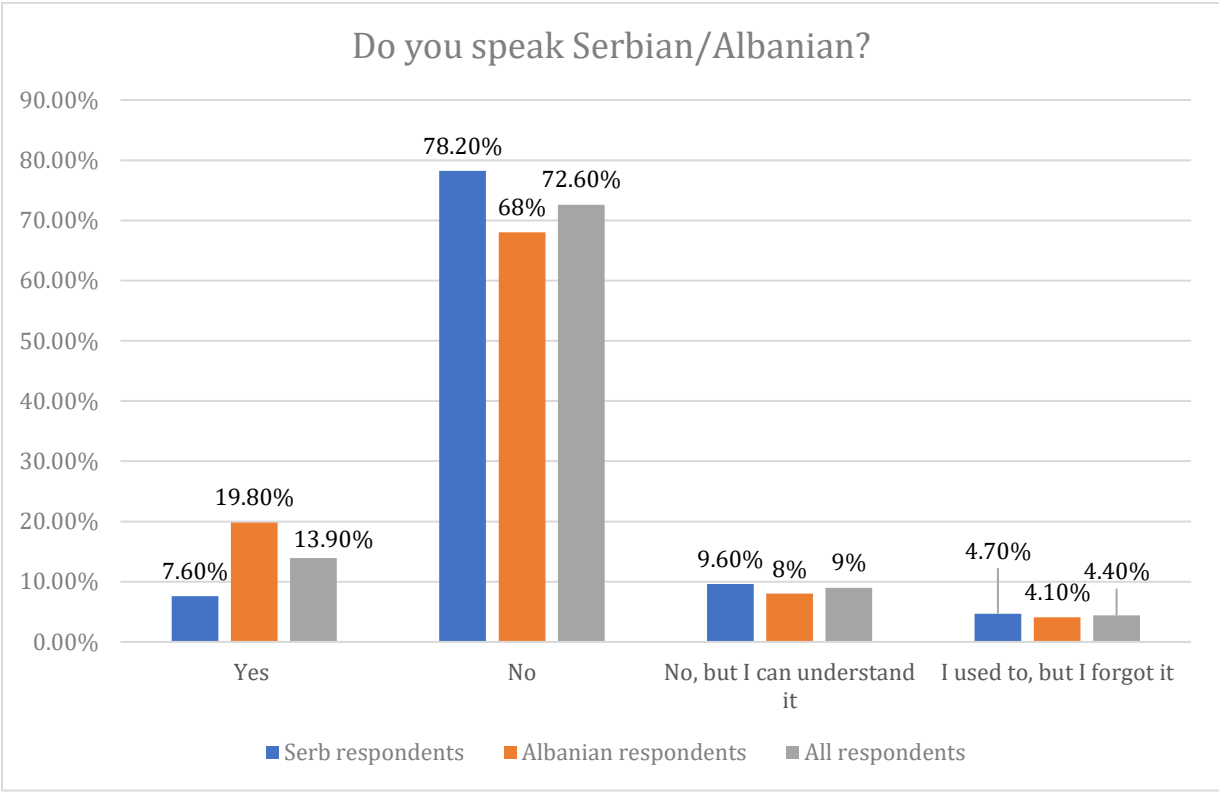


The results of the respondents' answers to the question how often you communicate with Serbs/Albanians are here broken down by ethnicity and age group.

Age group	Ethnicity	Every day	At least once a week	Once a month	Few times a year	Never
16-25	Albanian	4.6%	5.8%	4.6%	42.2%	42.8%
	Serb	4.8%	14.4%	20.2%	34.6%	26.1%
26-45	Albanian	4.2%	6.4%	5.1%	26.3%	58.1%
	Serb	16.9%	24.9%	20.9%	20.9%	16.4%
46-90	Albanian	2.7%	5.4%	2.7%	45.9%	43.2%
	Serb	16.5%	15.5%	23.7%	29.9%	14.4%

Apart from the frequency of the contact, the communication between Albanians and Serbs is often hindered by their native languages which are very different, and which have not been part of the two communities' curriculums for over 27 years. In fact, in these two neighboring municipalities, only

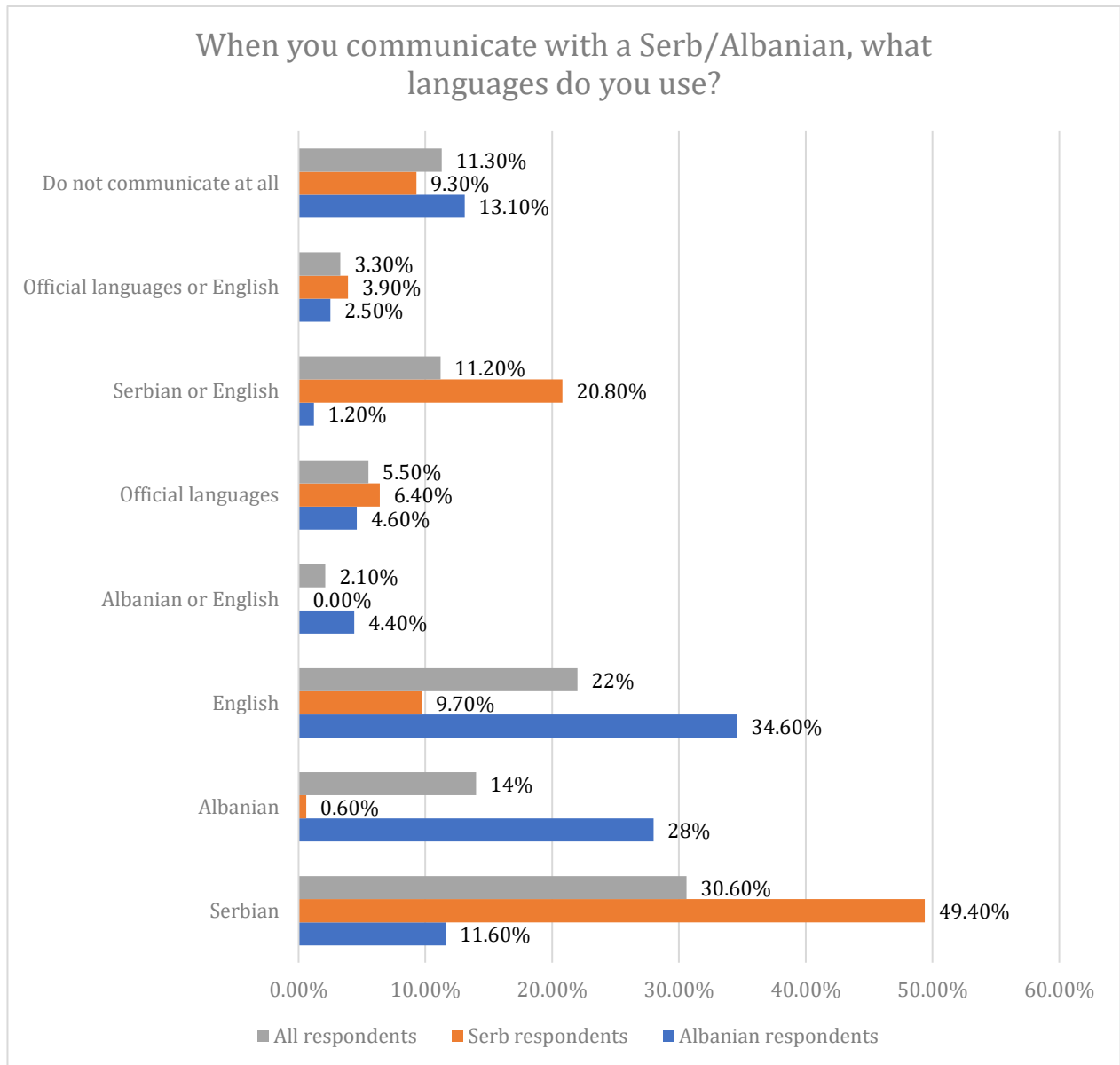
13.9% of respondents speak each other’s languages². Within both ethnic groups, it is the respondents who are older than 45 that know the language of the other ethnic group. However, a considerably higher percentage of Kosovo Albanians older than 45 (65.3%) than Kosovo Serbs in the same age group (13.4%) speak the language of the other community. When it comes to the Serb respondents between 46 and 90 years of age, 14.4% of respondents say that they knew, but have now forgotten Albanian.



The results showing that a larger percentage of Kosovo Albanians speak Serbian are hardly surprising as Kosovo Albanians were a minority community in the Yugoslav time, surrounded by nations who spoke what is today known as Bosnian-Croatian-Montenegrin-Serbian (BCMS)³. There are estimated 21 million native speakers of BCMS. This language is also somewhat similar to neighboring Macedonian and, to a lesser extent, to Bulgarian and Russian.

² The question posed to Serbs was: “Do you speak Albanian?”, and the question posed to Albanians was: “Do you speak Serbian?”.

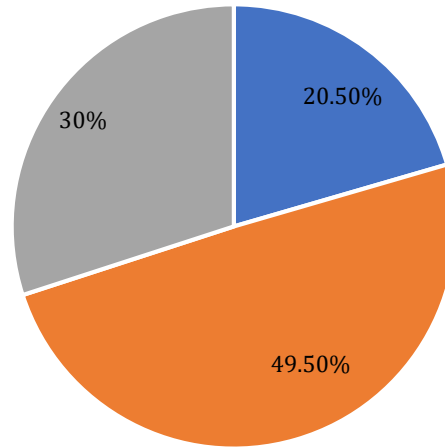
³ This is a pluricentric language enjoying the official language status in Croatia, Bosnia, Montenegro, Serbia, Kosovo, and the EU.



English is often the tool Serbs and Albanians resort to in trying to establish communication, which is especially true of the younger generation.

Interestingly, the majority of the respondents do not think that the fact that the Albanian and Serb community do not speak each other's languages prevents them from understanding the positions of the other. Unfortunately, it is probably this conviction that extends the stereotypes the communities have towards one another.

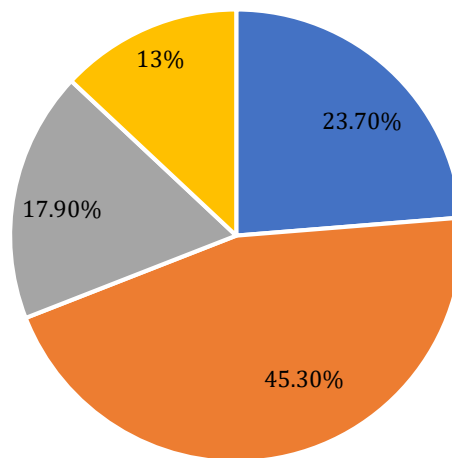
Do you think that the fact that Serbs and Albanians speak different languages prevents them from fully understanding the position of the other community?



■ Yes ■ No, we understand each other perfectly ■ I do not know

It is likely that the use of official languages in inter-community communication will increase in the future, as almost a quarter of our respondents' state that they would learn Albanian or Serbian⁴.

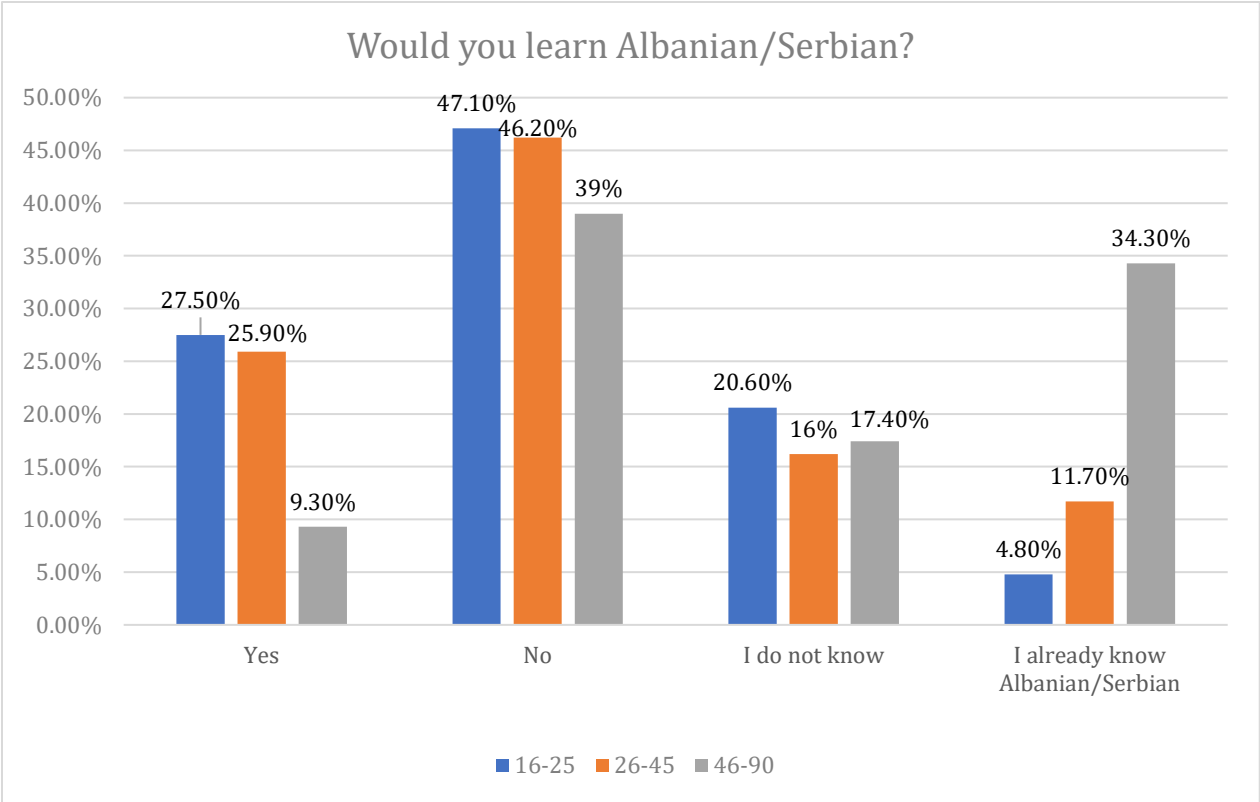
Would you learn Albanian/Serbian?



■ Yes ■ No ■ I do not know ■ I already know Albanian/Serbian

⁴ Serb respondents were asked if they would learn Albanian and Albanian respondents were asked if they would learn Serbian.

What is encouraging is that the percentage of those who are willing to learn the language of the other community does not decrease among younger respondents. On the contrary, 31% of Albanian respondents aged between 16 and 25 are interested to learn Serbian. The percentage among Serb respondents of the same age group is 22.9%. The distribution is the opposite in the age group between 26 and 45 years of age, 30% of Serb respondents would learn Albanian and 22% of Albanian respondents would learn Serbian. The highest percentage of undecided respondents (21.9%) is among Serb respondents aged 46-90. Out of those respondents who did elaborate further their answer, many state that it is too late to learn the language at their age.



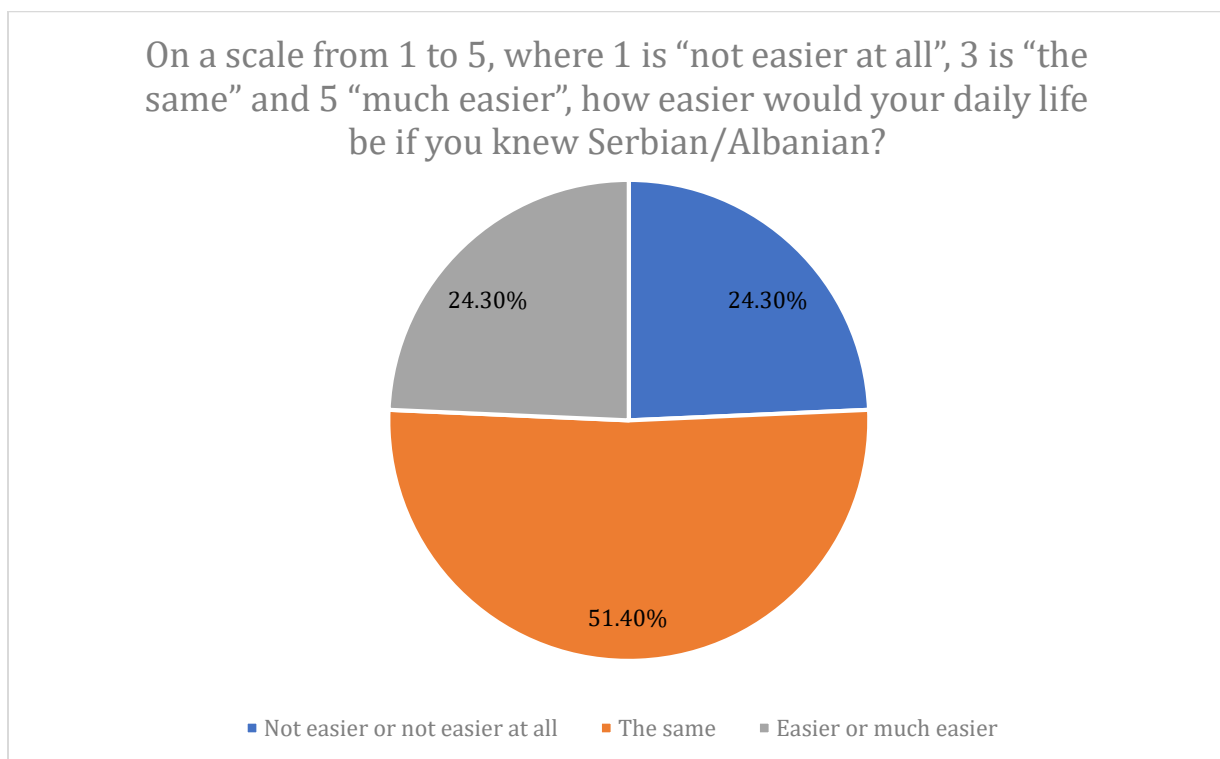
Albanian respondents in the focus groups largely agree that the person who decides to learn the language of the other community would be judged by the most members of their own community, that they would not be under pressure to stop learning the language but that they would not be comfortable to publicly admit that they are learning the language of the other community.

Serb respondents largely agree, stating that there would be a level of stigmatization as many in the Serbian community dislike the Albanian language, believing that it has a poorer corpus of words. But on the other hand, they stated that they would expect that the level of stigmatization in the Albanian

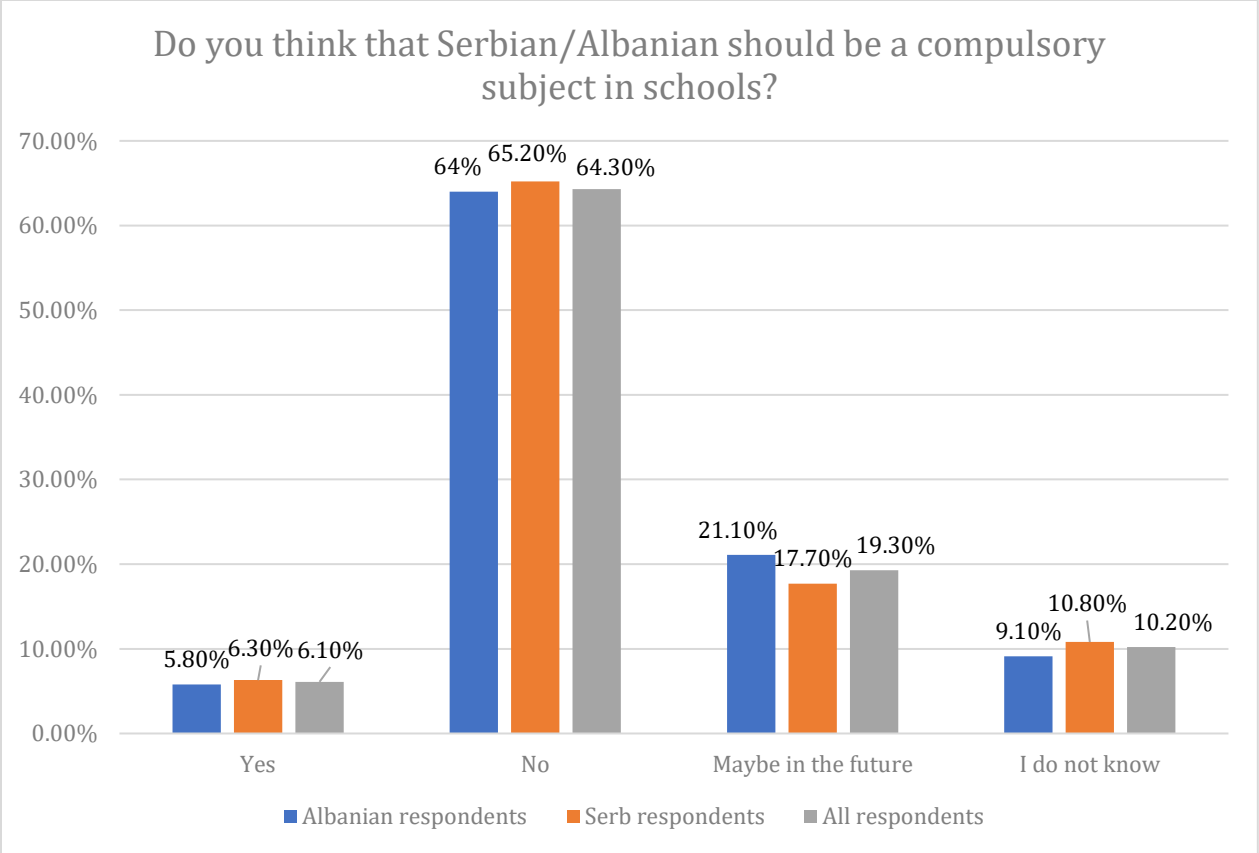
community to be higher, due to the “frustration and the fact that Albanians think that Serbs think we are better than they are”.

Others said that the level of stigmatization might be higher due to extreme dislike of the Cyrillic letter and the fact that the Albanians needed to know Serbian in the former country and that, due to this, learning the Serbian language now may feel like oppression Albanians feel they went through in the past.

The percentage of those who would learn the language of the other community corresponds to the percentage of people who think that their life would be either easier or much easier if they knew the language of the other community.



However, the percentages presented above are promising only for the non-formal education, as the situation is significantly different when it comes to bringing the teaching of Albanian and Serbian languages back to schools. Over 60% of respondents from both ethnic groups do not think that the official languages should be taught in schools. The differences of opinion amongst both ethnic groups and all age groups vary only slightly.



However, the respondents in the focus groups did see a lot of the advantages of knowing the language of the other community, especially when it comes to increasing one’s competitiveness in the labor market.

Some of the respondents in the focus groups were more flexible towards this topic and stated that if introduced in the schools, the subject should initially be optional in order to avoid any negative reactions from the community. Another respondent proposed introducing more TV content in the Serbian language as a less intrusive way of introducing the Serbian language to the Albanian community and slowly decreasing animosities.

A Serb respondent in a focus group stated that the antagonizing narratives divide the communities in all aspects bringing contacts to a bare minimum, the communities interact only if absolute necessary. In such a reality, the people can see neither the needs nor the benefits of better communication.

An Albanian respondent in the focus group did stand out in his position that the Serbian language should be the obligatory subject in schools as it is already an official language in Kosovo and its

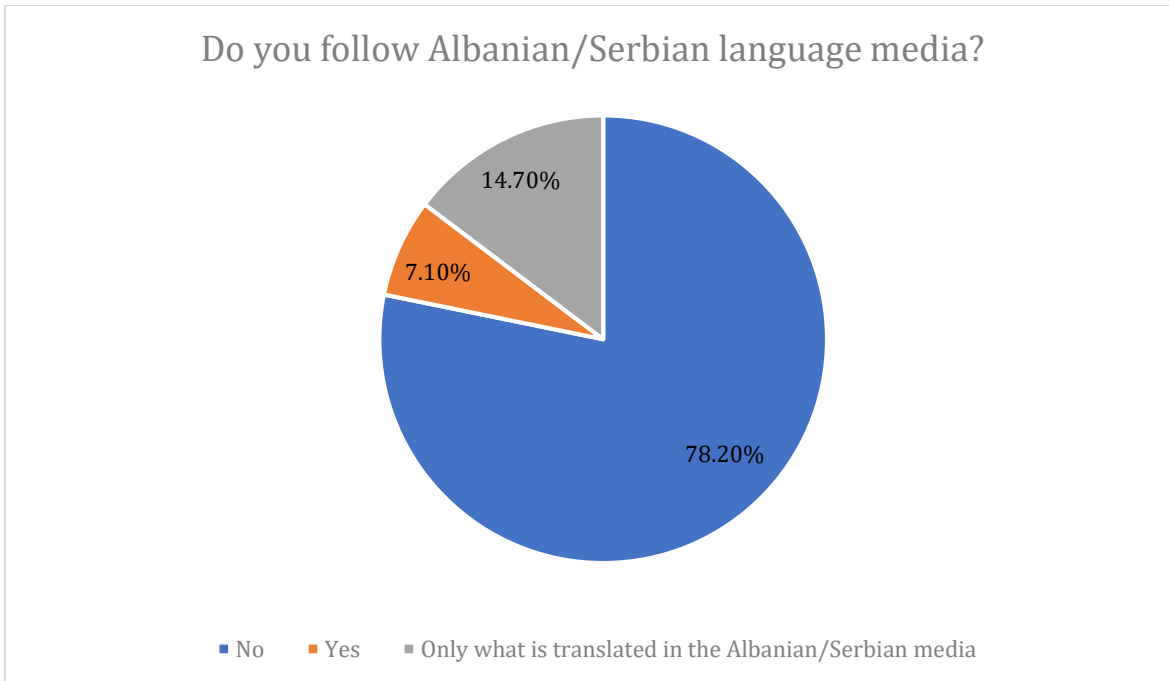
introduction in the schools would be just another mechanism of implementing the existing legislation on languages.

Some Albanian respondents in the focus groups pointed out that being surrounded by countries in Serbo-Croatian-Bosnian is spoken in, learning one of these languages can be advantage in mobility and doing business in the region, or accessing the literature written in this language.

Asked about the benefits of knowing the Albanian language, Serb respondents in the focus groups mainly gave the examples of easier communication with the public servants, better chances on the labor market, but also a sense of security. Some feel that they would be safer if they knew Albanian. One respondent said that knowing the language of the other is a powerful tool of domination through assimilation. They explained that to them addressing a person in their mother tongue is not only a matter of respect, but also of pride and dominance, “as if you had conquered the culture of the person you are speaking to, as if you know them better than you would if you corresponded in a third language”.

One of the Albanian respondents even stated that they would study Philosophy in North Mitrovica if they knew Serbian. The respondent points out that they do not mind that this is Serbian state University, for them that would be a practical decision as this University is closer to his home.

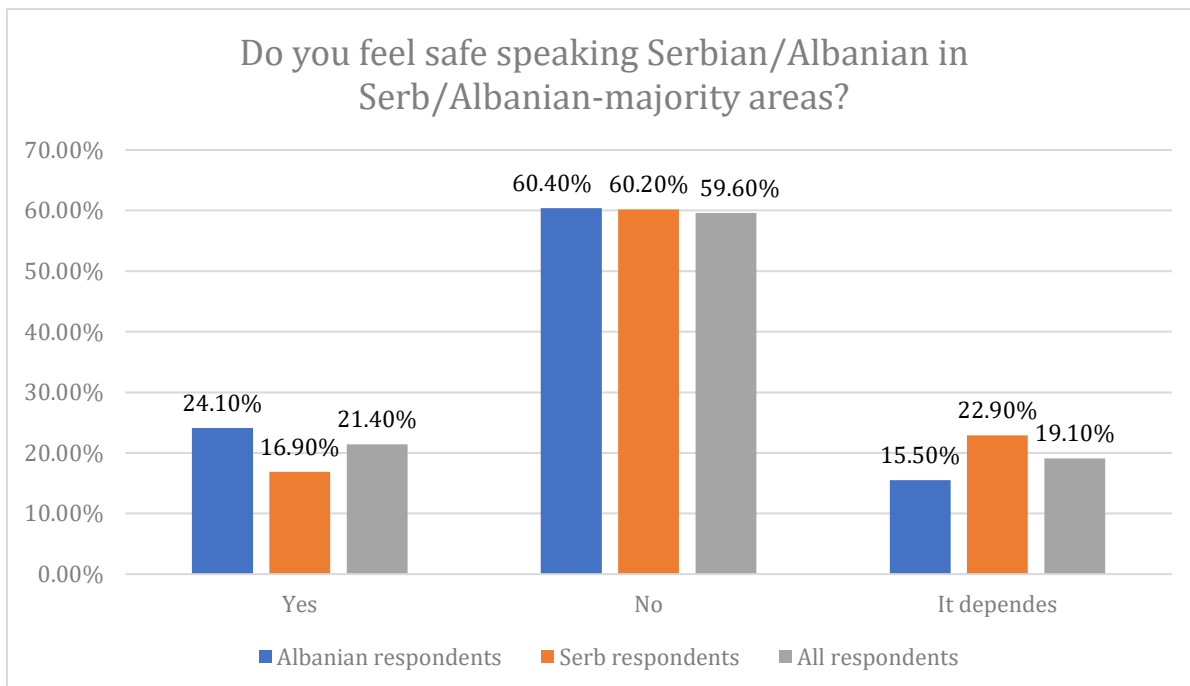
Neither Serb nor Albanian respondents seem to be too interested into each other’s realities, which becomes obvious through the lack of interest in following the media reporting on the language of the other community. Almost 80% are not interested in what is written in the media reporting in the other language, but almost 20% would read it if it were translated into their mother tongue by another media outlet.



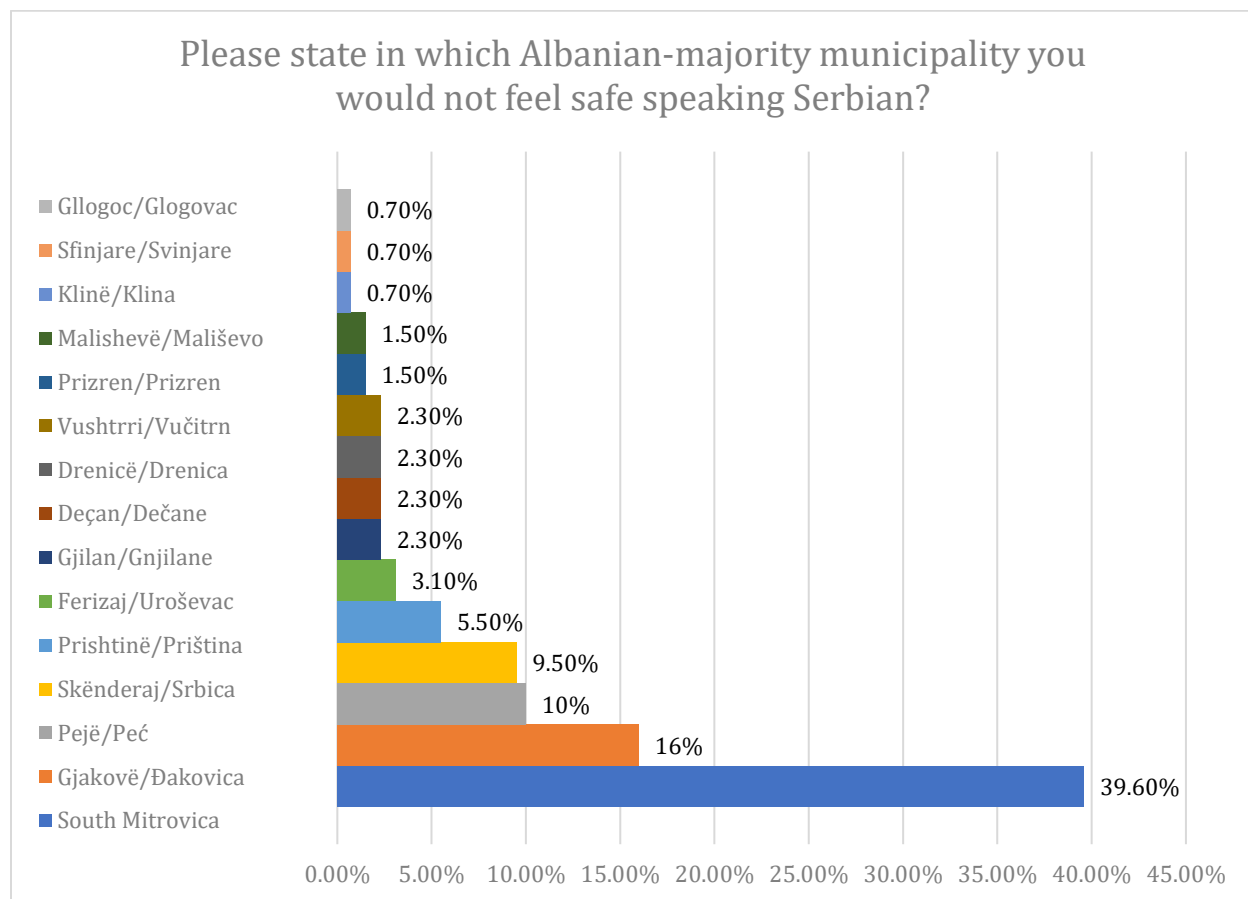
Serb respondents in the focus group said that they check the Albanian media for perspective, explaining that the truth is always halfway between what Serbian and Kosovo media are reporting.

Inter-community relations and the perception of safety

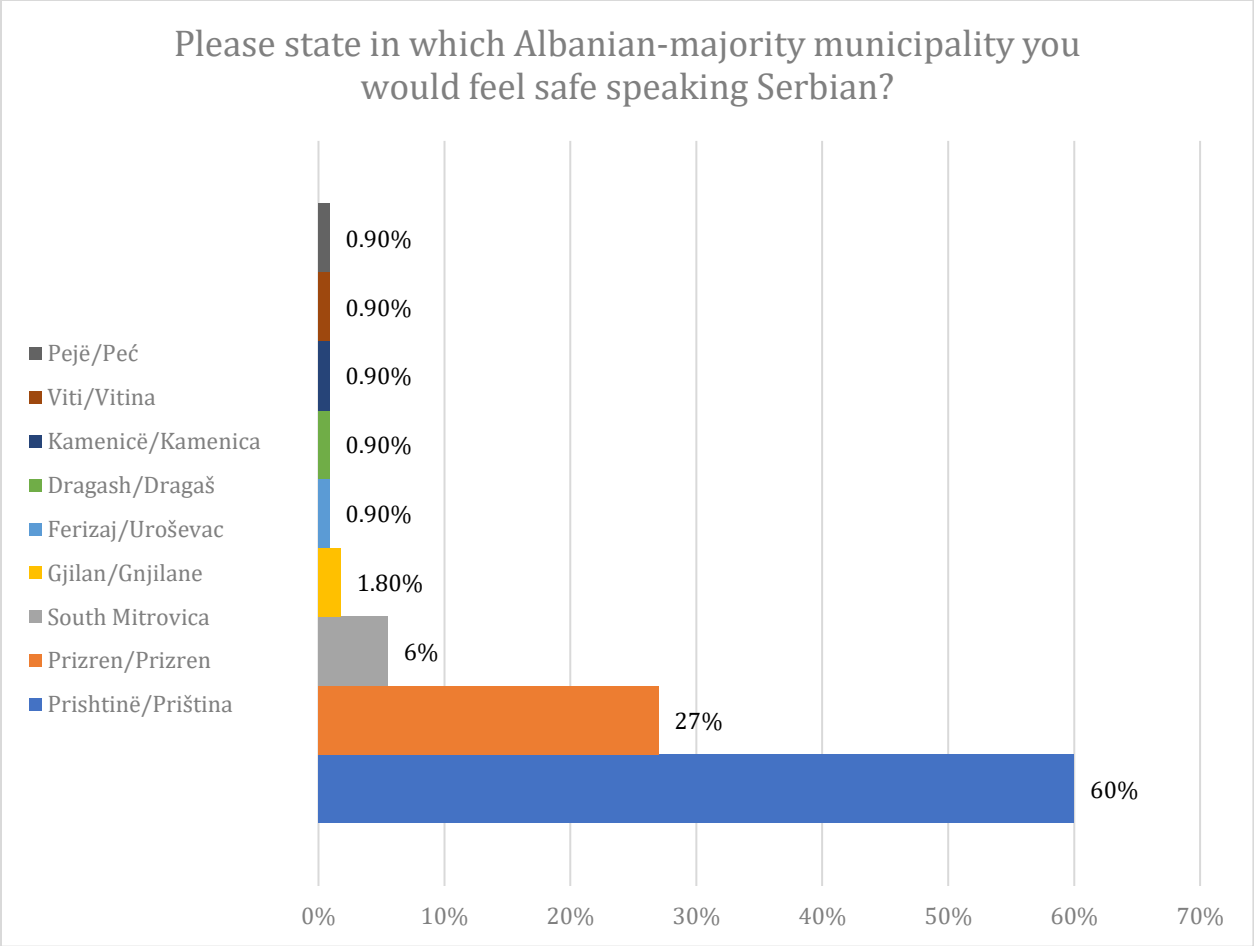
In general, the respondents do not feel safe to speak their language in the areas where their community is the minority.



The respondents who stated that their feeling of safety when speaking their mother tongue in the areas in which the speaker's community is in the minority, depends from the area s/he is in, were asked to name several municipalities in Kosovo where they would feel safe and several municipalities in Kosovo where they would not feel safe. Albanian respondents were asked to name Serb majority areas and Serb respondents were asked to name Albanian majority areas. Not all the respondents understood the tasks and only those who offered answers in accordance with instructions were taken into consideration. Finally, it is important to note that the question was open-ended, meaning that the respondents were not offered suggestions, but were required to write down their own answers. When it comes to the Serb respondents, well over third of the respondents who did name a municipality they would feel unsafe speaking Serbian in (126), named South Mitrovica as an unsafe area (50). The following table shows the distribution of answers of Serb respondents.

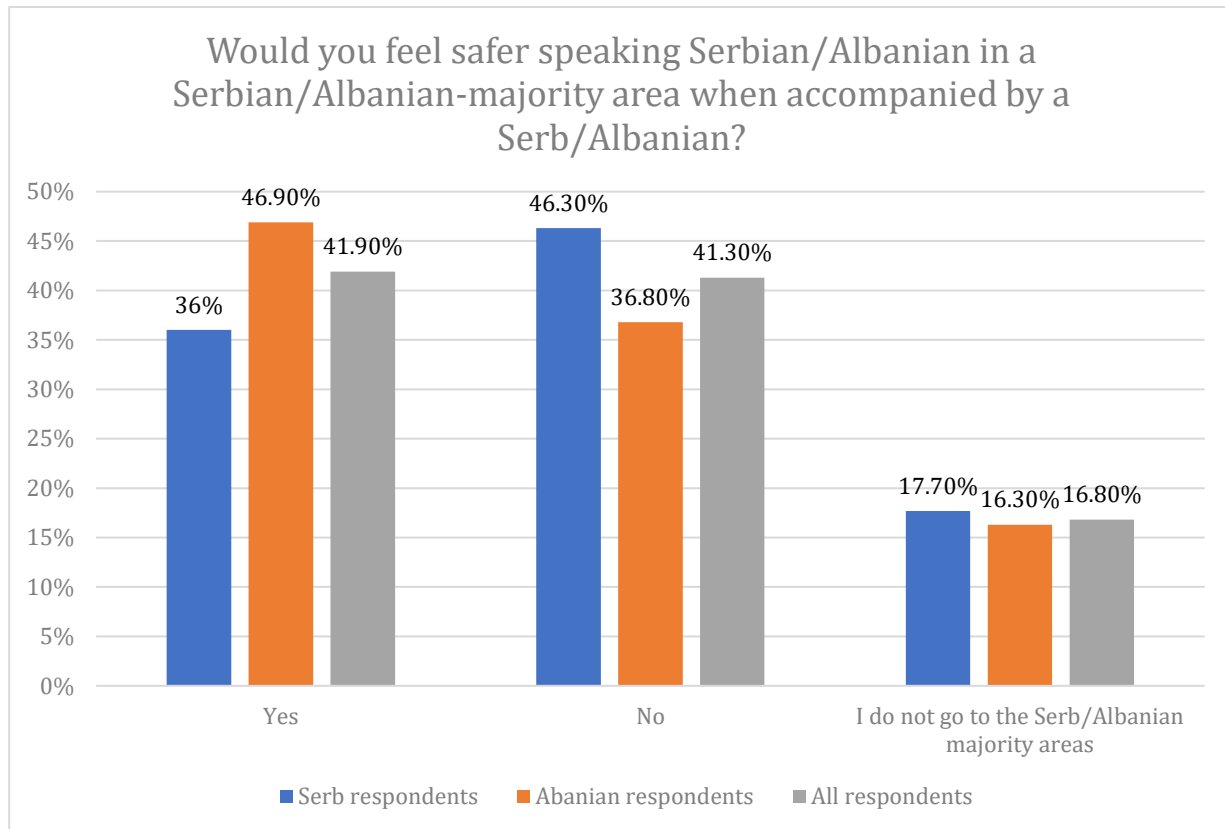


On the other hand, the place Kosovo Serbs would feel most comfortable speaking Serbian in, is Prishtinë/Pristina.

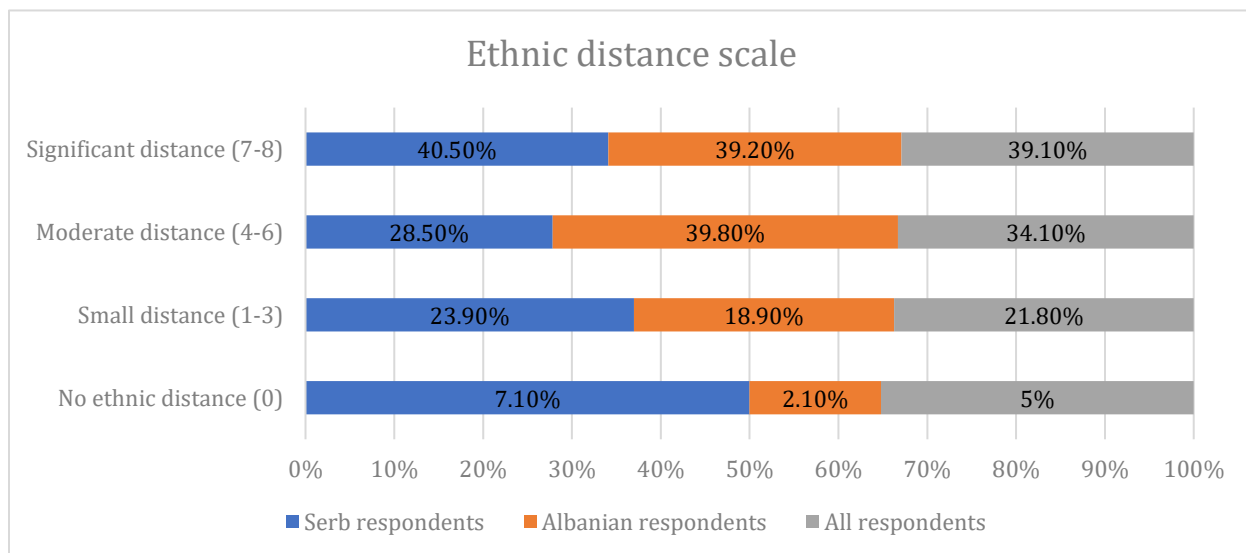


When it comes to Albanian respondents, out of 141 respondents who did specify particular Serb-majority places they would feel safe speaking Albanian in, 41% said that they would feel safe in the Serb-majority municipalities in the south, such as Gračanica/Gračanicë, Parteš/Partesh, Čaglavica/Çagllavicë. The rest would feel unsafe in North Mitrovica (44%), Leposavić/Leposaviq (10%) and Belgrade and Preshevë/Preševo (0.2% each).

However, a significant percentage of respondents' state that they would feel safer using their mother tongue in the area where their community is in the minority if accompanied by a person from the majority community.



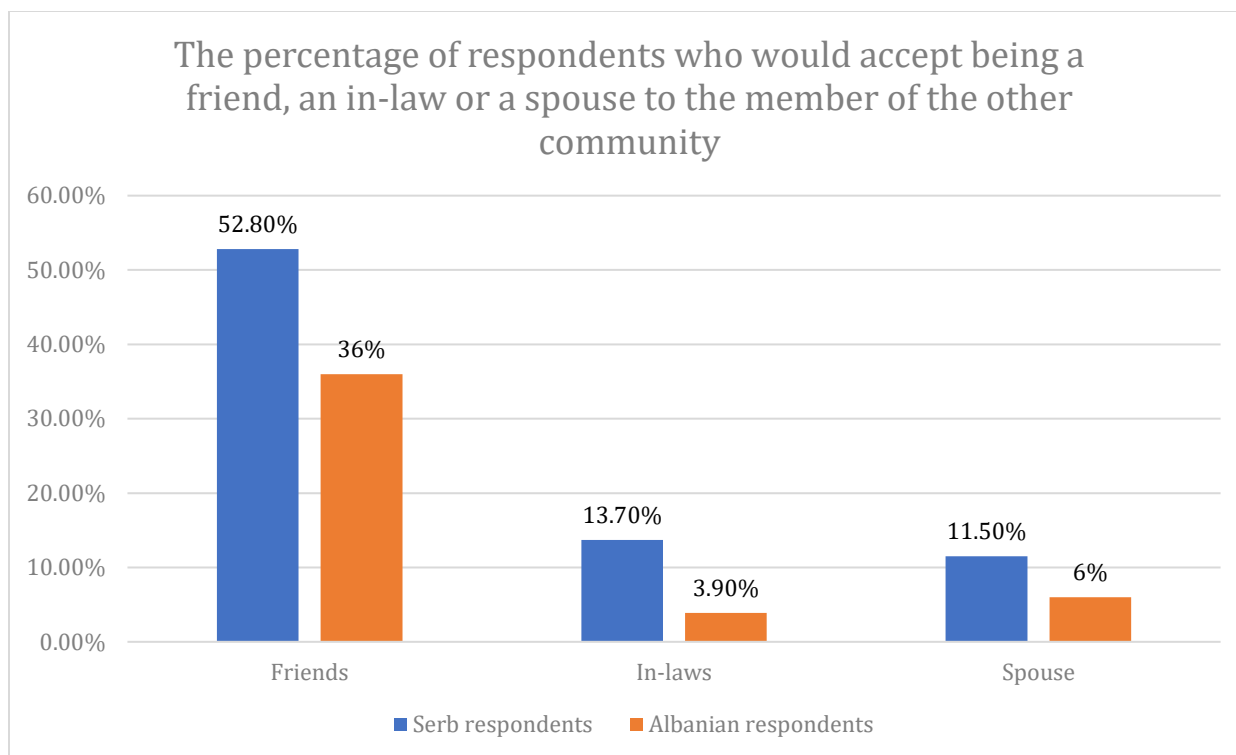
In order to quantify the inter-community relations, a scale of ethnic distance was presented to the respondents. The scale was constituted of eight different questions related to types of social interaction with the members of the other community (Serbian or Albanian). Respondents who did not oppose any type of interaction (and thus scored 0 out of 8 on the scale) are those with no ethnic distance. Those who opposed up to 3 types of interactions are somewhat distant, those who scored up to 6 are moderately distant and those who scored up to 8 are very distant.



The type of interaction that is the most acceptable to the respondents is to have a member of the other community live in the same city as the respondent (619 of 998 or 62% of respondents do not mind this type of interaction). The type of social interaction the respondent opposed the most to is having a person from the other community as an in-law or a spouse.

Would you accept that a member of the Albanian/Serbian community	No. of responders who answered "NO"	No. of total respondents
Lives permanently in your city	379 (37.97%)	998
Returns to live in your part of the city	425 (42.67%)	996
Lives in your neighbourhood	529 (53.16%)	995
Has high position in the government	730 (73.44%)	994
Is your supervisor at work	747 (75.23%)	993
Becomes your friend	545 (54.99%)	991
Becomes your son\daughter-in-law	903 (90.48%)	998
Becomes your spouse	901 (90.55%)	995

The only more significant differences in the answers given by Serb and by Albanian respondents are those related to the final three interactions or the interactions that are the most personal, friends, in-laws, and spouses. Relatively speaking, Serb respondents are somewhat more tolerant than Albanian respondents in this regard. The youth from both ethnic groups are the most distant respondents. Young Albanians (16-25) have the lowest acceptance rate in 7/8 interactions. The only interaction in which Serbs of the same age group have the lowest acceptance rate is "having a person from the other community be your supervisor at work" (19% of Serbs vs 24% of Albanians). The most tolerant group are respondents from both ethnic groups older than 45 years of age.



The following table will show the percentage of positive answers cross-referenced with age groups and ethnicity:

	16-25		26-45		46-90	
	Serb	Albanian	Serb	Albanian	Serb	Albanian
Lives permanently in your city	61.7%	48.9%	64%	64.4%	62.9%	70.7%
Returns to live in your part of the city	52.7%	51.1%	53.5%	62.1%	57.3%	69.3%
Lives in your neighbourhood	46.2%	37.9%	43.5%	46.8%	49.5%	60%
Has high position in the government	24.6%	20.1%	29.6%	20.9%	36.5%	32%
Is your supervisor at work	19.4%	24.1%	26.1%	21.6%	24.6%	23.7%
Becomes your friend	55.1%	29.1%	49.7%	37.7%	54.2%	46.7%
Becomes your son\daughter-in-law	11.2%	4%	15%	3%	15.5%	6.7%
Becomes your spouse	7%	6.9%	14%	5%	14.4%	6.7%

An Albanian respondent in the focus group explained the difference observed in the percent of the people willing to have a friend from the other communities, where to a larger percent of Serbs said they would not mind having an Albanian as a friend. This person said that the results would have been the opposite in the past when more Albanians would be willing to establish communication with Serbs. The respondent related this to the control of the system, of the institutions that were “Serb-run”. Now, as the respondent explains it, the Albanians run the system and Serbs are more proactive when it comes to engaging Albanians.

Another Albanian respondent insisted that Mitrovica must be viewed as a unique place, where conflict is still frozen, and societies closed and easily manipulated by politics. This respondent insists that the region of Mitrovica is instrumentalized by politics which is reflected in the results, they maintain the results would be significantly different if the same question were asked in Pristina or Belgrade.

Serb respondents in the focus group largely agreed. Not only is the conflict in Mitrovica still very palpable, but Mitrovica is the only formerly multiethnic urban area in Kosovo that still has the members of both communities, even if administratively divided. However, the difference in these percentages, the Serb respondents explained with a significant change in the demographics of South Mitrovica after the conflict. They state that both South and North Mitrovica was populated by many residents of the formerly rural area, who did not have much contacts with Serbs even in the Yugoslav era and that the children of these layers of the society are what makes the difference in the results.

Finally, an Albanian respondent sees the root cause of the difference in “victim-aggressor” relation, where to a stronger sentiment of a victim in the Albanian society has created more prejudices and negative labels towards the Serbian community. This respondent believes, that due to this, the Albanians would be judged more by their societies if they had friendly relations with Serbs, than vice versa.

Conclusion:

The research results, as well as the experience of the authors, show that the communities in Kosovo live one fragmented reality which cannot be fully experienced without understanding the language of the other community. Even though events of the past majorly affect the willingness of either side to accept the fact that the other community is shaping their reality as well, this does not mean that this is not a fact.

For example, as stated by one of the respondents, to learn the closest possible truth about what is going on in the process of the Brussels negotiations, one needed to read both statements of the proponents of the negotiation in the Serbian media, and the statements and interpretation in the Albanian media. Only through comparison of the different accounts can some truth be filtered out.

This does not mean that all media outlets are necessarily biased, but that the language barrier, and the time needed for the translation of the statements in the other language, slow down the flow of critical information. And for Kosovo Albanian and Kosovo Serbs, regardless of how difficult it may be to accept this as a fact, what happens in the Brussels or at a Cabinet meeting of Kosovo and Serbian Governments, does affect the everyday life of the citizens. There are two sides of the same coin (depending on the community and where they live one may be more important than the other) of reality in Kosovo, and it can be fully grasped only by those who do not miss out on the information of the one side.

The research also showed that, even though over 40% of respondents are not willing to learn the language of the other community, a bit over a third of the respondents either know or are willing to learn the other language. This group and the group that is still undecided about this topic (close to 20%) should be given a proper opportunity to act on their intentions, while multilingualism should be promoted as a value, both in by the CSOs and the government institutions in order to remove some of the social stigma and the prevailing perception of the language as a tool of dominance or assimilation. Both Kosovo Albanian and Kosovo Serb community have proverbs stating that “the more languages you know, the more you are worth” and this sentiment should be nourished and applied to the “language of the enemy” as well.