CHANGING IDEOLOGIES AND EXTRALINGUISTIC DETERMINANTS IN LANGUAGE MAINTENANCE AND SHIFT AMONG ETHNIC DIASPORA ARMENIANS IN BEIRUT

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Abstract

The Armenian Diaspora in Lebanon was formed after the 1915 genocide, when the arrival of survivors reached its peak. Since its creation no study has been undertaken to examine the impact of displacement, survival, and multilingualism in Lebanon on the status of its language, and the linguistic and attitudinal behavior of its members.

This thesis explores the state of the Armenian language through the analysis of language use and domains of use. It investigates the ways Armenians perceive their ethnicity and loyalties, since the awareness of the community and its linguistic ideology and loyalties are the interpretive and explanatory basis for research in this area.

Some of the major findings are that limited use of the language is leading to limited exposure to that language, which results in a circle of decreasing competence, lack of confidence in using the language, and increasing reliance and shift to Arabic, English, and French.

The study shows that the pattern of language use was very different in the period following the survivors' settlement in Lebanon from what it is today. The generational disparities in attitudes and perceptions demonstrate that along with the significant changes in the way different generations of Armenians grasp the meaning of the Genocide and their ethno-cultural identity, there are also considerable differences regarding feelings of loyalty to their ancestral language, homeland, and heritage.

What is particularly striking is that the changes which affected the Armenians since their coming to Lebanon in the early decades of the last century are primarily ideological transformations, new ways of looking at the world and at themselves. While the older interviewees lament the present situation, the younger interviewees accept it as natural. What unfolds is deterioration in the status of the Armenian language and the oral fluency of its speakers, who have undergone a larger and more intense change in matters once held almost sacred by their parents and grandparents.

To my husband, Hrayr,
and children, Vahe and Alik,
whose love, patience, and support
offered me, as wife, mother, and scholar,
a wonderful chance for advancement.

INTRODUCTION: LANGUAGE MAINTENANCE AS A MULTIFACETED CONSTRUCT

> The shift from "field" to "home" can open up more third time-spaces in the interstices between the raw experiences of the everyday and the texts about them. Just as identity and place grate against each other, and are forced into constantly shifting configurations of partial overlap, so the locations of home and field, and those of text and experience, scrape against each other, only partially overlapping, creating methodological borders along their contiguities. These realignments of the formerly hierarchical arrangement of the power/knowledge binarism are redefining not only our work but also the academic disciplines themselves.

> Lavie and Swedenburg, *Displacement, Diaspora, and Geographies of Identity,* 2001

Background to the Work

Fishman (1989) points out that language is "intimately tied to a thousand intimate or small-scale network processes too gratifying and rewarding to surrender even if they do not quite amount to the pursuit of the higher reaches of power and modernity" (p. 399). Similarly, Armenians believe their language has played a vital role in shaping the historical destiny of their people. In this regard, the fifth-century monk who fashioned the original thirty-six letters of the alphabet was instrumental in carving a separate existence for the Armenians. His translation of the Bible opened the way to other translations and new literary works, giving rise to a golden age of knowledge in the fifth century. It established Armenians as part of the civilized world and consolidated their Christian identity.

However, with a background in literature, an initial intensive exposure to the world of linguistics and sociolinguistic issues made me aware of the changes the Armenian community in Lebanon and its language were undergoing. A member of this community

and one who speaks its language. I became aware that even though some Lebanese-born Armenians did not deny the historical significance of their language they seemed to emphasize integration into the Lebanese society, believing that the well-being of Armenian, the people, and heritage are better served by their business or professional success and prominence in Lebanese society. In contrast there were those who argued that fluency in Armenian qualifies a person to be a legitimate member of the Armenian community, that is, Armenian identity is contingent on knowledge of language and culture. This view is portrayed in Alice Baghdasarian's (1990) poem: "Mother's Last Word":

Take my message to the world, my child.

To my people, my blood and my bones.

Tell my people how hard it was to save our Language.

Tell my people that our Language has to be alive, as long as we breathe.

Tell them it has to be the Language of the heart and mind.

Tell them it has not to be replaced.

Tell them it has to be passed to our next generations.

....

Our Language has to be alive

Or else, we'll die. (p.4)

These preliminary exposures to such contrasting viewpoints paved the way for an initial investigation of the phenomenon in the library and a gradual conviction of the need for an academic investigation into the linguistic situation of Armenian and linguistic perspectives of Armenians in Beirut, the capital city of Lebanon and home to the highest concentration of Armenians in the country.

My readings, slowly but surely, revealed that the phenomenon of language maintenance and language shift (henceforth LMLS) and how various communities have responded and are responding to it is a topic which is of particular concern to linguists. As a result, work

on LMLS has been accelerated over the past decade. Dorian's (1981) *Language Death* opened a serious and important field of research for sociolinguists. *The loss of language skills* (1982) by Lambert and Freed (Eds.) was one of the first major contributions in the field. Although I found there to be a strong inclination towards the study of individual language change and of psycholinguistic implications in the process of language maintenance, there were also important developments in the sociolinguistic study of language shift at the level of society, especially on the importance of age, of social and linguistic attitudes of the speakers and of individual behaviors, as factors in language retention.

LMLS among Armenian diaspora communities has been understudied. For example, the bulk of Armenians in Lebanon arrived after the 1915 massacres in Turkey and since then no study has been undertaken to examine the impact of displacement, survival, diaspora, and multilingualism in Lebanon on the status of their language. There are some cursory works on the Armenian community in Lebanon which deal with the establishment of the Armenian community in Lebanon (Hovannisian 1997; Bournoutian 2003), but without any deep description of the status of its language and the impact of cultural, sociological, ethno-linguistic, and economic factors on their linguistic and attitudinal behavior. Moreover, Armenian dailies have recently referred to the growing number of Armenian students in Lebanese schools. In these articles, the only concern was the subsequent economic crises encountered by Armenian schools rather than the apparent threat to the maintenance of the language in the form of a shrinkage of the domains of use, especially in light of new domains of language such as computer related ones.

The absence of linguistic studies and the ever-increasing discontent voiced by Armenian leaders and writers in the Beirut community added to the imperative of undertaking this task. Indeed, there was need for a serious study that would investigate the situation in an

attempt to identify the degree of linguistic and attitudinal shift and pave the way to the adoption of certain maintenance strategies in the future. It was necessary to forestall the experience some linguists had had during their fieldwork, as they had found the targeted language on its "deathbed", such as Hawaiian, North Frisian, Tasmanian, and Itelmen (Dalby, 2002). Armenian is not likely to be totally lost to the world in anything like the near future because there is an independent homeland now, where around three million people speak Armenian and where Armenian is the official language. However, for many Armenian communities the consequences of living in the diaspora have been grave. There are no academic studies to substantiate this, but the popular belief is that since their forced creation at the turn of the twentieth century, many such sub-planted communities have either lost their mother language, such as in Austria, Poland, India, and Argentina, or have third and fourth generations no longer speaking it, such as in Russia, France, and Turkey. Hence, it was time to embark on an academic study that would focus on the Armenian community in Beirut and its language and examine the factors contributing to the LMLS of a minority language existing away from "home".

Dorian's (1998) and Dauenhauer and Dauenhauer's (1998) observations that moral support and technical expertise, including linguistic expertise, can and should be offered from inside the community compelled me, a Lebanese Armenian who speaks the language, to pioneer this study. It is designed to investigate any interruption in language use and transmission, the special ways Armenians perceive their ethnicity, their particular attitudes to Armenian, the efforts of the community for the maintenance of the Armenian language, and to offer proposals based on the findings. Researchers mentioned above point out that such proposals should only be supplied from within the social web of the community itself or not at all.

The Importance of the Research

Some scholars treat language as one ingredient in a mixture of factors that make up identity (Fishman, 2001). Giles *et al.* (1977) state, "ingroup can serve as a symbol of ethnic identity and cultural solidarity. It is used for reminding the group about its cultural heritage, for transmitting group feelings, and for excluding members of the out-group from the internal transactions" (p. 307). The Greeks, for instance, identified as non-Greek those whose speech sounded to them *barbarbar* and called them *barbarians* (Tabouret-Keller, 1997). Alcoff (2003) and Tabouret-Keller (1997) agree that this link between language and identity is often so strong that a single feature of language use suffices to identify someone's membership in a given group. The following oft-cited example illustrates this latter point. On the battle field after their victory over the people of Ephraim, the Gileads applied a language-identity test to sort out friend and foe: All of the soldiers were asked to pronounce the word *shibboleth;* those who pronounced the first consonant [ʃ] were friends, those who pronounced it [s] were enemies and therefore killed at once (Judges 12:6). Hence, a single phonemic feature may be sufficient to include or exclude somebody from any social group.

I believe that Karmsch (1998) is fundamentally right when she asserts that identity is about belonging, about what you have in common with some people, and what differentiates you from others. At its most basic, it gives one a sense of personal location, a stable core to one's individuality. But it is also about social relationships, one's complex involvement with others. These facts were illustrated in a 1997 advertisement on BBC Radio One for a helpline for victims of racial discrimination:

> It took the form of first two men, one English, and the other Scottish, arguing in a pub. The two traded insults based on the other's individual ethnic identity. A third man, with an East Indian accent, then intervened and the Englishman and Scotsman

then claimed solidarity as 'real' British, turning on the member of the British East Indian minority group. A Frenchman then waded into the foray, which caused the Englishman, Scotsman and East Indian to claim solidarity as 'British' and to carry on a well-established tradition of hostility with France. An American stepped in, causing the Frenchman and the 'British' to merge into 'Europeans'. The sketch ended with the appearance of a Martian, which then united the rest as 'Earth humans'. (Thomas and Wareing 1999, p. 86)

An important facet of this study, then, is its focus on an ethnic minority group in Lebanon, and, hence, its ethnic identity, a concept proven to be very important in understanding language shift (Kulick, 1992). This aspect of the research will be one of the contributions of this study, as the majority of previous studies consulted for the present study covered indigenous groups whose languages were replaced by the language of the invader or colonizer, or of immigrant communities who adopted the majority language.

Research on language maintenance and shift has pointed out the need for case studies with multiple foci on socio-linguistic, extra-linguistic, and structural phenomena. This thesis attempts to make a contribution by filling gaps, especially in the first two areas as limitations of space introduce the need to be selective. Besides the contribution of this study to the general field of sociolinguistics, it fills a gap more specifically in Armenian linguistics.

The importance of this study also lies in its focus on the diaspora reality of the Armenian community in Beirut and on the linguistic aspect of the "continuing struggle" inherent to diaspora communities (Suleiman, 1999). Diaspora is an ancient word, but its new currencies in globalist discourses confound the once clearly demarcated parameters of

geography, national identity, and belonging. Diaspora has historically referred to displaced communities of people who have been dislocated from their native homeland through the movements of migration, immigration, or exile (Braziel and Mannur, 2003). Diaspora, in today's world, however, speaks to groups of displaced persons and communities moving across the globe – from India to London, Beijing to Sydney, Algiers to Paris, or Ankara to Frankfurt.

However, in its multiple uses, the term "diaspora" risks losing specificity and critical merit if it is deemed to speak for all movements and migrations between nations and cities. While not losing sight of these important aspects, my objective is to examine, within an interdisciplinary frame, the doubled relationship or dual loyalty that exile/refugee diasporans have to places – their connections to the space they currently occupy and their continuing involvement with "back home" and how these movements also affect identity formation in relation to ethnicity and language. The dimensions of language use and its profile among a diaspora community are analyzed in relation to the history of Armenian speakers, their past and present socio-economic position, and ethno-cultural character. The integrative methodology reinforces, on the one hand, the interpretive and explanatory nature of the study and, on the other, the reliability of socio-linguistic conclusions about the state of Armenian. Previous research shows that only on the basis of such conclusions can a community and its institutions construct a sustainable plan for efforts to increase the functional scope of the language and its power in a linguistic repertoire (Dorian 1981; 1989).

Furthermore, this specific experience of a displaced community, a people dispossessed and separated from their identity and their history, is seen in the context of a new global economy characterized by complex, interacting, and disjunctive transnational flows. The conjunction of this historical moment with both the emergence of a diasporized generation

of hyphenated people, third-space scenarios, and the theoretical developments of post-modernism and post-colonial theory have prompted this study as a means of exploring in a systematic way the dialectic of belonging and not belonging in the context of what Hall and Du Gay (1998) have called 'new ethnicities': identities that are somewhere-in-between.

Dorian (1998), Fishman (2001), and other scholars underline the need for case studies as the only way to make comparative studies on language maintenance possible and to raise the level of complexity of this field of research. This case study has a deeply empirical nature because it is based on a long period of observation, data collection, and my own involvement in the community, attempts to solve a practical problem, and plans to return the study to the community for possible use in the process of language maintenance.

The usual explanations of language shift do not neatly fit this case. Unlike most of the cases mentioned in the LMLS literature, where two opposing languages are typically involved, one which is replacing and one which is being replaced, this study adds a new dimension. It shows that there is little indication that Armenian has been replaced exclusively by Arabic, the official, "dominant" language in Lebanon. This study of the "dominated" language shows instead an increasing reliance and shift to three other languages commonly used in the multilingual society of Beirut: Arabic, English, and French. This, it is hoped, constitutes an important element in the overall contributions of this thesis to linguistics, sociolinguistics, and the field of LMLS.

Another important aspect of this research is that it is based on qualitative research with multiple methodological and interpretive frameworks. A sociolinguistic theoretical frame encompasses the whole work, but other methodological perspectives and theoretical

approaches are used in order to integrate into it a wide range of dimensions related to the topic of this work, such as ethnic and diaspora studies. Qualitative analysis, generally concerned with identifying patterns in the data and how different ways in which the data relate to each other (Darlington and Scott 2002; Mason 2002), will concentrate on the content and recurring themes to build a logical chain of evidence and create conceptual/theoretical coherence – moving from metaphors to constructs to theories to explain the phenomena (Miles and Huberman 1994; Seale *et al.* 2004).

The Aims of the Research and Research Questions

The main goals of this thesis are to assess the state of the Armenian language through the analysis of language use and domains of use, and to investigate the ways Armenians perceive their ethnicity, their particular attitudes, and loyalties to determine necessary future steps. The interpretive and explanatory basis for the research are the awareness of the community and its linguistic ideology and loyalties. The assessment of language shift is examined in two main directions: the analysis of the functional scope of Armenian and the investigation of perspectives. The functional scope is analyzed through evaluation of the uses of Armenian and its communicative patterns. The study of the maintenance process consists of an analysis of the perspectives of community members in regard to maintenance of the language, the critical examination of already implemented steps, and the discussion of some future steps towards language maintenance. This will provide the basis for a series of recommendations on measures that could be taken to ensure the maintenance of Armenian.

Based on the goals of this study, the research questions guiding this thesis are: What are the characteristics of the present state of the Armenian language in Beirut? That is, what are the dimensions of language use, speech behavior, communicative functions of

Armenian among the Armenian diaspora community in Beirut? How do they view their language and ethno-cultural character? How do these perspectives and extra-linguistic factors impact language use and language maintenance? What are the measures undertaken by the community to maintain the Armenian language? These help to identify the present profile of the Armenian language in Beirut and make recommendations on how Armenian can be maintained, and what kind of further research would shed light on additional issues which may arise.

For these purposes, three sets of questions were prepared. The first set included a short demographic questionnaire. The second group contained questions on language use, and the third set asked questions pertaining to culture, identity, and language.

An Overview of the Thesis

Below is a brief description of the chapters of this thesis and the way the chapters interconnect and contribute to achieve the objectives of the study.

Chapter Two introduces the history of the Armenian diaspora community in Lebanon and related socio-economic and cultural events of the past and present in Lebanon. Since it is generally accepted among scholars that the motivations for language shift are to be found in extra-linguistic phenomena, this extra-linguistic background helps in interpreting the characteristics of LMLS in this speech community. The first section presents a brief history of Armenians. The second section focuses on the socio-cultural patterns of everyday life in Lebanon which broadly affect patterns of linguistic maintenance and shift.

Chapter Three concentrates on presenting a review of the literature on LMLS. The terms, concepts, and theories related to the issues of the thesis are defined, explained, and evaluated in this chapter. The chapter also provides a brief presentation of the main theoretical discussions in LMLS, analyzes critically the social, historic, and diasporic contexts in the way ethnicity and linguistic symbolic values are negotiated, and focuses on factors and motivations significant in LMLS.

Chapter Four explains the data collection process and provides a rationale for the main theoretical perspectives used in this thesis. The strategies, techniques, and methods of collecting data are presented in detail. The multifaceted frame of this study and theoretical viewpoints used here are investigated. It is shown how the fieldwork methodology and the theoretical perspectives of this study are the basic factors to determine the level of reliability and of applicability of the thesis.

Chapter Five analyzes language use and language perspectives of the Armenians in Beirut in an effort to chart the progress of language shift. The analysis is based on the information gathered through 92 individual interviews. Language use is one of the main dimensions involved in answering the central question of this thesis. Language attitude is seen as playing a vital role in LMLS, but its influence on language use is seen in relation to other important factors.

Chapter Six presents data collected through two focus group interviews. The principal aim here is to present a clearer view of the ideological and socio-economic basis of LMLS and assess prospects about the linguistic future of the community. The analysis here sheds light on the issues pertaining to socio-economic and political factors, and underlines the participants' interpretations of the reasons leading to shifts in linguistic and attitudinal behavior.

Chapter Seven closes the study with the conclusions arrived at and an account of what original knowledge emerges from the study. It also identifies new directions for future research, and makes recommendations and provides guidelines for improving the chances of survival of Armenian in Lebanon.

Following the references there are five appendices that include a list of countries and cities that are home for Armenians living in the diaspora, the questions used during the interviews, samples of Armenian newspaper features, and profiles of the participants both in the individual and group interviews.

CHAPTER TWO

A BRIEF HISTORY OF ARMENIANS AND ARMENIANS IN LEBANON

Introduction

Most researchers agree that it is within historical contexts and extralinguistic environments that the linguistic ideologies of a community exist. Hence, the analysis of the Armenian community in Lebanon starts with this chapter which provides a brief history of Armenia and the Armenian language; a short presentation of the history of Armenian settlement in Lebanon; an analysis of certain early and recent historical events; and an examination of the socio-economic, educational, religious, multilingual, and political contexts in which Armenians live.

The chapter has three main sections. The first section gives some background information on Armenia in order to highlight the conditions which gave rise to the existence of the Armenian diaspora in Lebanon. The second part presents a discussion of the socio-cultural implications of past and present events in the life of the Armenian community in Lebanon. The third section focuses mainly on the economic, social, and political patterns of Armenian life in Lebanon.

Armenians' Past and Current History

Legend has it that the Hai (pronounced high) are descended from a renowned archer, Haig, a great-great-grandson of Noah who escaped the doomed city of Babel before its celebrated tower fell. This legend, probably as old as Mesopotamian legends, is the first "truth" Armenian students learn at school, with a significant emphasis on the fact that it places Armenians within the biblical tradition. This is reinforced by the account in the Book of Genesis (8: 4): after 150 days of rain, on the seventeenth day of the seventh month

Noah's ark grounded on Ararat. Mount Ararat is in the center of historic Armenia. As the beasts, birds, and humans are believed to have issued forth from this place, Armenia can be considered to be at the epicenter of the rebirth of the earth.

The origins of the conversion of Armenia to Christianity in 301 also contains elements of fable recorded a century later by the Armenian chronicler known as Agathangelos. Furthermore, to give the Armenian alphabet shaped by a monk named Mesrob Mashdots in 405 a divine aura, legends were circulated which claimed that the alphabet, like the Ten Commandments, was bestowed on Mashdots in a divine vision. The story has it that the hand of God appeared before him, burning 36 characters (two characters "*o*" and "*fe*" were added later to make them 38) of fire into the wall of a cave. Researchers observe that Armenian characters are based on the Greek alphabet, and the Pahlavi script, derived from the Aramaic alphabet, of ancient Persia, given that Greek and Persian were the two prominent languages spoken in the region around Mashdots' time (Manoukian, 2004). The language of this earliest period is called *krapar*, Classical Armenian (literally meaning "written").

Emerging as an organized state by the middle of the second millennium B.C., the Armenian plateau became the buffer and coveted prize of rival empires: Assyrian, Arab, Seljuk, Mongol, Roman, Byzantine, and Crusader (Hovannisian, 1997). The dynastic era of Armenian extended, with interruptions, over a time span of some two thousand years. The pre-Christian period, spanning more than one thousand years, was characterized by strong interchanges with Persian and Hellenistic civilizations. After the fifth century and until the ninth, the Church joined in and provided the structures essential for the continuation of traditional society and a national existence (Hovannisian, 1997).

The fall of the last major Armenian kingdom in the eleventh century gave rise to an expatriate kingdom in the region of Cilicia. The fall of the latter in the fourteenth century, though, left only isolated pockets of semiautonomous Armenian life (Bournoutian, 2003). The Ottoman Turks captured Constantinople in the mid-fifteenth century and extended eastward into both Cilicia and Armenia proper during the next century. Thereafter, the Armenians existed as a religious-ethnic minority with the legal status of second-class citizens. Because of the segregated nature of Muslim-dominated societies and the quasi-theocratic foundation of certain Islamic states, the Armenian Church was accorded jurisdiction in internal civil and religious matters (Chaliand and Trenon, 1983). The church hierarchy was, then, held responsible for the conduct of all members of the ethnic community, their payment of taxes, and their loyalty to the reigning sultan. In the Ottoman Empire this system was undermined by political, economic, and social decay, and by the infiltration of intellectual and political currents inspired by the Enlightenment and French Revolution (Chaliand and Trenon, 1983).

These changes also affected the Armenian *millet* (community), first through an intellectual revival and then through plans and pressure for reforms. However, formally organized as the Committee of Union and Progress, the Young Turks, on which reform-minded Armenians had placed hope, decided to Turkify the multiethnic Ottoman society in order to preserve the Ottoman state from further disintegration and to obstruct national aspirations of the various minorities (Chaliand and Trenon 1983; Adalian 1991). Resistance to this measure convinced them that the Christians, especially the Armenians, could not be assimilated. The widespread massacres of 1894-1896 of Armenians by the Ottomans were followed by the Cilician pogroms of 1909 and ultimately by the Armenian Genocide in 1915 (Hovannisian, 1997). Ostensibly provoked by a militant surge of Armenian nationalism against the repressive Ottoman government and despite the fact that tens of thousands of Armenians were loyally serving in the Ottoman army, the government

crackdown in 1915 grew into an organized effort to exterminate an entire community (Chaliand and Trenon, 1983). In 1913, the empire had an Armenian population of about two million, according to parish records of the Armenian Apostolic Church; fewer than 100,000 remained in 1920 (Viviano, 2004). The others had been shot, bayoneted, or deported into the Syrian Desert where many died of thirst and starvation, while others were either rescued by Bedouins or arrived in Syria in terrible conditions (Jebejian, 1999).

For Cohen (1997) the events of 1915 bear some comparison with the tit-for-tat expulsion between Nigerians and Ghanaians, and the "ethnic cleansing" of inconvenient groups in the micro-states that emerged following the disintegration of Yugoslavia. In a single year, the Armenians were robbed of their 3,000-year-old heritage. The desecration of churches, the burning of libraries, the ruination of towns and villages – all erased an ancient civilization. With the disappearance of the Armenians from their homeland, most of the symbols of their culture – schools, monasteries, artistic monuments, and historical sites – were destroyed by the Ottoman government (Adalian, 1991). The Armenians saved only that which formed part of their collective memory. Their language, their songs, their poetry, and their tragic destiny remained as part of their culture. The abuse of their memory by the continuing denial of Turkish governments of the systematic slaughter of Armenians was probably the most agonizing of their tribulations. Semerdjian (2002) views Armenians as a "serious nation" and attributes this to the history of the Armenian nation being so full of tragedies that "our capabilities to relax and look at the funny side of life has been dramatically effected or diminished" (p. 3).

As Richard Falk (1994) has put it, the Turkish campaign of denying the Armenian Genocide is "sinister," singular in the annals of history, and "a major, proactive, deliberate government effort to use every possible instrument of persuasion at its disposal to keep the truth about the Armenian Genocide from general acknowledgement, especially by the

elites in the United States and Western Europe" (p. i). Elie Wiesel (2003) has called denying genocide, and in particular the Armenian Genocide, a "double killing," because it murders the memory of the event (quoted in Balakian 2003, p. xix). It is doubly ironic when one notes that in 1915 alone, the *New York Times* published 145 articles on the Armenian massacres (Balakian 2003, p. xix). The conclusive language of the reportage was that the Turkish slaughter of the Armenians was "systematic," "deliberate," "authorized," and "organized by the government"; it was a "campaign of extermination," and of "systematic race extermination" (Balakian 2003, p. xix).

The Armenians remember the Genocide every year on April 24. On that day in 1915 the Turkish government rounded up all the Armenian intellectuals in Istanbul. They were all subsequently murdered. April 24 stands for all the acts of violence committed against the Armenian people during that period. The Genocide is commemorated by requiems in all Armenian churches as well as public gatherings, marches, speeches, and special events like concerts and plays. The Genocide and its subsequent denial by Turkish governments is a symbol of collective Armenian identity. It serves as a common denominator, an equalizer of all differences between Armenians: national, regional, religious, ideological, political, socioeconomic, and generational (Bakalian, 1994). Armenian community brokers and intellectuals have used the Genocide as a tool to mobilize men and women of Armenian descent, to foster a sense of we-ness, and to maintain their ethnic allegiance (Hovannisian, 1997). The Genocide has become an ideology. By selecting such a symbolic framework, Armenians have been provided with a sense of peoplehood, cultural rebirth, and historical continuity (Hovannisian, 1997). However, the data gathered for this study reveal that these are challenged by the contemporary situation (discussed in chapters Five and Six).

At the end of the First World War an independent Armenian state was set up and recognized by the allied powers at the 1920 Treaty of Sevres (Trendle, 1992). Though

defeated, Turkey, a signatory to the treaty, a month later attacked and annexed one-third of the fledgling Armenian state. In a decisive shift in foreign policy, the western allies conceded the reconquered land to Turkey and, furthermore, sanctioned the annexation of the remaining part, an area of 11,500 square miles, roughly the size of Belgium, of the Armenian state to the Soviet Union (Chaliand and Trenon, 1983).

The rapid collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 brought another opportunity for Armenian independence on a small landlocked portion bordered by Turkey, Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Iran. Many of the problems besetting the first Armenian republic quickly resurfaced, including a territorial dispute with and economic blockade by neighboring Azerbaijan and Turkey and an earthquake measuring 6.9 on the Richter scale that leveled the industrial cities of Armenia and left more than 50,000 dead in December 1988 (Viviano, 2004). Since the earthquake, the focus of the diaspora has shifted to appeals for humanitarian, economic, and especially political support for Armenia.

In March 2002 Armenia's National Statistical Service reported that the republic's population had plummeted by 800,000 since the last Soviet census in 1989. Roughly a quarter of the nation had joined the Armenian diaspora who count for four million of the estimated seven million (Bournoutian, 2003), counting a million in the US alone (Balakian, 2003). Presently, Armenians, besides the Jews, are the only people that have more members living in the diaspora than in their own country (Appendix A).

A significant aspect of this dispersion, among others, is that these communities use two different but standardized vernacular dialects: western Armenian, based on the dialect in Constantinople, and eastern Armenian, based on the dialect of the capital of the Armenian state, Yerevan (aan de Wiel, 2004). Dialectical differences include phonological, grammatical (including conjugation and declension), and idiomatic variances (Hovannisian

1997; Manoukian 2004). All this makes it difficult for eastern (used only in Armenia, Russia, and Iran) and western Armenian speakers to understand each other readily or follow the liturgy which is conducted in *krapar*, a fifth century Armenian dialect.

There are historical reasons for this division in two variants, namely the establishment of a western-oriented Armenian kingdom in Cilicia in the Middle Ages, away from the Armenian homeland, and more recently, attempts by the USSR to assimilate Armenians (Manoukian, 2004). In 1922, two years after Armenia became one of the fifteen republics of the Union of the Soviet Socialist republics, the authorities issued a decree whereby the classical orthography was replaced by a new one. Khachatrian (2006) believes that this was not a "Bolshevik Conspiracy", as it was called then, but the doing of Manug Apeghian, a specialist in medieval Armenian whose deed, according to Sunny (1997), brought about a cultural revolution by making Armenian the language of state administration, by setting up a new school system, and by creating special schools for the peasant population. Khachatrian (2006) adds that the latter was made possible because the new orthography was implemented at a time when the majority of Armenia's population was illiterate and most people simply began to write and read using the modified orthography only.

On the other hand, Krikorian (2004) argues that the introduction of a new orthography was a terrible violation of the human and national rights of Armenians everywhere. He believes that the repressive nature of the Soviet regime and the threat of replacing Armenian with Russian made it impossible for the people of Armenia to go against such oppressive measures. Consequently, they resigned to implementing and getting used to the new orthography rules. Krikorian asserts that this not only divided the Armenian language but also played havoc with the unity of the Armenian people. Similarly, Balian (2004)

believes that the change in the Armenian orthography was introduced to separate the Armenian people from their past and the diaspora.

With the collapse of the totalitarian regime and the election of a democratic government, the unification of the eastern and western dialects of Armenian has become a divisive issue among Armenians. Some concerned Armenians in the homeland and the diaspora (Krikorian 2004; Balian 2004) believe that it is time for Armenia to return to the original spelling system or devise and adopt a new spelling system that would cater to the 21st century linguistic demands and that would be used by Armenians worldwide. Khachatrian (2006), however, argues that a new orthography would create additional problems. Hence, he proposes that the diaspora adopt the orthography that has been used in the Armenian State by four generations and thus pay tribute to the Armenian State and Armenia, the center of Armenians. He believes this to be the easiest choice for Armenians since all Armenians in Armenia study the language, while in the diaspora the study of the language is optional. Others (Balian, 2004) argue that the two spelling methods have generated two different languages and that it is impossible to unite them, especially when these languages are used with words borrowed from Arabic, Russian, English, French, and Turkish.

Armenians in Lebanon

The Armenian presence in Lebanon resulted from a series of immigration waves during the nineteenth century. However, the process of these waves reached its peak with the 1915 genocide, marking the formation of the contemporary Armenian Diaspora. A new and larger wave of Armenian refugees arrived in Lebanon between 1937 and 1940 from Alexandretta, after the annexation of the latter by Turkey and the evacuation of Sanjak by the French forces (Aprahamian, 1964). Armenian immigration into Lebanon continued in the 1940s from Palestine as a result of the Arab-Israeli war and the early 1960s from Syria

owing to the Arab nationalist sentiments of its ruling circles which curtailed cultural and educational rights of the Armenians (Aprahamian, 1964).

Armenians, indiscernible in appearance from Lebanese citizens, were granted Lebanese citizenship in 1924 by the French mandate authorities to boost Christian numbers in the newly-created state of Lebanon (McDowell, 1986). In 1926 there were some 75,000 Armenians in Lebanon, and this number played an important role in the "equitable distribution" of the country's political and administrative positions, as its Constitution specified a balance of political power among the major religious groups (Hudson, 1968). Hence, the last census held in 1932 formed the basis for proclaiming Lebanon a Christian country and for the distribution of parliamentary seats and key positions (Hudson, 1968). Accordingly, the presidency was reserved for the Maronite Christians, the premiership for the Sunni Muslims, the speaker of the Chamber for the Shiite Muslims, and so on. To this day the Lebanese government reflects this peculiar nature of Lebanese society, even though the popular belief is that nowadays Muslims represent 70% of the population.

This system of political confessionalism reserves six parliamentary seats for Armenian candidates, while the present 30-man government cabinet contains one Armenian minister. Up till 2001, the six Armenian candidates used to run as one group and formed the "Armenian Block". Since then, however, this unity has been disrupted, and Armenian candidates are opting to run along with other local Christian and Muslim powerful political figures. This has, consequently, created tensions and divisions among the different Armenian political parties and their supporters, especially in the months leading to the parliamentary elections.

In the years between the two world wars, many churches, community clubs, athletic, educational, philanthropic, theatrical, and youth organizations were established. Armenian

political parties began functioning regularly, competing in periodic local communal elections, and propagating their nationalistic views in the newly-founded daily Armenian newspapers. Economically the Armenians did equally well. By the mid-40s, Aprahamian (1964) reports, a large percentage of them had already left their refugee camps, built their own houses, and set up their own businesses or become employed in a variety of enterprises. Armenians virtually monopolized the Oriental rug trade, for example. Using their connections with markets in Constantinople, London, and Persia, these businessmen, many of whom were the sons of Old World rug merchants, established flourishing wholesale and retail outlets (Aprahamian, 1964).

Though supporting or rejecting the Soviet regime in Armenia polarized Armenians all over the world, the importance of the homeland for national survival has rarely been questioned. Hence, when after WWII the highest councils of the Soviet Communist Party and Stalin himself gave permission to diaspora Armenians to return to the homeland, 150,000 Armenians from Syria, Lebanon, France, the United States, and other countries immigrated to the Armenian Soviet Republic (Dekmejian, 1997). In the heady milieu of *nerkaght,* repatriation, many immigrants had forsaken their economically comfortable and politically tolerant existence in the diaspora, in exchange for the economic hardships of the homeland ruled by Stalinist totalitarianism (Dekmejian, 1997). After the collapse of the USSR a similar wave of repatriates from all over the diaspora poured into Armenia, especially young male repatriates during the fierce battles with the Azeris over the disputed region of Nagorno-Karapagh in the early 1990s.

Like the Polish Catholic Church and other Eastern churches, the Armenian Church has always been identified with the nation and has been involved in political issues. But the church did not become crippled by political issues until the 1950s. With the death of the Catholicos of the Holy See of Cilicia in 1952 in Beirut, the Tashnaks, that is, the Armenian

Revolutionary Federation party, helped elect a candidate who favored their principles

(Bournoutian, 2003). When the Catholicos of Edgmiatsin, Armenia, influenced and

backed by Soviet Armenian officials and the anti-Tashnak parties in the diaspora, refused

to recognize the election, the Church split (Bournoutian, 2003). This ecclesiastical

division has polarized the diaspora communities to this day. Armenian groups fought,

betrayed, and occasionally killed each other in Iran in 1953 and Lebanon in 1958

(Bournoutian, 2003). The Cilician See meanwhile began to extend its jurisdiction beyond

Lebanon, Syria, and Cyprus and founded separate prelacies in communities where the

Tashnaks had gathered support, especially in Iran, Greece, Canada, and the United States.

In the 1960s and 70s, the Armenians had achieved a significant degree of economic

prosperity in virtually every host country (Chaliand and Trenon, 1983). This was

accomplished through a combination of hard work, self-reliance, and entrepreneurial

ingenuity – attributes that had served Armenians well in their long history of struggle

against difficult odds (Chaliand and Trenon, 1983). Also the Armenians' familiarity with

western languages and cultures made them key brokers in foreign commerce and mediators

between the European mandatory authorities and the indigenous population in Syria and

Lebanon (Dekmejian, 1997). However, economic well-being was not accompanied by a

sense of contentment and happiness. Dekmejian (1997) identifies several factors that were

discernible after the mid-1960s as being responsible for feelings of discontent among

Armenians in the diaspora: the gradual realization of the permanence of diasporic

existence, the persistent concern with the threat of assimilation and loss of identity, the

pervasive feeling of political impotence because of the lack of national independence, and

the deep sense of loss and moral outrage against Turkey for its persistent denial of the

Armenian Genocide.

Moreover, having suffered countless casualties in the 1950s, the Armenian community adopted a position of "positive neutrality" during the 16-year-long civil war in Lebanon, 1975-1991. Some militant Lebanese Christians resented the Armenians' reluctance to join the fight in what was in the early days of the conflict seen as a Muslim-Christian battle. The Armenian neutrality paid off. Throughout the war years, Bourj Hammoud, a predominantly Armenian neighborhood on the edge of east Beirut, even during the heaviest artillery shelling of east Beirut remained untouched; however, thousands along with many Lebanese sought refuge in Canada, the United States, France, and many other European countries.

The Armenians of Lebanon were, for a time, especially during the 1960s and 1970s, the most important Armenian community outside of the Soviet Union and the United States (Bournoutian, 2003). This was expressed in the description of the community as the "most Armenian" of all diaspora communities and as the "second Armenia", and its schools, clubs, and publications were often said to be the most noteworthy achievements of the Armenian people in the entire diaspora (Bournoutian, 2003). The Armenians in Lebanon constituted the largest diaspora community in the world, counting 175,000 in 1983 eight years after the cycle of violence had started (*The Europa World Yearbook*, 2003). They had two dozen churches, sixty schools, more than fifty athletic, patriotic, benevolent organizations, numerous literary, cultural periodicals, and newspapers (McDowell, 1983).

Now, their number has dwindled. Unfortunately, there are no official statistics specifying the present number of Armenian or non-Armenian citizens in Lebanon. The popular perception is that the number of Armenians is somewhere around 30 to 70 thousand. They are scattered all over the country, especially in the major cities, such as Beirut, Sidon, Tripoli, Anjar, Zahle, the Bekaa valley, Batroun, and Jbeil. The largest concentration of Armenians is in Beirut. It is not clear when, but the streets in Bourj Hammoud, Beirut,

were named after towns in western Armenia, occupied by Turkey, such as. Nor (new) Marash, Nor Amanos, Nor Adana, Sis, Arax, and Cilicia. However, recently areas like Rabieh, Naccash, and Rabweh, suburbs reserved for the affluent section of the Lebanese society, are also becoming overwhelmingly populated by Armenians, indicating a rise in the number of affluent Armenians and a growing desire to integrate in the Lebanese society.

The Socio-cultural Patterns of the Community

Survivors of the Genocide who reached Lebanon recount how they could not afford the time to study, as they worked to establish themselves in the new land. But they considered education for their children of paramount importance. *"Tebrots kena vor mart ellas"* (go to school to be successful/educated/cultured) was a popular injunction, and older children took jobs to make sure that their younger brothers and sisters would receive the prized high school diploma or college degree. Moreover, phrases like, "The Armenian school is the home of the Armenian" and "Armenians' survival can be ensured only through the Armenian school", served as the underlying impetus for the proliferation of Armenian schools, as verified by many survivors, first as wooden shacks with tin roofs, then annexed to church compounds, and later as spacious, modern constructions.

Following the Genocide, humanitarian organizations, such as the American Near East Relief and Swiss Friends of Armenians established orphanages in Karantina, Ghazir, Bourj Hammoud, and Jbeil. These were then transformed to educational and/or vocational training institutions. Soon, the Armenians themselves got organized. and. with substantial donations and endowment funds from wealthy diasporan Armenians founded the Armenian Relief Red Cross in 1930, the Karaguezian Center in 1940, and the Jinishian Center in 1966. These were either affiliated with the three church denominations. Orthodox. Catholic. or Evangelical. or with the three political parties, Armenian Revolutionary

Federation established in 1904, Social Democrat Henchag Party. 1912, or Ramgavar Liberal Party, 1921 (Bournoutian, 2003). Consequently, the Church and the political parties became a major power in the life of the early settlers and played a central role in the social, political, and cultural domains of Armenian life, creating a distinct Armenian identity (Bournoutian, 2003).

Indeed, the social, educational, and humanitarian efforts of the newly-formed Church and political parties led to the establishment of many schools. In time, the schools Armenian students attended became regular schools that nowadays, in addition to Armenian language, history, literature, religion, and culture, teach a basic curriculum of general studies that prepares students for the Lebanese official baccalaureate exams. They are multilingual institutions because students are taught all other subjects, such as, mathematics, physics, chemistry, geography, history, civics, science, and literature in Arabic and French and/or English. Lebanon is a multilingual country, where Arabic and French are recognized as official languages, and schools teach these two languages concurrently with English. It is also worth mentioning that schools in Lebanon teach Standard Arabic devised from the old classical language of the Qura'n but use Colloquial Lebanese everywhere else. Hence, a characteristic feature of virtually every conversation that occurs between multilingual Lebanese is code-switching (henceforth CS; more on CS in Chapter Three). Therefore, most of the CS that occurs among Armenians in Lebanon is between Armenian, Turkish, French, English, and Arabic; while, other Lebanese code-switch between Arabic, French, English, and increasingly, with the return of some families that had left Lebanon during the war for Brazil. Argentina, and Venezuela, also Spanish and Portuguese.

At present there are a total of twenty-eight Armenian schools in Lebanon. Of these eight are elementary (kindergarten to grade six), seven intermediate (kindergarten to grade nine),

eleven secondary (kindergarten to grade twelve), and two intermediate and two secondary

boarding schools. There are also three seminaries, three technical centers. and two special

centers for the mentally and physically challenged (Tanielian, 2002). The majority of

these are in Beirut. The exact number of school enrollments for the 2006-2007 academic

year was 7,029 students. Twenty-five years ago, this number was 21,000 distributed on the

then-existing sixty schools (Tanielian, 2002).

According to recent statistics, the number of schools in Lebanon has decreased by 50% in

the last 25 years. Surprisingly, there is no systematic study of the reasons for/and impact

of this phenomenon. Two obvious reasons are the location of some of these schools on the

green line, the 16-year-long war zone separating Christian-dominated east Beirut from

Muslim-dominated west Beirut, and the emigration of a large number of Armenian

families during the long years of the war in Lebanon. None of these schools, however,

reopened after the war ended in 1991; moreover, the migration process is still ongoing due

to the upheavals plaguing the Middle East. This study hoped to find out from the

participants in the individual and group interviews other reasons for the decrease in the

number of the enrollment of Armenian students in the remaining parochial schools and the

impact of such behavioral changes on the present and future state of the schools and the

Armenian language and culture.

In the same way, it would be useful to carry out another study on the evolution of the

family. the rate of intermarriage, and social integration of Armenians in Lebanon. Perhaps

what Mirak (1997) writes about Armenian American writers having idealized Armenian

family life as unified, warmly sharing, and good humored is reminiscent of life in

Lebanon. Elders often remember the strict control the family exercised over its younger

members through hard work and often harsh discipline. and their conclusion is that. as a

result, juvenile delinquency was virtually unknown. The popular perception is that

desertion and divorce were also rare and intermarriage with *odars* (outsiders) was frowned upon, as parents insisted that their children marry within the group and within the denomination to preserve family ways, religious traditions, and culture. The family was the hub of social activity. This meant visiting, often weekly, among relatives and friends from the Old Country villages and gatherings of compatriotic societies based on Old World hometown affiliations. Even in the late 1970s, I remember that Sundays in my family and extended family were reserved for visiting relatives and what seemed like a myriad aunts and uncles, who I learned as an adult, were old hometown neighbors and acquaintances of either my father's or mother's families. However, nowadays, the popular perception is that greater affluence, mass culture, and education up to college level have transformed this family ethos and that the next generations have adopted middle- and upper-middle-class Lebanese values. Intermarriage with Arabs and non-Christians (Muslims and Druze) increased among the children of the survivors, presenting a challenge to the perpetuation of the culture and ethnic identity. However, in college-educated offspring the traditional respect for those older than themselves is perceived by many to have been replaced by concepts of egalitarianism and meritocracy. Socially, debutante balls, church-sponsored activities, and women's organizations supplanted the earlier communal forms. Similarly, among other signs of a new ethos are cited a higher incidence of divorce, drug addiction, dropouts, and juvenile delinquency.

Although data is scarce, it is clear that the first generation of Armenians had a high percentage of Turkish speakers. With the third generation and new trends in the life of the Armenian community there is a tremendous decrease in the use of Turkish as the language of conversation in the homes (more on this in Chapter Five). However, it has not disappeared completely from some homes, where the second generation still knows Turkish. This is evidenced by the irate radio programs and newspaper editorials that condemn the increase in the rate of Armenian viewers of Turkish satellite programs. The

speaking of Turkish was reinforced by the fact that the newcomers were citizens of the Ottoman Empire and had no command of Arabic. This situation continued, and the first generation did not make any particular effort to learn Arabic, as they lived in neighborhoods where there was no immediate need for acquiring it. Their neighbors, shopkeepers, butchers, bakers, and other service-providers were all Armenian. Another factor that might have retarded the acquisition of Arabic by the Armenians was the fact that Syria and Lebanon were under European mandate until 1946. Therefore, the official language was French. The situation changed when Lebanon gained its independence, and Arabic became the first official language. The second generation learned Arabic, French, and English, but those who remained in the predominantly Armenian neighborhoods still spoke Arabic with an accent and their confusion about the genders (Arabic, like French and Spanish, is a gendered language, whereas Armenian is not) is still a source of many jokes. In the absence of any study in this area, this study attempts to at least gather information on the linguistic competence of the interviewees in Turkish, Arabic, English, and French.

The linguistic diversity is also reflected in the Armenian Church. Although mass in the Orthodox Church is carried out in western Armenian, the liturgy, hymns, and Bible readings are recited in *krapar,* an ancient language which the people do not understand. It is true that the Armenian orthodox rite and the priests are very respected by the community, but nowadays it is mainly a symbolic respect rather than an everyday relation with the church. All the priests I met complained of the growing indifference among Armenians towards church activities and of the sharp decrease in the number of young participants. During the main religious celebrations, the church, however, becomes the very heart of the community, for they have always felt that holding tenaciously to the language and the rite would make them stronger and not weaker in the face of the new

world they encountered away from their homeland, a conviction, according to the gathered

data, is not shared by the younger members of the community.

Existence in this new world, as stated earlier, was supported by the three political parties

that had reorganized themselves after surviving the Genocide and settling in Lebanon.

Besides the humanitarian efforts of these parties, an important outcome which played a big

role in the language maintenance efforts was the formation of the press. The first long-

lasting Armenian-language daily, *Aztag,* was established in 1927 by the Tashnaks.

Zartonk, another daily, dates from 1934 as an organ of the Ramgavar Party. *Ararad,* a

daily established in November 1937 by the Henchag party, became a weekly in 2001. A

total of two Armenian newspapers, then, are published in Lebanon, compared to the four

fifty years ago. None of the seven weeklies and biweeklies published as early as 1947

(Massis) are published today (Tanielian, 1986). Besides newspapers, there are three

monthly and quarterly literary journals (compared to ten fifty years ago), and more than

half a dozen in-house magazines and newsletters of organizations, churches, schools, and

centers (Tanielian, 2002). These are written in Armenian, but starting March 2004,

Zartonk, began publishing a monthly supplement in Arabic, and *Aztag* an English

supplement starting January 2006. To illustrate the focus of these newspapers and the

interests of their readers, I collected a sample of the headlines that appeared in twenty-five

issues of the Armenian versions of *Aztag* and *Zartonk,* between October 14 and November

12, 2004 (Appendix B).

The collected sample seems to suggest that the cultural and communal life of Armenians in

Lebanon is supported by the press. The cultural, social, and educational associations rely

upon the press to advertise the programs and events they sponsor, while the newspapers fill

up their pages with reports and photographs of those activities and sell subscriptions. The

press also announces personal news of weddings, funerals, high school and college

graduations, names of students who have passed ninth and twelfth grade official exams, as it publicizes the successes of Armenian men and women in their fields of endeavor. Most importantly, the Armenian press contributes to the development of Armenian pride and sense of community by highlighting the accomplishments of Armenian individuals around the world and publishing news of ancient and new Armenian communities around the world, stressing the longevity and greatness of Armenian culture and reinforcing a sense of diaspora. Since the independence of Armenia, more pages are devoted to cover the political and cultural events in the motherland. During my interviews with the editors of the two dailies and the weekly I learned that there is a steep and steady decline in the number of subscribers and the number of copies printed for local consumption. The editors, however, declined to provide specific numbers.

Radio Van, the only Armenian radio station in Lebanon, focuses on news about the Armenian communities in Lebanon and the diaspora, and political, social, and cultural issues in Lebanon, and Armenia. It also attaches great importance to a range of issues and social problems associated with divorce, parent-child conflict, family violence, and linguistic and cultural retention. Established in 1986, it broadcasts news and music in Arabic and Armenian. The station is affiliated with the Tashnak political party and additional support for the radio comes from Armenian individuals and advertisements. According to its director, the goals of the station are to provide cultural nourishment, information, and community services to its listeners. Recently, Radio Van started a program entitled, "Let's speak correct Armenian", where Armenian sentences containing Arabic, English, French, and Turkish words are reiterated entirely in Armenian. Thus, Armenian media has a clear mandate to promote Armenian culture, language, and music.

As it moves into its second century, the Armenian Lebanese community is caught in the dilemma common to a diaspora communities. On the one hand, it is being pulled by forces

and institutions inherited from the Old World, and its Armenian consciousness will continue to be heightened by the destabilization in the Middle East, the quest for political recognition of the genocide, and the fear of cultural extinction. On the other hand, the Armenian Lebanese community has integrated itself successfully into the economic, social, and political fabric of the host nation.

A summary chart of the main historical dates and events related to Armenians in Lebanon is presented in Appendix C.

CHAPTER THREE

LANGUAGE MAINTENANCE AND SHIFT: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

In a discussion I had with Archbishop Kegham Keshishian, Prelate of Lebanon, he recounted how a young Armenian philanthropist had requested that all communication with him from the Prelacy be in Arabic, as he did not read or speak Armenian. "After all, this is Lebanon not Armenia," the patron had argued. The Prelate's dilemma was, "How can I write a 'thank you' letter or even speak in Arabic to an Armenian? I tried but could not do it. It just did not feel right especially that he is a very well-known person in our community. I have not given in so far, but I am afraid to persist because he is a generous donor."

For Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004) such an incident exemplifies negotiation of identities, language choice and attitudes in multilingual contexts, where different ideologies of language and identity come into conflict with each other with regard to what languages should be spoken by particular kinds of people and in what context. For the charity donor Arabic was the primary language of all Lebanese-born Armenians, while for the Prelate Armenian identity was inherently linked to Armenian.

Researchers agree that ongoing social, political, and economic changes affect identity, language shift, and language choices offered to individuals at a given moment in history (Kulick, 1992). For more than one hundred years now, more than half of the seven million Armenians in the world have been living in diasporic communities where they have been subjected to shifts and fluctuations of language ideologies, ranges of identities, sociopolitical and socioeconomic trends, and more recently to globalization, consumerism, explosion of media technologies, and the post-colonial and post-communist predicament of

belongingness. This and other instances involving other minority or immigrant populations are becoming a major concern for scholars in the field of sociolinguistics (Crystal 2000; Dixon 1997). Consequently, while acknowledging that globalization is progressively increasing, (with religious fanaticism and political unrest punctuating recent history, especially in the Middle East), broadening the range of available language and identity options, there is growing concern among scholars about language use and language attitude, and patterns and networks of the use of minority, ethnic languages in the world.

This chapter first presents a review and a discussion of terminological conceptual issues in the field of linguistic maintenance and shift, the main focus of this study, and then examines extra-linguistic factors such as sociological, ethno-historical, cultural, and economic issues related to language maintenance. It investigates the impact of these factors, and lastly explores preservation of language diversity. The above factors are of extreme importance not only from a theoretical but also from a practical perspective. Some of the above-mentioned issues are discussed in detail and some more briefly, depending on their significance in the field and for the present study.

A Review of Theoretical Issues

This part of Chapter Three presents a review and a discussion of terminological and major conceptual issues in the field of linguistic maintenance and shift, delves into extra-linguistic factors related to language maintenance, and explores the impact of historical, economic, and sociological factors.

A General Discussion of Terminological Issues

The phenomenon of LMLS and how various communities have tackled it is a subject that has developed into an issue of immense interest to linguists. Coined by Joshua Fishman in

1964, Swann *et al.* (2004) define language maintenance as "the preservation of a language or language variety in a context where there is considerable pressure for speakers to shift towards the more prestigious or politically dominant language" (p. 172), and language shift as "the inability of a speech community to maintain its language in the face of competition from a regionally or socially more powerful or numerically stronger language" (pp. 174-5). For Fasold (1984) language maintenance means that "the community collectively decides to continue using the language or languages it has traditionally used," and language shift means that "a community gives up a language completely in favor of another one" (p. 213). Sercombe (2002) prefers to define LMLS as a whole and for him it deals with "the extent of change or retention of language and language features among a group that has more than one code for communication both within and outside the group" (p. 1). In light of the subsequent discussion of the factors involved in LMLS, the definition offered by Swann *et al.* (2004) is rather a limited one as it confines the reasons to prestige and politics. Hence, a broader definition is needed.

I endorse Clyne's (1997) definition of linguistic maintenance as "keeping up the use of a specific language entirely or in one or more domains," and of language shift as "switching partially or wholly to the use of another language" over a period of time (p. 309). To reverse language shift in a community means to work against the main tendency of replacement of the "subordinate" language (one that is being replaced) by the "dominant" one (the language that is replacing another) in order to maintain it. I also endorse the following distinctions suggested by Fase *et al.* (1992): language maintenance deals with the continuing use and proficiency in a language concerning both groups and individuals in the face of competition from another language. Shift is to do with a reduction in use of a language among a language group. Loss is to do with a reduction in language proficiency and is particular to an individual. For Sercombe (2002), too, this distinction is important because he believes that shift and loss can and do occur separately.

The burgeoning of investigations into LMLS, however, especially in the last fifty years, has resulted in a plethora of terms and definitions. The field is overloaded with metaphoric expressions: language atrophy, attrition, contraction, death, decay, demise, drift, endangerment, erosion, healing, hybrid language, loss, maintenance, obsolescence, preservation, reconstruction, replacement, restricted code, resuscitation, retention, revival, shift, etc. Most researchers use some of these terms interchangeably, but there are also preferences, and sometimes even insistence on differentiating among them. However, it should be added that there is also an emerging "coverall term 'language death'" which is "closely linked with language viability" (Sercombe 2002, p. 1). Simply put, the latter occurs when a community shifts to a new language totally so that the old language is no longer used.

However, some researchers are not comfortable with the term 'death', as it holds negative connotations related to a fatal prediction. Fasold (1984), for one, refers to this appellation as being a somewhat dramatic exercise. Moreover, another controversy surrounds this term, one that we should be aware of but not dwell on, as resolving it is beyond the scope of this chapter. The debate is about whether language death should apply only when the shifting community is made up of the last surviving speakers of the language or whether it can be applied to a total shift in a given community, whether or not there are other people in the world who still use the language. Dorian (1978), for instance, believes that language death refers to total shift in one community only, provided that the shift is from one language to another, rather than from one variety of a language to another variety of that same language that is deemed more prestigious. Denison (1977), however, and I agree with him, takes the point of view that "though the disappearance without trace of all Basque speakers would signal the 'death' of a language, if all Viennese dialect speakers were to be carried off by Hong Kong flu, it would mean scarcely more than a headache to

the 'German language'" (quoted in Fasold 1984, p. 15). Most of the research in the field

deals with the most common type of death, the gradual one that lasts for a few or several

generations, usually of marginalized and dominated populations, sometimes even

stigmatized for their linguistic, ethnic, cultural, or religious features. But the "sudden" or

"radical" language death that occurs when a population is annihilated by genocide (Lenca

and Cacaopera in El Salvador) or when the last speaker of the language dies (many Indian

languages in both Americas), is also discussed.

A Survey of Significant Factors

As mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, linguists have been interested in the

linguistic and sociolinguistic aspects of LMLS. As the latter aspect constitutes the

principal emphasis of this research, the authors and studies referred to below are significant

to this study, as they underline the set of conditions that may cause people to give up a

language in favor of another. However, although scholars agree that the factors identified

below are important in explaining language shift, there has been, as Fasold (1984)

comments, "very little success in using any combination of [these factors] to predict when

language shift will occur" (p. 217). Hence, despite the different approaches and the

significant number of factors accounting for why people's attitudes change and why shift

occurs, there is "considerable consensus that we do not know how to predict language

shift" (Fasold 1984, p. 217), or "whether it is, in fact, possible to provide a comprehensive

check list and fully describe the linguistic ecology of a polity" (Martin 2002, p. 177).

Dorian (1989), one of the most prominent researchers in this field, referred in *Investigating*

language obsolescence to the absence of a relevant framework for measuring language

shift and the complexities involved in predicting the degree of viability of a language. In

an attempt to propose a plausible key, Dorian sees the increase in the level of complexity

of the field as entirely depending on the number of case studies. She believes that every

case is a special one, and that a larger number of case studies would provide the necessary

amount of data in different stages of language contraction that, as a consequence. would make comparison and generalization possible. Therefore, besides adopting some of the theories put forward by scholars, this study adds a new dimension to LMLS.

Along with the excess of terminology there have been substantial efforts among researchers to identify and pin down the main variables in LMLS. Such recent scholarship has suggested that there is a significant relationship between ethnic languages and extra-linguistic factors, that is, cultural, psychological, social, and historical processes. Haugen (1950), for example, suggested family, neighborhood, political affiliation, and education as being crucial factors in LMLS. In this context, in 1972 he coined the term *language ecology* which he defined as the study of interactions between a language and its environment, the true environment of a language being the society that uses it as one of its codes. He further explained that part of the ecology of a language was psychological that is its interaction with other languages in the minds of bilingual speakers, and part sociological, that is its interaction with the society in which it functions as a medium of communication. His concern was that most language descriptions are "prefaced by a brief and perfunctory statement concerning the number and location of its speakers and something of their history" and are "eager to get on with the phonology, grammar, and lexicon" (p. 57). Haugen (1972) argued that the ecology of a language is determined primarily by the people who learn it, use it, and transmit it to others. For this, he posited ten ecological questions that should be answered for any given language, and that have been relevant to this research: (1) what is its classification in relation to other languages? (2) who uses it? (3) what are its domains? (4) what other languages are employed by its users? (5) what are its internal varieties? (6) what are its written traditions? (7) to what degree has its written form been standardized? (8) what kind of institutional support does it have? (9) what are the attitudes of its users towards the language? (10) where do all these factors place it in relation to other languages?

Weinrich's *Languages in contact* (1953), a comprehensive survey of factors significant in

language contact situations, similarly, offered ten variables as decisive in determining

LMLS: geography, indigenousness, cultural or group membership, religion, sex, age, social

status, occupation, and rural versus urban residence. On the other hand, Mackey (1962)

put forward crucial additional factors such as duration of contact, frequency of contact and

pressures of contact with an/other language/s derived from economic, administrative,

cultural, political, military, historical, religious, or demographic sources as causes deciding

the maintenance or shift of a language. Kloss (1966), targeting language maintenance,

pinpointed six important variables: religio-societal insulation, time of migration, existence

of language islands, parochial schools, and pre-immigration experience. In a paper in

Advances in the sociology of language, Fishman (1971), a leading contributor to the study

of LMLS, proposed three essential variables for a systematic exploration of issues in the

study of LMLS: psychological, social, and cultural factors and their relationship with

stability or change in habitual language use, behavior towards language in the contact

setting, and habitual language use at different times and under conditions of intergroup

contact. For decades, Fishman elaborated and refined a complex sociological theory of

community, language, and ethnicity that have been essential to the present case study.

On the other hand, the catalogue of variables for the assessment of ethnolinguistic vitality

(EVT) listed in Giles *et al.*'s (1977) *Language, ethnicity and intergroup relations* seems

plausible in the study of LMLS even though it had its share of criticism due to

"inexactitudes, lack of weighting and other perceived weaknesses" (Sercombe 2002, p. 4).

EVT outlined three broad categories often referred to in the LMLS literature that are

reminiscent of the questions posited by Haugen (1972) earlier: status, demography, and

institutional support. Giles *et al.* underscored the role of the status of the speech

community's socio-economic standing, socio-historical prestige, and the status of the

language used by a community in the extent of its linguistic vitality. It was stressed that

the number of members in a speech community was crucial in the maintenance of its language and that demographic heterogeneity contributed to the weakening of the first language of an ethnolinguistic minority group. 'Institutional support'. as put forward by Giles *et al.*, meant the degree of image the language group has in the various institutions of a community, region, or nation.

The first investigation or case study of shift in a specific community, illustrating the factors presented above, was Gal's (1979) *Language shift: the social determinants of linguistic change in bilingual Austria.* Gal studied language use in Oberwart, Austria, and reported that German-Hungarian bilingualism had existed in Oberwart since before 1500, and by the nineteenth century the majority of peasants had been bilingual. However, with the arrival of monolingual German–speaking immigrants, who formed a prestigious class of merchants and government officials, nonagricultural employment became an attractive possibility and the use of German expanded into formerly Hungarian domains. According to Gal, the transfer of Burgenland from Hungary to Austria in 1921 added to the prestige of German by making it the official national language as well. Hungarian then became associated with the peasant class, while the social identity associated with German became desirable. Gal found that the two languages became symbols of two ethnic identities. Coupled with marriage patterns, institutional support for German as the language of education, and extensive use of German words in Hungarian suggested that German was gaining at the expense of Hungarian as time went on. Gal had as well, found that where there was intermarriage, for instance, between a German monolingual and a German-Hungarian bilingual, the children in Oberwart grew up monolingual in German. Gal's investigation of language use in Oberwart underlines the role of prestige, attitude, and socio-economic factors in enhancing language shift.

We can deduce from the attempts of researchers of LMLS at highlighting certain variables. that serious studies in this area should include the analysis of external settings, like history and ethnicity of the community, cultural and religious features, economic status, and socio-political and constitutional structures. They should also include analysis of speech behavior related to the communicative functions pertaining to diglossic or bilingual patterns, and domains of use. The pivotal longitudinal work of Nancy Dorian (1981) on the Scottish Gaelic dialects was an example of this approach. Dorian's *Language death: the life cycle of a Scottish dialect*, a case study on East Sutherland Gaelic, a Scottish dialect, placed emphasis on the socio-economic and political background of the community, the historical changes that modern life brings to the speech community and the language, the speakers' attitudes and language use. Dorian reported that like Oberwart, Austria, East Sutherland had a long history of bilingualism. The languages were English and Gaelic. With the establishment of an English-speaking elite in northern Scotland, Gaelic changed from having majority language status to minority status as it became identified with the crofters, people with small land holdings. Also, similar to the situation in Oberwart, Dorian found that the oldest speakers were the ones who were the most comfortable with Gaelic. The younger speakers were better at English, and English words were freely incorporated into Gaelic. Dorian remarks, "As English pressed in from the top of the social hierarchy and spread steadily downward", Gaelic moved from majority to minority language status (p. 53).

In another work, *Investigating Obsolescence: Studies in language contraction and death*, Dorian (1989) identifies bilingualism, lexical borrowing, and problems of ethnic and linguistic identity, factors that surfaced at the analysis stage of this research, as common preliminary features and conditions for language shift. Fasold (1984), too, comments that "a virtual *prerequisite* for shift is bilingualism" (p. 240). At the same time though, Romaine (1995) argues that even though CS, a phenomenon that is common in bilingual

situations, has often been cited as a factor leading to language shift, in some cases CS and diglossia are seen as positive forces in maintaining bilingualism. For instance, researchers (Li Wei 2000; Baker and Prys Jones 1998) agree that some minority language speakers will be more motivated to maintain and use their languages if they prove to be useful in increasing their employability, since, in some cases, certain jobs are reserved for bilingual speakers only.

Muysken (2000) points out that CS does not usually indicate lack of competence on the part of the speaker in any of the languages concerned, but that it results from complex bilingual skills that enables speakers to code-switch between turns of different speakers in the conversation, sometimes between utterances within a single turn, and sometimes even within a single utterance. Karmsch (1998), who uses the term 'language crossing', believes that the switching of codes enables speakers to change footing within the same conversation, to show solidarity or distance towards the discourse communities whose languages they are using, and to whom they perceive their interlocutor as belonging. She concludes that by crossing languages speakers perform "cultural acts of identity" (p. 70). Ibrahim (1998) voices a similar opinion when he states that "not only are identities reflected in languages but also constructed in, through and within them. Language can be or is a political statement and is or can be a medium of identity performance" (p. 13). As if to prove these claims, Giampapa (2001) shows how eight Italian-Canadian youths in Toronto lean on different aspects of their identities through their daily linguistic and cultural practices across and within multiple "worlds", that is Canadian, Italian-Canadian, and Italian, and discourse sites and concludes: "As shown, within the Italian-Canadian world it is through the intimate exchanges of the peer network where the participants reclaim their *italianità* on their terms through code-switching and code mixing dialects, Italian and English" (p. 307).

In their relatively recent collection, *Endangered Languages: Current Issues and Future Prospects,* Grenoble and Whaley (1998, eds.) make a serious attempt to typologize ailing minority languages based on extra-linguistic and speech behavior phenomena, two important aspects of this study. They start their account from the model proposed by Edwards (1992) that is grouped under three broad categories: speaker, language, and setting. These are explained further through eleven different categories that coincide with the factors referred to above: demography, sociology, linguistics, psychology, history, politics/law/government, geography, education, religion, economics, and the media. These three categories are organized in 33 cells of different combinations of micro and macro variables, the first being features of the individual speech community that are internal to the group speaking the language and the second features of a broader context that are external to the speech community. The model sees a direct association between the two sets of variables. A functional difference between the two sets and their impact is made thus: "while the direct determinant for language shift is a modification in the attitude which a speech community holds towards its traditional language (thus, it is an operation of micro-variables), the impetus for this modification invariably is external to the speech community (thus, an operation of macro-variables)" (p. 38). Grenoble and Whaley try to raise the adaptability of Edwards' model in different situations by including literacy as an important variable, by breaking macro variables into international, national, regional, and local settings and hierarchically arranging the variables.

Grenoble and Whaley (1998) seem to conclude that the fundamental cause for shift is well known: speakers abandon their native tongue in adaptation to an environment where use of that language is no longer advantageous to them. This much might appear simple and uncontroversial. The more complex and obscure issue is *what* brings about the decreased efficacy of a language in a community. Besides access to material prosperity, these researchers outline an intricate matrix of variables dealing with the community's self-

identity, the relationship with other groups, the prestige of the language. the degree of political autonomy of the group, and linguistic attitudes among the speakers, factors that feature prominently in the present study. Emphasizing the strength of the speech community as a main factor in language maintenance, they also underline the idea that language preservation cannot be done by others and that the will and the attempts of the community itself are decisive for language maintenance.

Due to the complexities of LMLS, however, most comparative work seeks out general points of commonality between situations. By identifying recurrent patterns in the causes of language decline, such work has helped make evident those characteristics of speech communities which leave them most susceptible to language shift. This kind of work has also been instrumental in raising awareness and in providing a convenient way to prioritize the response of the linguistic community. However, focus on shared characteristics often masks the fact that there are intriguing divergences from the typical scenario for language maintenance and shift. Romaine (1989), for one, observes that researchers may fail to identify similarities among eroding languages, because they are comparing entities which are not at comparable stages of development. Languages are highly complex systems with a very active life of their own, different from each other and from a period in another, which makes a general device hard to find. Hence, this observation, besides pointing to the need for empirical research, calls for longitudinal studies that would analyze a language in different stages of change and not only at a single point of its change. Grenoble and Whaley (1998), similarly, stress the need for comprehensive detailed case studies, longitudinal research, and an integrated holistic approach in the field, for the perspective on the processes of change is the key to understanding these processes themselves.

Therefore, there is a growing tendency to avoid mechanical theories of shift and universal patterns of causality. Increasingly, researchers are discovering that language shift is

caused by shifts in personal and group values and goals. For instance, "What is of interest to know," writes Gal (1979) in the preface to her monograph on Hungarian-German language shift, "is not whether industrialization, for instance, is correlated with language shift, but rather: By what intervening processes does industrialization, or any other social change, affect changes in the uses to which speakers put their languages in everyday interactions" (p. 3). Gal makes clear that identifying that urbanization, government policies, assimilation, or other social changes "cause" shift is to discard the crucial step of understanding how that change has come to be interpreted by the people it is supposed to be influencing. Viewed in this way, Kulick (1992) rightly observes that the study of LMLS becomes the study of a people's conceptions of themselves in relation to one another and to their changing social world, and of how those conceptions are encoded by and mediated through language, a framework that guides the present study. Kulick reached this conclusion after he studied the villagers' languages in Gapun, Papua New Guinea. He asserts that the fact that the children in Gapun were no longer learning Taiap, the language of their ancestors and that they were shifting to Tok Pisin, indicated that what had changed was the evaluations and uses of language by the parents, i.e., "the villagers' own ideas about their world and how the ways in which they have made sense of their changing world have come to affect the ways they use language" (p. 17). The villagers in Gapun, an isolated rural community with little out-migration or in-migration, far removed from industrialization or urbanization, were in the process of shift because of a change in how they had begun viewing and expressing themselves. By using Tok Pisin, Kulick believes, the villagers were "expressing an important and highly valued aspect of self: they [were] displaying their knowledge and social awareness" (p. 21).

That is the reason why, by focusing on a specific case, that of the Armenian language in Beirut, this study will contribute to the ongoing research by identifying the factors effecting shift. Taumoefolau *et al.* (2002) observe that linguists may help inform and

advise the language community through research on language maintenance efforts or on the circumstances under which speakers may lose their first language and shift to the dominant language. Nevertheless, Dorian (1998) believes that it requires enormous social and psychological self-confidence for any small group to insist on the importance of ancestral-language retention. Fishman (2001) considers this effort as a struggle for a more humane, better society.

Motivations: Sociolinguistic and Extra-linguistic Factors

Most of the authors see the reasons and motivations for language shift in the domain of external setting or in extra-linguistic phenomena. Among the extra-linguistic factors scholars mention cultural, ethno-historical, and economic variables. In this context, researchers see the reasons and motivations for language shift in the domain of language use and language attitude, patterns and networks of language use, the set of phenomena that Fishman (1971) refers to as "who speaks (or writes) what language (or what language variety) to whom and when and to what end" (p. 26). Hence, the linguistic attitude of the speakers of a language, the way they perceive their language, and the values they attach to their language, has been analyzed as one of the main factors that cause language shift and gradual abandonment.

The work of Dorian (1981) in East Sutherland illustrates this clearly. Besides the crofters, Dorian found that a group of farmers who had been forcibly cleared from their lands and moved to the coast to take up fishing spoke Gaelic. These were socially ostracized and lived in a special part of town called "Fishertown". To a greater degree than in Oberwart, the lower social status of the East Sutherland fishing communities was forced on them by the refusal of other members of the wider communities to accept them. Paradoxically, this first led to the maintenance of Gaelic and then to a complete shift. As long as they remained a distinct, lower-status socio-cultural group with Gaelic as its linguistic symbol,

the language continued to be used. However, Dorian found that after the First World War, the fishing industry declined, and Gaelic-speaking fishing people had to find other jobs. She asserts that coupled with a certain amount of in-migration from other areas of Scotland, intermarriage became possible and slowly people gave up their fisher identity and Gaelic with it.

Underlying this linguistic attitude, Dorian (1998) emphasizes, is a complex ideology whose analysis means delving into the socio-economic situation and cultural systems that characterize a community. Crystal (2000) considers them the very reason for the interruption of language transmission and comments that socio-economic and/or socio-psychological pressures move the members of an economically weaker minority speech community to give up its language. For him this often happens through the development of a negative attitude which results in collective doubts about the usefulness of language loyalty. Regarding the spread and level of negative attitudes Mithun (1998) remarks that attitudes are very variable. She separates as main variables in the continuum age, cultural inclinations of the individuals, and economic tendencies of the community. Sasse (1992), on the other hand, analyzing the way the variability is demonstrated in the same individual speaker, characterizes it as "schizophrenic", not entirely negative or positive, but a mixture of both. He believes that linguistic attitudes of the speakers reflect and reinforce language prestige, which is based also on socio-economic settings but is related to other factors like political power of the speakers, attitudes of majority institutions, literary traditions, and so on.

In a similar vein, Crystal (2000) argues that if speakers take pride in their language, enjoy listening to others using it well, use it themselves whenever they can and provide occasions when the language can be heard, the conditions can be favorable for maintenance. Conversely, he believes that if people are embarrassed to use their language, switch into

the dominant language whenever they can, avoid occasions where the language is celebrated, then the bilingualism starts to decline, with the old language giving way to the new one. Crystal observes that if people believe, rightly or wrongly, that it is their ancestral language which has kept them down, or that they were held back from social advancement by an inability to speak the dominant language well, it is not surprising to find them antipathetic towards preservation and unsupportive when language maintenance projects are put in place. When this view is reinforced by the opinions of the young people themselves, who may also see the old language as irrelevant or a hindrance and think of the older people who still speak it as backward or ignorant, Crystal rightly observes, it is only to be expected that negative attitudes pervade the whole community.

To focus on language use is to focus on the speaker and the speech community as the basic unit that undergoes and manifests language shift. Hence, the process of oral transmission from a generation to the other, the way natural languages have survived and developed in history, is one of the basic areas of interest in the analysis of causes of language shift. In this context, Andersen (1982) considers a "break in the linguistic tradition" as a cause of a break in language use, and therefore an important factor in language shift (p. 87, 90). He asserts that this break occurs as a change in language use or in language transmission that does not favor linguistic maintenance. He believes, and I agree with him, that the interruption of language transmission is a consequence of the reduction of language use, and as well a reason for a further decline of language use. Andersen maintains, emphasizing Gal's (1979) and Dorian's (1981) findings, that a restricted language arises in situations when one of the languages has less prestige than the other, and that there is a generational shift towards the language of greater prestige.

As if agreeing with Andersen, Kulick (1992) and Crystal (2000) believe that the most familiar process by which language shift occurs is lack of transmission of an original

language from parents to children.   Crystal explains that the decision to adopt a new language leads to the abandonment of the old language, but not immediately. There must always be one generation that is reasonably bilingual. This is the generation of parents who decide, for the first time, that their children shall learn the new language at home. To take that decision, Crystal states, the parents must themselves be able to speak it. But these parents will still speak the old minority language between themselves, and they therefore have to take a second decision: whether to teach their children this minority language as well. Generally, whereas the first generation prefers to speak the ethnic language (L1), the second generation is bilingual, and the third usually adopts the new language (L2) as its first language. The second generation is likely to be the transition generation, in a sense determining whether or not a minority language will be maintained. Crystal cites improved communication all over the world, such as transport, radio, television programs, and the internet, as contributing to a reduction in the transmission of minority languages. As people watch each other's movies and TV programs – an effect which Michael Krauss (1992) has likened to "cultural nerve gas" (quoted in Crystal 2000, p. 78), they pick up speech habits from each other – words and idioms and grammatical constructions, and even some habits of pronunciation. All of this contributes to narrowing the dialectical spread of a language and to reduction in use of the languages of minority groups.

In *Language in Danger: The loss of Linguistic Diversity and the Threat to Our Future* Dalby (2003) reiterates the fact that daily intergenerational use of a minority language is crucial for its survival, both at the individual and family level as well as at the community level. However, he admits that in almost every country, in increasing numbers, parents who are able to make the choice are no longer teaching minority languages to their children. He cites the example of many Welsh parents who are taking that decision now, in spite of the language's raised profile and in spite of all the moral encouragement and practical educational provision and government money that support the choice of Welsh.

Similarly, Dalby reports that the Armenians, a long-established officially recognized religious minority in Vienna who worship at the Armenian Church and maintain community links, have no long-term tradition of Armenian speech even when there is little overt pressure from the majority to conform. Their first appearance in Vienna has been traced to the Turkish siege of Vienna in 1688, and there are now officially 2.500 members of the Armenian minority in Vienna. He observes that new arrivals speak only Armenian. or Armenian and another Near Eastern language. Their children speak Armenian and German. Those of the third generation speak German alone. He interprets the notable Armenian publishing activities of the Mekhitarist community in Vienna as proof that there was a long-standing and stable community of Armenian speakers in the nineteenth century. Some Armenian printing was aimed at Armenian readers and scholars worldwide, some at the first and second generations of migrants "who arrived speaking no German and whose grandchildren would speak no Armenian" (Dalby 2003, p. 110). It is safe to say that for Dalby it is the coherence and exclusiveness of the linguistic community and not the size of the community that matters, something Romaine (2000) does not support. Romaine argues that when large groups of immigrants concentrate in particular geographical areas, they will be more likely to preserve their languages. She cites third-generation Chinese Americans who reside in China-towns and who have shifted less towards English than their age-mates outside China-towns. The latter viewpoint will be revisited later in the analysis chapters.

There is increasing evidence that knowledge and usage of the ethnic language have a positive effect on adolescents in immigrant families. Studies that directly address this question suggest that ethnic language and ethnic identity, two important variables in this research, are positively related. Imbens-Bailey (1996), for instance, used interviews with first and second generation Armenian-American children to explore the importance of being proficient in Armenian. Results showed that the bilingual children and adolescents

expressed a closer affinity with the Armenian community than those who were monolingual in English. The author suggests that knowledge of the ancestral language may help maintain ethnic participation, which may in turn reinforce ethnic identity. Similarly, in a study on ethnic identity among 81 Armenian families, 47 Vietnamese families, and 88 Mexican families in the US, Phinney *et al.* (2001) conclude that language, social interaction with same-ethnic peers, and the attitudes of parents regarding cultural maintenance form a cluster of variables that reinforce ethnic culture and ethnic identity.

However, that language interlocks with identity is surely a piece of knowledge that is as old as human speech itself. Language carries out this role in what Fishman (1980) sees as a "sensitive web of intimacy and mutuality" (quoted in Suleiman 2003, p.29). In particular, language acts as the medium for connecting the past to the present and the future, thus bestowing on the past by virtue of its durability a legitimacy and authority, which, in turn "accrues to language itself through the power of close association and intellectual transmission" (Nash 1989, quoted in Suleiman 2003, p.29). Suleiman believes that language also plays a part in other communication facilities, including learned habits, symbols, memories, patterns of social stratification, events in history, and personal association. Hence, my assessment is that identity is rather a network of identities, reflecting the many commitments, allegiances, loyalties, and hatreds everyone tries to handle in ever-varying compromise strategies. These, Tabouret-Keller (1997) concludes, show that language is used to imply group affiliation, to reveal permitted or forbidden boundaries, or to exclude or include. In this context, Giles (1977) states, and I agree with him, that membership of an "in-group" can serve as a symbol of ethnic identity and cultural solidarity that is used for reminding the group about its cultural heritage, for transmitting group feelings, and for excluding members of the out-group from the internal transactions. Obviously, researchers agree, an interruption in language transmission, a

break in language use, and negative linguistic attitudes (low prestige and even stigmatization), are motivated by extra-linguistic phenomena.

Researchers of LMLS have also studied and analyzed the nature of other relevant extra-linguistic features and their impact on languages. Among them two directions are the most powerful as explanatory tools: socio-economic and political factors, on the one hand, and cultural factors on the other. Brenzinger (1992), for example, discusses economic assimilation as a main reason both for linguistic assimilation and for language retention in some East African ethnic tribes. Dorian (1998) explains the natural inclination of a subordinate speech community to shift towards the language of a more powerful community. She observes that the linkage between material well-being and shift towards the dominant language is undeniable. The role of economic factors is even more clearly and strongly emphasized by Grenoble and Whaley (1998) in their discussion of macro and micro variables that influence LMLS. They maintain that "one must take into account the potential of economic issues to outweigh all others combined, although this is a potential, not an absolute" (p. 31). As if explaining this particular situation, Crystal (2000) notes that the dominant language is attractive because it facilitates outward movement from the indigenous community; there are new horizons which members of the community wish to reach towards, new standards of living to be achieved, and a new quality of life to be pursued. Crystal explains that the dominant language is necessary because it provides people with a bridge between the two worlds – an intelligibility bridge, without which their progress would be negligible. The subordinate language, he asserts, by contrast has quite another role – to express the identity of the speakers as members of their community, foster family ties, maintain social relationships, and preserve historical links giving people a sense of their pedigree.

Regarding the importance of cultural factors in language shift, Fishman (1989) maintains that its cultural matrix, the staying power of a minority language, is what changes during language shift, therefore it should also be the core of attempts to reverse language shift. Schiffman (1996), on the other hand, relates linguistic culture to attitudes by defining linguistic culture as "the set of behaviors, assumptions, cultural forms, prejudices, folk belief systems, attitudes, stereotypes, ways of thinking about language, and religious-historical circumstances associated with a particular language" (p. 5). Then he adds that the beliefs that a speech community has about language in general and its language in particular, from which it derives its attitudes towards other languages, are part of the social conditions that affect the maintenance and transmission of its language. Similarly, Myers-Scotton's (1992) belief that it is not the cultural contact with an outside culture, but the linguistic culture of the community itself that seems to be very important in the fate of a language features prominently in the analysis chapters. The notion that language expresses / embodies / symbolizes cultural reality is reiterated by Karmsch (1998) who believes that culture is the product of socially and historically situated discourse communities that are to a large extent imagined communities created and shaped by language.

Dixon (1997) affirms that each language encapsulates the world-view of its speakers – how they think, what they value, what they believe in, how they classify the world around them, how they order their lives. Endorsing Paulston's (1994) point, he observes that when language transmission breaks down, a part of human culture, history, and inherited knowledge is lost for ever. Jocks (1998) and Woodbury (1998) offer two actual instances of the widely held view that language shift entails cultural loss. As a native Mohawk, Jocks addresses the role of the Mohawk language in understanding Mohawk culture and, in particular, religion. He shows that in a culture, knowledge, memory, language, and culture are indivisible. Furthermore, he believes that language and cultural identity, and language and self-identity are inexorably linked. Similarly, Woodbury (1998) examined a set of

suffixes in Cup'ik, a dialect of Central Alaskan Yup'ik Eskimo, and found that as it is supplanted by English, the affective suffixes are not replaced by any functionally equivalent strategy. Therefore, Woodbury argues that the aesthetic and rhetorical value of these suffixes for Cup'ik culture disappears with the language.

Kroskrity (1993) offers another example. He proposes that the centrality of religious ceremony and the highly regarded ceremonial speech variety called *te'e hi:li* among the Arizona Tewa have played a crucial role in maintaining their ancestral language, despite enclavement within a Hopi environment, despite considerable intermarriage with the Hopi, and despite a small population. This echoes Dalby's (2003) conclusion that where religious or ritual beliefs have been present in the background, there is a good chance that the language will continue. In "Ethnic Identity: A Psychocultural Perspective" De Vos and Romanucci-Ross (1995) reinforce the latter observation by arguing that the origin myths which establish who one is, for instance, help individuals resolve priorities of loyalty and allegiance in terms of a past frame of reference. In this sense, ritual acts become expressions of commitment, be it to a religion, to a nation of loyal citizens, or to an ethnic group. Rituals of belonging, especially, are seen as reaffirmations of origin, dramatizations of ancestral suffering and triumph, out of which future purpose is born and sustained. Many of the historical occurrences that are ritualized or become legend tend to be symbolic victories of survival or attempts at revival (De Vos and Romanucci-Ross, 1995).

As already alluded to above, two examples from Armenian history emphasize the importance of these remarks. According to the earliest Armenian accounts written sometime between the fifth and eighth centuries AD, the Armenian people are said to be the descendants of Japheth, a son of Noah. This myth not only blends historical facts with fable but manages also to place the Armenians in a prominent position within the biblical tradition. Similarly, the battle of Vartanants in 301 is the revivalist ritual of a defeated

people who succeeded in keeping their faith. Today, that fierce struggle against the Zoroastrian Persians is a tale of ordeal that feeds a struggle for survival by the maintenance of group consciousness, especially among those who have read well-known episodes in Armenian history. Hence, Blackledge's (2002) and Dixon's (1997) assertion that assessments of any linguistic scene will profit, to say the least, from historical awareness and cultural heritage, and that analyses of what people have done are likely to be useful not only in determining what they will probably continue to do but also in ascertaining what their desires and needs are in linguistic and other matters.

In the same vein, Tannenbaum (2003) maintains that language is a crucial aspect of the homeland and the old world, and the mother tongue is often viewed as a positive symbol of cultural pride, as a means of maintaining practical and emotional contact with the homeland and with oneself, and as a tool that strengthens family cohesion. He observes that language is the means of socialization into one's culture, the vehicle for transmitting the cultural heritage of the past, reshaping it, and passing it on to the next generations. As one Native American put it to Nettle and Romaine (2000), "We must know the white man language to survive in this world. But we must know our language to survive forever" (p. 192). However, established generations of diasporic populations across the globe generally, and the Armenian diasporic community in Beirut particularly, have been grappling with these questions as their youth are born and raised in diasporic contexts: How will they relate to the cultural heritage of their parents? Will they reject aspects of the home country culture? Will they embrace other aspects? What types of alliances will they seek to establish?

A glance through academic journals will reveal an increasing preoccupation with theorizations of diaspora, culture, minorities, immigration, and language – *Migration* (Berlin 1981), *The International Migration Review* (New York 1966), *Immigrants and*

Minorities (London 1982), and *Diaspora* (New York 1991). Once conceptualized as an exilic or nostalgic dislocation from homeland, diaspora, as Braziel and Mannur (2003) explain, has attained new epistemological, political, and identitarian resonances as its points of reference proliferate. I find myself agreeing with Gilroy (1997) who observes:

> A diaspora is a network of people, scattered in a process of nonvoluntary displacement, usually created by violence or under threat of violence or death. Diaspora consciousness highlights the tensions between common bonds created by shared origins and other ties arising from the process of dispersal and the obligation to remember a life prior to flight. (p. 328)

Quite probably, in the context of our discussion, language is the main factor influencing cultural attitudes within diaspora groups, host countries, and home countries. Suleiman (1999) observes that the shared memories of the diaspora are based on religion, customs, and language. However, with the hold of religion waning amongst certain sections of the population, the main tie between home country and diaspora appears to focus on culture, with an emphasis on language, as concepts of authenticity (Smith 1996, quoted in Landau 1999). What emerges is what Gloria Anzaldua (1987) calls 'the new *mestiza*' who copes by developing a tolerance for contradictions, juggling cultures, and operating in a pluralistic mode – nothing is thrust out, the good, the bad and the ugly, nothing abandoned (in Landau 1999). Rosaldo (1989) reinforces this when he talks of a twenty-first century marked by borrowing and lending across porous national and cultural boundaries that are saturated with inequality, power, and domination.

This is echoed by one of the main questions posed in the 1998 UNESCO World Culture Report: how do multiple cultures co-exist in an interactive world where multi-cultural alliances are more important than identification with particular culture? Bromley (2000) observes that everyone who speaks of globalization warns of its propensity for

homogenization and its segregating potential in the midst of the asymmetrical inter-dependence of the world system. At the same time, though, he draws attention to the positive aspects of integration and of new forms of multi-culturality, as well as the complexities and counter-trends which could mean that "new forms of citizenship, consumption and socio-cultural interaction are taking shape in these interstitial practices" (p. 159). Homi Bhabha (1994), for instance, believes that there can be no understanding of the global without understanding it as the ways in which different local sites are coordinated; yet there can be no understanding of any local without understanding the global of which it is a part. Nevertheless, even this can be a difficult goal to reach, as it is beset by many differences of opinion, both among activists and academic specialists.

Current Perspectives

Besides researches undertaken by scholars of LMLS to identify a range of variables responsible for language shift, recently, there have been other publications to reveal the challenges facing such linguists. For instance, Sercombe (2002) observes that there are weaknesses in applying concepts and parameters used, for example, in North America and Britain to a Middle Eastern setting, for example. Mühlhausler (1996), too, underlines the limitations of applying boundaries of language use in one context to another, discarding the various functions of language(s) in particular settings. I agree with both scholars because in Lebanon, where multilingualism and multiethnicity are widespread, a two-way language choice, as presented by some LMLS scholars, is irrelevant. It was only in 1945, for example, that Arabic became the official language of the country, before that French served as the official language. Arabic is used for documenting, publishing, formal speeches, and some religious rites. Most of the Lebanese in Lebanon know Standard Arabic along with their native Lebanese. That is because they learn Lebanese from their parents and their daily life, while they study Arabic language and literature in school. These are supplemented by English and French and the ethnic languages and dialects of the

nineteen officially recognized denominations. Hence, as Pierson (1994) argues, the complexities of any ethnolinguistic situation and the number of variables to be considered can be handled through qualitative ethnographic and anthropological data.

The current interest in the processes of linguistic maintenance and shift shown by sociolinguists, ethnolinguists, psycholinguists, anthropological linguists, language policy analysts, scholars in education and even fields not directly related to linguistics, is an indicator of the multifaceted issues that are involved in LMLS. One should bear in mind Sercombe's (2002) approach, which I endorse, that advocates drawing on other disciplines, such as "parameters from anthropology for the study of cultural behavior, sociology for the consideration of group institutions and structure; and psychology for insights into individuals' perceptions, for which language is a means of expressing and classifying experience" (p. 3) in order to gain an adequate understanding of the causes of language change. Crystal (2000) in his introduction to *Language death* admits that the issue of language maintenance "is now so challenging in its unprecedented enormity that we need all hands-scholars, journalists, politicians, fundraisers, artists, actors..." to approach it (p. ix). This becomes very important in a situation in which there is not yet a working 'measure device' for the level of competence/fluency of the speakers and for the stage of change of a language, despite efforts to find such devices.

As stated earlier, to reverse language shift in a community means to work against the main tendency of replacement of the subordinate language by the dominant one in order to maintain the language in question. Such rewards cannot be supplied from outside (Dorian 1998; Dauenhauer and Dauenhauer 1998). One role that knowledgeable outsiders have sometimes usefully played is that of information-disseminator and consciousness-raiser, helping to make a wider public aware of the looming threat to a minority language's

survival. However, proper support and professional expertise should be offered from inside the community (Dorian 1998; Dauenhauer and Dauenhauer 1998).

There is a vigorous discussion in the literature on the role of the researcher in this field. There is a 'role dilemma' faced by many sociolinguists: do they study the language as outsiders or do they also get involved and see their responsibilities as rescuers? Most of the researchers in this field implicitly support language maintenance, but only a few of them have made it a major question in their research and have dedicated entire volumes of their works to the preservation of languages and cultures. These scholars belong to an avant-garde that makes explicit efforts to overtly support and actively promote reversal of language shift and maintenance, like Fishman, Romaine, Nettle, Grenoble, Whaley, Skutnabb-Kangas, and so on. The perspectives of these scholars echo Grinevald Craig's (1997) labeling of the field of LMLS as "salvage linguistics" (p. 257).

In a recent book by Nettle and Romaine (2000) the authors argue in support of the universal importance of language diversity. For them, preserving languages is equal to preserving "ourselves and our diverse heritage" (p. 23). They advocate that as efforts and awareness campaigns are directed at slowing down environmental damage similar efforts should be directed at helping languages and cultures, for any reduction of language diversity diminishes the adaptational strength of the human species, constitutes a huge intellectual loss, and reduces the most direct glimpses at the creativity of the human mind because it lowers the pool of knowledge from which people can draw. They quote Ron Crocombe (1983), a proponent of cultural and linguistic diversity, to show how undesirable cultural and linguistic uniformity would be: "Nothing would more quickly stultify human creativity or impoverish the richness of cultural diversity than a single world culture. Cultural uniformity is not likely to bring peace: it is much more likely to bring totalitarianism" (p. 199).

In contrast, many might argue that the leveling off of linguistic diversity is a good thing. Mufwene (2002), for instance, considers shift a response of the community to adapt to changing socio-economic conditions for its survival. He supports the natural path a language takes, whatever the final result turns out to be. Mufwene is skeptical about the wisdom and even the possibility of deliberate efforts to prevent language shift. Nettle and Romaine (2000) refer to scholars who argue that anyway the proliferation of languages in the world was a penalty imposed on humanity, as expressed in several mythologies but most famously in the Biblical story of Babel. Hence, according to this view, there should be just one language which would guarantee mutual understanding and peace and facilitate communication and, accordingly, intercultural harmony. Nettle and Romaine remind these researchers that the New Testament, by contrast, presents linguistic diversity as a divine blessing bestowed upon the apostles, who are empowered by this miraculous gift of tongues. Moreover, the fact that the recent history of monolingual countries such as the inter-ethnic strife between the Serbian-speaking peoples of Bosnia or the Kinya-rwanda speaking peoples of Rwanda and Burundi provides too many counterexamples for this misconception, i.e., the leveling off of linguistic diversity is a good thing, to be tenable. Fishman (1991) describes the proponents of the former group as "reductionists whose 'realism' reduces human values, emotions, loyalties, and philosophies to little more than hard cash and brute forces" (p. 19).

There is much reason to assume that language diversity is 'good' and that languages should be preserved. Edwards (1985), for example, shows that we need the knowledge that is preserved and transmitted in each of the languages of the world, and that we need the different, alternative, and conflicting world views that each language gives us. Fishman (2001) reiterates this stance in acknowledging the fact that such a huge part of every ethno-culture is linguistically expressed and that "it is not wrong to say that most ethnocultural behaviors would be impossible without their expression via the particular language with

which these behaviors have been traditionally associated" (p. 3). Fishman asserts that

besides being linguistically expressed, behaviors such as education, the legal system. the

religious beliefs and observances, the self-governmental operations, the literature, the

folklore, the philosophy of morals and ethics, the medical code of illnesses and diseases,

childhood socialization, establishment of friendship and kinship ties, greetings, jokes.

songs, benedictions, maledictions, are usually enacted through the specific language with

which these activities grew up, have been identified, and intergenerationally associated.

Humanity certainly needs bilinguals as much as ever, and not only for the reason that

international understanding is more likely to make progress where there is a significant

degree of multilingualism. We need bilinguals, as Woodbury (1998) argues, because

individual bilingualism helps human beings to realize the full potential of their

intelligence. If you are bilingual, you are familiar with two distinct world views as

embodied in two different languages (Romaine, 1995). Hence, languages are in contact

and world views are in contact if there is bilingualism. These researchers conclude that for

our continued progress that kind of interaction must continue.

The argument is that there is no necessary confrontation between a new language and an

old one. Fortunately, there is evidence that minorities and indigenous populations are

organizing themselves and formulating linguistic, cultural, economic, and political

demands (Li Wei, 2000). Since the 1960s, there has been a political movement in many

parts of the world, upholding language rights (Li Wei, 2000). The result of this campaign

was that the United Nations, UNESCO, the Council of Europe, and the European Union

declared that minority language groups have the right to maintain their languages (Li Wei.

2000). Nettle and Romaine (2000) celebrate such steps because they believe that although

ethnic identity can survive language shift. a Quebecois or Welsh identity expressed

through English is not the same as one expressed through French or Welsh. Recognizing

that this does not mean that one is necessarily better than the other, they assert that to argue for the preservation of French in Quebec or Welsh in Wales is to argue for a people's right to choose the language in which they want to express their identity.

Therefore, based on the goals of this study and the above-presented review of LMLS literature, the research questions guiding this thesis are: What is the present state of the Armenian language in Beirut? What are the patterns of language use and communicative functions of Armenian? How does this diasporic community evaluate its language and ethno-cultural identity? How do their viewpoints and extra-linguistic issues influence their language choice? What actions is the community taking to maintain the Armenian language?

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

Introduction

This chapter presents the theoretical framework of the research and the fieldwork

methodology. Here the emphasis is on the sociolinguistic approach as the basic theoretical

frame of the thesis and the additional perspectives used to analyze different facets of the

community life related to language maintenance and shift. In addition to these, this part

contains analysis of the main theoretical perspectives used in the study and how they add a

new analytical angle to the research.

There is also a brief explanation of the preliminary work I carried out and my goals and

strategies during the eight months of fieldwork in 2004-2005. The emphasis is on the

methods of collecting the data, the difficulties encountered, and the issues that arose during

the individual and group interviews. The primary concerns in this part have been to

describe how a reliable and representative group was selected, the description of the

individual interviews and focus group interviews, the way the questions were written and

the data collection strategies used in each of them, and the decisions behind choosing these

particular tools of data gathering. This part also includes a discussion of the interpretive

aspects of the methods used and the ways they help in fulfilling the tasks of this thesis in

gathering data on language use, language perspectives, and community reactions to

language maintenance.

Theoretical Framework of the Research

The primary focus of this research is to assess the state of linguistic maintenance of the

Armenian language among the Armenian diaspora in Beirut and analyze its functional

features, critically evaluate community efforts, investigate the social, linguistic, and educative factors that play a particularly crucial role in language maintenance today, and analyze the socio-cultural and political patterns developing in the community.

The study can be described as qualitative research with multiple methodological frames. A sociolinguistic theoretical frame pervades the whole work, but other methodological perspectives are also used. The sociolinguistic view of LMLS is discussed extensively in the literature review chapter (Dalby 2003; Crystal 2000; Dixon 1997). The analysis in the chapters about the history of Armenians, language use, and identity, follows a sociolinguistic perspective with ethnographic elements, especially when everyday life attitudes, religious procedures, or cultural life is involved. Linguistic practices of the speakers are seen in relation to the ideologies held by community members in the past and present time (Kulick, 1992). The ethnographic dimensions of the analysis of significant historic and cultural facts emphasize the sociolinguistic approach. As presented in the literature review chapter, the extra-linguistic factors in the research on LMLS are central (Dorian 1981, 1989; Gal 1979). The theoretical frame of ethnic, identity, and diaspora studies is also presented in the literature review chapter (Braziel and Mannur, 2003). These perspectives are not separate entities but are combined with each other in the analysis of the various issues. For example, Fishman's (1997) theory of the interplay of ethnicity, culture, and linguistic ideology is a very useful angle from which to analyze the extra-linguistic social phenomena and their influence on the Armenian language. Moreover, in the study of language planning and the importance of literacy and schools for Armenian, and on diaspora analysis, the research agendas and the orientations of both sociolinguistics and the sociology of language come together. Hence, some characteristics of this thesis that reflect the guiding sociolinguistic principles are:

1. It focuses on speech behavior phenomena, communicative functions of the language, and historical, economic, socio-cultural, and ideological issues underlying the linguistic phenomena.

2. The perspectives on the language and its prestige are studied as reflections of a combination of its utility for Armenian speakers, and its symbolic role as indicator of the ethnicity and uniqueness of the community.

3. It is a detailed study of a language and a community in which the principles outlined above are argued based on a large set of examples from the life of the Armenian community.

4. It is based on a long period of contact with and research on the community and the language.

5. It considers the phenomena of LMLS as very much worth studying and as a field with a lot to offer to the comprehension of the human mind and linguistic behavior.

An interpretive analysis is the final task of the whole work as it provides "a detailed, contextual and multilayered interpretation which is unlikely to simplify or caricature developmental processes" (Mason 2002, p. 175). In fact, the need to interpret what is happening, why it is happening, and what can be done is what fundamentally links all the chapters. The data analysis, then, employed the following analysis tactics outlined by Miles and Huberman (1994) to generate meaning from transcribed and interview data:

- Counting frequencies of occurrence (of ideas, themes, words, pieces of data);

- Noting patterns of themes which may stem from repeated themes and causes or explanations;

- Seeing plausibility – trying to make good sense of data, using informed intuition to reach a conclusion;

- Clustering – setting items into categories, behaviors, and classifications;

- Subsuming particulars into the general – a move towards clarifying key concepts;

- Building a logical chain of evidence – noting causality and making inferences;

- Making conceptual / theoretical coherence – moving from metaphors to constructs to theories to explain the phenomena (pp. 245-287).

Finally, it is imperative to clarify that the dilemma between the researcher as an investigator and as a member of the community engaged in the debate of why and how to maintain the language, is resolved in favor of the second position. I envisage the chance to document, analyze, and suggest ways of maintaining the language not as a right, but as a responsibility to participate in language maintenance. The fieldwork principles and this analysis reflect the empowerment framework that "responds to the social conditions of the present-day field situations and is about research ON, FOR, and WITH the people" (Grinevald Craig 1997, p. 269; capitals in the original).

Fieldwork Methodology

This section includes a short explanation of the groundwork undertaken and the goals and strategies of the study. It presents the methods of collecting the data and the concerns that arose during the process. The main aims are to explain how a reliable and representative group was selected and clarify the way the questions were refined and the data collection approaches used in each of them.

Preliminary Fieldwork

Through my initial course work for the EdD, I became aware of the changes the Armenian community and its language were undergoing. Another factor that helped a great deal in enlarging my experiences with Armenian was the fact that I wrote articles for two Armenian Church magazines, on language, diaspora, culture, and identity issues. I had contacts with Armenian community leaders and attended many cultural, religious, and social events that allowed me to objectively compare the linguistic and cultural life in Beirut with that of other Armenian towns in Lebanon and abroad. I became convinced that Beirut, although its Armenian was undergoing drastic changes and its people struggling with issues of belonging, was still the most important stronghold of Armenian language and culture in the diaspora and that its people were the most enthusiastic on ethnic and linguistic issues.

During a preparation period, I began individual interviews with young speakers. These helped me considerably in knowing how to select a sample of population and how to proceed with the fieldwork. The twenty pilot interviews were conducted and recorded between May and July 2004, and they also helped me test and improve the quality of the interview protocol. This phase was followed by a pilot focus group session with six Armenian and Lebanese friends over dinner in a Lebanese restaurant. Both types of interviews were conducted in the early days of the study for exploratory purposes and to inform the development of the later stages of the study (Bloor *et al.*, 2002); hence, they did not constitute part of the main research. Using interviews and focus groups for preliminary exploration of the topic areas under study was especially useful because prior research was lacking (Bloor *et al.*, 2002).

Practical Steps to Achieve the Tasks of the Project

I began the study by writing down goals, tasks, and things to do. Mason's (2002) "Difficult Questions for Qualitative Research" served as a guide at this and subsequent stages of the research. Based on this plan and the pilot interviews, I started writing the interview questions. These were tested with speakers of different ages, and corrections were made based on the gaps and errors, duplications, expressions that needed new contexts as back up; hence, the style of many questions was changed, improving their clarity and efficiency.

One of the main objectives of fieldwork is selecting a representative group of participants. Researchers agree that the successful fulfillment of this task is the basis for the credibility, objectivity, and reliability of the data. Rubin and Rubin (1995), for instance, emphasize four key areas around recruitment: initially finding knowledgeable informants, getting a range of views, testing emerging themes with new interviewees, and choosing interviewees to extend results. Seale *et al.* (2004) admit that these are valuable "ideals", as actual practice can deviate from this. However, they deem it important to try and obtain a range of views on the topic of the research, as those few interviewees who produce radically different or contrasting talk can often be central to modifying theories. In this task, the contacts I had in Beirut were a great help. Through friends, friends of friends, and friends' families (Seale *et al.*, 2004), a sample was created that would satisfy the needs of my work and provide the broadest possible reach of the range of perspectives on the topic under investigation (Darlington and Scott, 2002), representing participants with characteristics of age, sex, and education I believed would be representative of the Armenian demography in Beirut. A notebook was kept about the process as recruitment can be central to understanding the outcomes of the research (Seale *et al.*, 2004).

However, potential participants are not always easy to find. Seale *et al.* (2004) point out that participation in qualitative research requires considerable time and energy and the willingness to commit to reflection on deeply personal experiences. Consequently, I left plenty of time for data collection. I wrote the chapters on the Armenians and the literature review while building up the list of possible participants and their contact numbers.

Some of the old people interviewed resented the study openly because they believed that these were private issues and that they should not be focused on directly. I tried to allay their fears and objections by explaining to them the importance of studying the present socio-cultural and linguistic state of the community, diagnosing the situation, and finding practical solutions that would help the community maintain its ancestral language in the Lebanese diaspora. On the other hand, those between 40 and 55 welcomed the study and congratulated me on embarking on such an important and much needed examination of the community. I was asked to publish my findings so they could benefit from the analyses and recommendations. Soon afterwards, I received offers from two Armenian newspapers, a weekly, a bimonthly, and a quarterly to provide them with articles on issues related to language, maintenance, and shift. The 1600th anniversary of the invention of the Armenian alphabet and the 90th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide in 2005 provided propitious occasions for the publication of these articles (Jebejian, 2004a; 2004b; 2005a; 2005b; 2006a; 2006b).

I kept myself open to whatever the data would show, believing that too tight a focus on particular types of data at an early stage carries the risk that unexpected and unanticipated relationships between the data will be missed (Darlington and Scott, 2002). Hence, I worked to build a multifaceted plan of fieldwork that could overcome any unintentional influence I could exercise on the speaker through my questions.

Looking back, it was a good practice that after almost every interview I wrote field notes on the main results of the interview, on interesting things that happened or that I observed. It was not a perfect record, and often notes had been written either in Armenian, Arabic, or English. These field notes not only provided interesting facts related to issues being analyzed, but also helped clarify my understanding of the speaker's answer or reaction to a question (Morgan, 1997). Like Morgan, Lofland and Lofland (1984) observe, the classic medium for documentation in qualitative research has been the researcher's notes. Moreover, Flick (1998) adds that the notes taken should contain the essentials of the interviewee's answers and information about the proceedings of the interview. Flick underlines the importance of field notes by asserting that "the production of reality in texts starts with the taking of field notes" (p. 171). Correspondingly, Spradley (1980) suggests four forms of field notes for documentation, which I have followed in my fieldwork journal:

- condensed accounts in single words, sentences, or quotations from conversations

- an expanded account of the impressions from interviews and field contacts

- a fieldwork journal, which like a diary "will contain ... experiences, ideas, fears, mistakes, confusions, breakthroughs, and problems that arise during fieldwork" (p. 71)

- notes about analyses and interpretations, which start immediately after the field contacts and extend until finishing the study.

The Main Data Collection Tools

This section presents the methods of collecting the data: individual interviews and group interviews. The major goals of this section are to highlight the characteristics of these research tools, explain the reasons for choosing them, and describe the individual interviews and focus group interviews conducted for this study.

Individual Interviews

Researchers agree that interviewing is the most commonly used data collection approach in qualitative research (Darlington and Scott 2002; Rapley 2004). Firstly, because the interview seen in various forms of news interviews, talk shows and documentaries, alongside research interviews "pervades and produces our contemporary cultural experiences and knowledges of authentic personal, private selves" (Rapley 2004, p. 15). Secondly, as Atkinson and Silverman (1997) point out, interviewing is currently *the* central resource through which contemporary social science engages with issues that concern it.

Among the reasons for choosing to use interviews in this study is that they enabled me to gather contrasting and complementary talk on the same theme or issue and that they yielded data that best met the research purpose of the present study and answered the research questions. In this sense, Holstein and Gubrium (1997) pinpoint that qualitative interviewing is both "simple and evident" (p. 3). Rapley (2004) observes that face-to-face interviewing enables a special insight into subjectivity, voice, and lived experience. Darlington and Scott (2002) add that there is an implicit or explicit sharing and/or negotiation of understanding which is absent in other research procedures. Furthermore, any misunderstandings can be checked immediately.

Interviewing was deemed crucial for a study that had not been embarked on before because, as Holstein and Gubrium (1997) argue, respondents are "not so much repositories of knowledge – treasures of information awaiting excavation, so to speak – as they are constructors of knowledge in collaboration with interviewers" (p. 114). Interviews, then, are excellent tools for finding out how people think or feel in relation to a given topic and open up a world of experience that is not accessible through other methods such as observation (Taylor and Bogdan, 1998). At the same time, because interviewer and

interviewee jointly construct knowledge, the interviewer's influence on the interview responses must be taken into consideration.

This view entails attention to the interview process, to the hows as well as the whats. However, I concur with Darlington and Scott (2002) who caution that a "narrow focus on *how* tends to displace the significant *whats* – the meanings – that serve as the relevant grounds for asking and answering questions" (p. 115). Rapley (2004) argues that interviewers do not need to worry excessively about whether their questions and gestures are too leading or not emphatic enough. He suggests that they just get on with interacting with that specific person and later analyze "how your interaction produced that trajectory of talk, how specific versions of reality are co-constructed, how specific identities, discourses and narratives are produced" (p. 16).

Individual Interviews in the Study

The main goal of the interviews was to assess on a large scale the level of language use in Beirut. A second goal was to evaluate the view of the community on issues related to their linguistic and cultural identity, linguistic competence, and outlook on culture and language maintenance. For these purposes, three sets of questions were prepared. The first set included a short demographic questionnaire that would provide information about age, sex, education and training, occupation, languages spoken, and information on how to contact the participants. The second group contained questions on language use. The third set asked questions about culture, identity, and language (Appendix D).

"Questions on language use" contains 18 questions that inquire about which of Lebanon's languages the speakers use, in what situations, where, and with whom. Armenian, Arabic, English, French, and Turkish are included in the questions.

"Questions on language, identity, and culture" contains 28 questions. There is a multiple set of issues such as perspectives on the language, religion, history, and culture. The opinions of the speakers on the role of schools, media, identity, the Genocide, Armenia, and so on are also sought. The questions solicit the interviewees' perception of the attitude of Lebanese Arabs towards Armenians. There are also questions on their expectations and desires for the linguistic and cultural future of the Armenian community in Lebanon and how to realize them. This set of questions is more complex than the one on language use, so often open-ended questions were used in order not to limit the range of choices or opinions of the speakers and moreover to increase the objectivity of the results.

Before every interview, it was made sure that the interviewee felt comfortable. Work on the questions began only when any kind of tension had disappeared. Moreover, to enable people to tell their stories, in their way, rapport needed to be built (Darlington and Scott, 2002). For example, prior to the sessions, I introduced myself, reiterated the goals of the study, obtained permission to take notes, and informed the participants that their names would be changed for confidentiality and anonymity reasons (Seale *et al.*, 2002). Another issue that also needed to be cleared at the beginning was the participant's right to terminate the interview at any time (Seale *et al.*, 2002), as participation was completely voluntary. But nobody opted out as they were interested in the study and glad to be part of it.

The questions were prepared in English, a language in which most Armenians are fluent today. But during the interview, they were usually offered the chance to choose whichever language they felt comfortable in. Some of the younger interviewees preferred to use English and/or Arabic, as they felt they could express themselves better in those languages. The older ones chose to use Armenian, as they thought they had no problem neither with formulating sentences nor expressing themselves clearly in Armenian. French was also used during the sessions, and at times all four languages.

Sometimes, especially when I thought the participant had socio-cultural and psychological reasons to not give their real opinion multiple questions were used, located distantly from each other, which asked in different ways more or less the same thing. Delicate topics included questions that involved speaker's views and loyalties, like issues of the linguistic degeneration of the language, language utility, or marriage.

'Why' questions seemed interrogatory and could lead to a dead end, but 'what' and 'how' questions seemed less intrusive and tended to yield explanations (Becker, 1998). However, since the interviews were structured to resemble informal open-ended conversations, there was little observable pressure to say the "right" thing. Moreover, the interviewees were able to articulate sequences of thoughts without being interrupted or pushed in a certain direction. The interviewees were also encouraged to illustrate their statements with stories and anecdotes. The sequence of question sets was introduced in all the interviews in identical order. Specific questions were omitted only if the interviewee had already talked about the topic. Sometimes, interviewees tied together several topics in one answer. In the analysis, all responses relevant to a specific topic have been combined in one analytical step.

On average, each interview lasted around 45 to 60 minutes. The main technical insight I gained was to carefully choose the room for interviews. In the beginning I used homes, cafes, and university campuses. Family members intruding, friends stopping by to talk, and mobiles ringing, were a continuous interruption of the work. Later I made a point of finding quiet corners when on a campus or in a café, and asking for some privacy when in a home. Therefore, the interviews took place in a relatively relaxed setting. I took notes during the interviews instead of using a tape recorder, as I had found out during the pilot study that the interviewees felt less intimidated, more open to share, and more serious when I took notes instead of tape recording the interview.

All the interviews were conducted by me. A hundred and ten were scheduled, but some

subjects had to travel, others cancelled due to the prevailing tense political situation and

constant demonstrations in Beirut, while still others had to cut the interview short for

emergencies at home or work. Ninety-two complete interviews remained. The

interviewees are all Armenians, that is, their fathers are Armenian, and consequently they

have the suffix –ian in their family name. They come from different neighborhoods and

educational and socio-economic backgrounds. The age of the interviewees ranged from 18

to 80 years. Fifty-one of them were men and forty-one women. The following

occupations were represented: journalist/editor, university student, businessman, priest,

housewife, educator, taxi driver, writer/poet, house cleaner, truck driver, travel agent,

medical doctor, and administrator. For a detailed profile of the participants in the

individual interviews, please, refer to Appendix E.

Focus Group Interviews

Focus groups are groups of ideally 7 to 10 people, but some professionals in qualitative

research prefer to work with focus groups conducted with 4 to 6 people (Greenbaum,

2000). As interaction between participants is a key feature of the focus group method,

careful consideration of group composition is vital. Morgan (1997), for instance, believes

that there has to be enough diversity to encourage discussion but not too heterogeneous a

group so as not to repress others' views. Bloor *et al.* (2002) suggest that to have a

productive group the following characteristics need to be taken into account: ethnicity,

religion, sex, age, as well as a background of shared experiences.

Focus groups, however, have a number of shortcomings. These relate to the extent to

which participants may experience peer pressure to remain silent about some views or to

readily agree with more dominant views in the group (Darlington and Scott, 2002). The

fact that focus groups are driven by the researcher's interests can also be a source of

weakness. However, Morgan (1997) argues that this problem is hardly unique to focus groups because the researcher influences all but the most "unobtrusive social science methods" (p. 14). His argument is that there is no hard evidence that the focus group moderator's impact on the data is any greater than the researcher's impact in participant observation or individual interviewing.

Morgan (1997) points out that only a decade ago, focus groups, also called group interviews or group discussions, were almost unknown to social scientists; however, now, a review of on-line databases indicates that research using focus groups is appearing in academic journals at the rate of more than 100 articles per year. Morgan ascribes this rapid growth to social scientists' "ability to borrow from an established set of practices in marketing research" and their "ability to adapt this technique to our own purposes" (p. 2).

The objectives of focus groups, which range from ascertaining beliefs and perspectives of individual participants to the analysis of group processes leading to the formation of specific individual or group opinions (Darlington and Scott, 2002), seem to provide the best tool to serve the objectives of this study. It is a method which can "be adapted very flexibly to serve a particular topic, issue, purpose of study and target population" (Lamnek 1989, quoted in Wodak 1999, p. 128). Basch (1987) argues that focus groups are particularly well suited to collecting in-depth, qualitative data about individuals' definitions of problems, opinions, and feelings, and meanings associated with various phenomena. In this sense, Darlington and Scott (2002) add that particular advantages of focus groups relate to the benefits of group interaction, such as "the extent to which the cross-flow of communication sparks ideas that would not emerge in a one-to-one interview" or even observation (p. 62). According to Bloor *et al.* (2002) the interaction between participants is also useful where what is required is creative thinking, solutions, and strategies. In this context I found that, as Morgan (1997) remarks, that the

comparisons that participants make of each other's experiences and opinions are a valuable source of insight into complex behaviors and motivations.

In short, the characteristics outlined above rendered focus group interviews greatly beneficial as a research tool and helpful in generating data for this particular study.

Focus Group Interviews in the Study

This study examines language maintenance and shift, and, hence, investigates individuals' perspectives and statements about language, maintenance efforts, and reasons for shift, generated under group conditions. Focus group discussions seemed well-suited to these purposes. In particular, they enabled me to follow closely patterns of "recontextualization" (Wodak 1999, p. 107) and the transformation of concepts such as identity, culture, and language during group interactions. Moreover, I was able to gain powerful insights into how meanings of important concepts such as diaspora, identity, and language are jointly shaped and negotiated or "coconstructed" (Wodak 1999, p. 107) during the discussion. These focus group interviews, made up of new interviewees (that is, they had not taken part in the individual interviews), were able to yield valuable knowledge which would otherwise have been difficult to obtain.

The first focus group was held at my brother's house and the second at a friend's. Initially, each group was designed to be made up of six participants, but only five appeared each time. Three males and two females took part in the first focus group. The age of the participants ranged from 20 to 48 years. Their education and training ranged from high school diploma to graduate degree. The following occupations were represented: high school teacher, housewife, university student, church administrator, and executive secretary. Two males and three females took part in the second focus group. Their ages ranged from 39 to 67 years. Their education ranged from high school to post-graduate

training. The following occupations were represented: businessman, librarian, writer/editor, travel agent, and housewife. A detailed profile of the participants in the focus groups interviews is provided in Appendix F.

The participants were offered snacks, soft drinks, and coffee before and during the sessions. Then, it was important to open the sessions by introducing the topic in a fairly general fashion. There were two reasons for beginning at the level of generalities: first, the participants may not be able to follow a researcher's detailed thinking on a topic, and second, they may be looking for some sense of purpose and direction that can lead them to restrict and channel their discussion (Morgan, 1997). It was also important to keep the introduction and instructions as brief as possible, so as not to create an expectation that "the moderator will be telling the group what to do" (Morgan 1997, p. 49). After obtaining permission to tape record the sessions and informing the participants that their names would be withheld for confidentiality and anonymity reasons, the sessions started with me asking each member in turn to identify themselves by their first name and playing the recording back to check audibility. This initial experiment also helped me identify the individual voices on the cassette (Bloor *et al.*, 2002) and helped set the mood for the group as a whole. At the end of the sessions, the participants were asked to give a final summary statement. Believing that the final statement will not be interrupted or challenged may allow a participant to make a contribution that they have been holding back from the open discussion (Morgan, 1997).

After the group discussions on issues pertaining to language, maintenance efforts, identity, cultural, socio-economic, and political concerns, and reasons for shift, the participants were asked to fill out a short questionnaire to gather personal information about age, sex, education and training, occupation, languages spoken, and information on how to contact

them. The first discussion lasted 90 minutes and the second two hours during which Armenian, Arabic, English, and French were used.

Researchers caution that analysis without transcription leads to loss of much of the richness of the data and risks a selective and superficial analysis (Bloor *et al.*, 2002). Hence, in order for a detailed and rigorous analysis to be conducted, a thorough transcription of the tapes was carried out. The conventions were:

- all words have been transcribed, using conventional spelling

- repeated words, broken-off words and back-channel utterances (uh, um, mm) have been ignored

- there are no indications of pauses, overlaps, stresses, volume, pace or intonation, except in conventional punctuation (Macnaghten and Myers, 2004).

These guidelines saved transcription time and made the transcripts readable, as the extra features possible in more detailed transcription systems could render the text nearly unreadable and could "even influence readers' sense of the social status of participants" (Atkinson 1992, p. 73).

Once the transcripts had been checked for accuracy, I listened to the tapes again, with the transcript in hand, to get a fuller sense of what the text was about (Darlington and Scott, 2002), and to make sure that the translation during the transcription process from Armenian, Arabic, and French was as accurate as possible. Moreover, it helped me become familiar with the data and provided me with early thoughts for the analysis. It was useful to have a notepad in order to note down any thoughts as they occurred (Bloor *et al.*, 2002). Copies of the transcripts together with the tapes were sent to the participants to eradicate the errors that could have occurred in translation and transcription, in addition to ensuring validity.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE PROGRESS OF LANGUAGE SHIFT AND CHANGING IDEOLOGIES

Introduction

This chapter presents an analysis of language use and language perspectives of the

Armenians in Beirut in an effort to analyze the progress of language shift. The analysis is

based on the information gathered through 92 individual interviews.

The analysis in the first part is based on the 18 questions that appear in "Questions on

language use" and that inquire about which of Lebanon's languages the speakers use, in

what situations, where, and with whom. For Clyne (2003) the domain of language use is

the contextualized sphere of communication. Similarly, Fishman (1991) regards a domain

as "the socio-cultural context in which a language is realized" and relates it to a certain

topic and situation (p. 44). For both researchers, such domains are family, home, work,

public sphere, religion, school, and friends. Fishman further narrows down the definition

of a domain to be "conceptualized as the role-relations that are most congruent with

particular domains" (Fishman 1991, p. 44). Clyne, on the other hand, considers the

relation between interlocutors as the factor governing language choice. Both viewpoints

add importantly to this study, and since they overlap they are not necessarily different from

each other.

Then, I begin to "unpack" the patterns of language use. This process is the starting point

for understanding the current everyday places and situations in which the interviewees use

Armenian. In turn, the investigation of the frequency, usefulness, and opportunities

interviewees have sheds light on their use of Armenian in various contexts and situations,

the choices they make, the views they hold on the amount of Armenian they draw on in

their everyday life relationships, and the subsequent perceptions they maintain concerning their identity, culture, and language.

Subsequently, there will be a discussion of the data generated through the 28 questions from "Questions on language, identity, and culture", on issues like perspectives on the language, religion, history, culture, role of schools, media, identity, the Genocide, and Armenia. The study also includes an analysis of the 92 interviewees' expectations and desires for the linguistic future of the Armenian community in Lebanon and how to realize them. The examination of the responses reveals their standpoints on identity issues, cultural belonging, and economic, social, and political considerations and impacts on language maintenance and shift.

The results are not organized according to the interview protocol but according to the main thematic categories of the present study. Thus the analysis, based on Miles and Huberman's (1994) analysis tactics (outlined in Chapter Four), concentrates on the content-level and on the identification of constitutive elements and recurring patterns of argumentation as well as on the way interviewees chose to combine these elements. The viewpoints are presented jointly with explanation of repeated themes and causes, trying to make good sense of the data, subsuming particulars into the general – a move towards clarifying key concepts, and building a logical chain of evidence by noting causality and making inferences. The extracts are designated by the age, gender, and number of the interviewee. The contribution, for example, of a 24-year-old male who was interviewee number 35 will be designated as 24M35, and so on. A sample transcript of an interview is included in Appendix G.

Combined, the discussions aim at providing the reader with a clear picture of the extent to which the Armenian community utilizes its mother tongue, its interpretation of its

experiences, analysis of socioeconomic, political, personal, and communal factors that contribute or have contributed to the shrinkage of the domains in which Armenian is used and the subsequent accelerated pace towards language shift, and its perspectives on the repercussions these may have on language maintenance possibilities. A table summarizing the major tendencies among Armenians in the study according to age group is included in Appendix H.

Patterns of Language Use in Beirut

Academic research is lacking, yet historical facts and the older interviewees' reports suggest that the pattern of language use was very different in the period following the survivors' settlement in Lebanon from what it is today. In the early and well into the mid twentieth century, most Armenians used Turkish and Armenian, and the interviewees' anecdotes testify to the fact that Turkish was widely spoken by their grandparents and parents.

In retrospect, 80M75 notes,

> The Armenian language was forbidden in some of the Armenian villages of the Ottoman Empire, so our parents were obliged to speak Turkish. Therefore, when the survivors of the 1915 massacres reached Lebanon, for some the main language of communication was Turkish. I learned Turkish as a child because that was how we communicated at home and with most of our relatives.

There is further information, gleaned mostly from interviewees' memories, which allows comparisons between the language of the survivors and their offsprings:

> Looking back, I can understand why my father insisted that I go to school. He

wanted me to learn Armenian rather than Turkish or Kurdish which were the main languages that we spoke at home. They reminded him of the old country and the cruelty of the people his ancestors had lived with for very long years. (65M33)

Speaking Turkish was something natural for us. It was the only language we spoke at home. But my mother always made sure I spoke Armenian with my friends. I could feel inside of me that she wished I had never learned Turkish, but there was nothing she could do about it. I learned Armenian when I began going to the school behind our house. (70F63)

In fact, many interviewees report that even though Turkish was spoken with grandparents and parents, children spoke Armenian to each other:

As children, we spoke Armenian with each other at home, at school, and in the neighborhood but Turkish with our older relatives and grandparents. First, our parents encouraged us to use Armenian. Second, our teachers inculcated in us a sense of duty towards our language and ancestors. It is true that we learned Arabic at school, but it was not that important for us. (66M76)

My uncle, a prominent leader back then, used to visit the homes of the refugee Armenians and insist that they send their children to school, as he firmly believed that *hai tebrotse hai azkin miyag pergoutyounn e* [the Armenian school is the only salvation of the Armenian nation]. Turkish, however, constituted a major part of all our communications at home and in the neighborhood. (78M70)

These accounts explain the proficiency in Turkish of those interviewees who were over 55 and shed light on the historical impetus for clinging to Armenian and deeming it crucial at a time when the survivors most probably needed to learn Arabic to get along in their new environment. However, even though the majority of the older interviewees answered that they are almost fluent in Turkish, they said that they hardly use it any more. Some admitted to still using it for story telling and proverbs.

Several interviewees mentioned that the Armenians lived in ghetto-like milieus complete with exclusive church, school, and market place. They led a life style where sometimes one could spend an entire existence without being exposed to any "outsiders". Dekmejian (1997) argues that, as in the case of other ethnic groups, Armenian communities tended toward social insularity in diaspora settings. While economic ties were quickly established with the larger society, Armenians tended to view excessive social and cultural relations with non-Armenians as being inimical to their survival as a close-knit community. "Centuries of persecution," believes Dekmejian, "have deepened the sense of paranoia toward outsiders – odars – who, even in democratic settings, are sometimes regarded with apprehension lest they marry Armenians, thereby hastening the community's assimilation" (p. 439). Hence, even though their school curricula included Arabic, Armenians made no effort to learn it as they did not need it. 70F63, who still lives in such an area, indicated that she hardly uses Arabic in her daily interactions. The main language of communication is Armenian. Her words, though, are instructive of the future that awaited Armenians once they left Bourj Hammoud, an area in Beirut known as "Little Armenia".

I live in Bourj Hammoud where my neighbors are Armenian. Actually, once all my neighbors were Armenian, but they left looking for something better. They prefer to mingle with Arabs, and send their children to Lebanese schools. They hardly speak any Armenian. I am happy that I stayed here where my grocer and

butcher are Armenian. I work in an Armenian institution, so unlike those who left, I can say that I hardly use Arabic. (70F63)

Similarly, 63M32 explained,

I hardly use any Arabic. But sometimes I have to use it to communicate with the Arabic teacher at our school. You see, I like to mix with my own people with whom I know how to speak. I even buy my things from Armenian stores. I read and write Arabic well, but since I do not practice it a lot, I have come to notice that increasingly it takes me time to remember words.

70M85, who also owns a publishing company, said jokingly,

I just moved to a suburb of Beirut, and my neighbors call me *baron* [an Armenian term for a gentleman that Arabs use when talking with elderly Armenians] because they know I am one of those Armenians who does not speak Arabic very well. The funny thing is that they start to talk to me in broken Arabic.

58M40 disclosed his knowledge of Arabic thus, "I avoid working with Arabs because my Arabic is very weak". 63F52 said, "We underestimated the importance of Arabic in school and concentrated on learning Armenian, English, and French instead. Now I can hardly say a sentence in Arabic". 74M47 said, "I can hardly speak Arabic, and when I need to, which is not that often, I quickly resort either to English or French". 55F26 said, "Luckily, my French is very good. It saves me from many awkward situations where I cannot express myself in Arabic. And I believe it is too late now for me to try and learn a new language". These and other interviewees' accounts suggest that poor knowledge and

restricted use of Arabic further limit their need or use of Arabic. On the other hand, they reported using Armenian almost everywhere and with everybody they meet, very little Arabic, and occasionally English or French, even though some of them had a fair knowledge of both or one of these western languages.

In fact, Armenians who settled in Lebanon after the Genocide opted for Western languages, especially French and English, before they spoke Arabic. One reason, other than the one mentioned above, is that the prestige of Arabic and the power of the Lebanese government were disputable, as Lebanon was a French mandate. Moreover, self-imposed residential segregation kept the Armenian community insulated and made the need for Arabic unnecessary or basic in their daily interactions but French and English important for travel and commerce. Hence, it is safe to say that these interviewees have frequent chances of using a little Turkish and more Armenian in their homes, neighborhoods, for their daily needs, and with the people they come across or interact with.

Akin to these responses, the majority of the interviewees between 40 and 54 reported that increasingly they speak Armenian only at home and with friends. 53F68 stated,

> Almost all my friends are Armenian, and I speak Armenian with them. At home my children know that they are not allowed to speak in any of the other three languages they know. They often complain, but I think they are doing fine.

58M40 said,

> Actually, your questions made me realize how little Arabic I use in my daily interactions. I have enough self-confidence to engage in a conversation in

Arabic, but I have few opportunities to do so. I work in an Armenian school, where even the Arabic language teacher is Armenian. When I go home, the cycle continues. My neighbors are mostly Armenian, so I find it natural and comfortable communicating in my mother tongue.

Similarly, 42M86 summed up his peers' position when he reported,

> I have no contact with my college friends anymore, and all my friends are Armenian. Like me, they believe that we have to set good examples to our children by speaking 'clean' Armenian with each other. My children feel very proud of their Armenian heritage.

Exceptions were cases where the wives or mothers were Arabs. For example, 35M69 preferred to have the interview in English because he does not speak Armenian,

> Before we got married, we agreed that my wife would learn Armenian. Now my children speak Arabic and English. We mingle with her side of the family more, since my parents live in the mountains. Our neighbors and friends are Arabs, and they all know either French or English. I come home late, so I hardly have time to teach my kids Armenian or speak it with them.

Similarly, 39M28 interviewee speaks no Armenian. At first, though, his Armenian name deceived me, and I started talking in Armenian when he first came to deliver our newspaper. I remember him explaining to me in Arabic, "Please, do not continue. I do not speak Armenian." During the interview, he explained,

> My mother is an Arab, and I grew up with practically no Armenian. My father

always hoped that my mom would learn Armenian, but she did not. I married an Arab myself, and the only language we speak at home is Arabic. I wish I knew Armenian or at least my children could learn it, but it is too late now. (39M28)

By contrast to the older interviewees, the majority of the interviewees between 25 and 39 reported using Armenian only with their parents and increasingly Arabic, French and/or English with siblings and maids. This age group disclosed that their Arabic was good or very good, and that they used it all the time with their neighbors, friends, while shopping, at the bank, in restaurants, at work, and government offices. 73M35 sums up the position of his peers when he said, "Let *them* [the Arabs] learn Armenian. It is too late for me to learn Arabic," the accounts of the younger interviewees show that they prefer to use Arabic in order not to offend the Arabs, to show respect, good manners, and good will. As they expressed themselves in Arabic with greater ease, younger speakers answered that they had no problem refraining from using Armenian and communicating in Arabic.

For instance, 35F64 imparted, "When we get together with my neighbors for morning coffee, I speak only in Arabic because they do not know Armenian, but I know Arabic". 34F51 said, "I have many Armenian patients, but I have made it a rule to speak Arabic with them for the nurse to understand what is going on". 34M73 explained his reasoning, "I always stick to Arabic otherwise they feel offended and think we are keeping things from them or badmouthing them". 34M68 said, "Armenian is not accepted at all. My colleagues get angry if they hear me speak Armenian with a student or a colleague. So, I have learned to change my ways for their sake". "I automatically use Arabic and then switch to English or French as most of my friends are multilingual, like me." were the words 25F23 used to describe the languages she used when with Arab companions. The older groups had revealed that they were accustomed to communicate in Armenian and had to be reminded to use Arabic when in a group that does not speak Armenian.

Concurrently, interviewees between 18 and 24 reported using very little Armenian. We learn from their responses that it is mostly restricted to their home. The majority of these also reported that they used mainly Arabic, English, and/or French with siblings, maids, friends, teachers, at the university, in cafes, shops, and workplaces. Almost all reported that they knew English and French very well or fairly well. Moreover, the majority of them said that they had practically no Armenian friends (and no desire to have any). These interviewees also chose to label their proficiency in spoken Arabic as very good, and in fact some of them preferred to have the interview either in Arabic, English, or French. The samples below illustrate some of their language choices and patterns of language use, and their interpretation of the motivation guiding their choices:

I use Armenian only with my father. With my mother I speak Arabic because she is an Arab and does not know Armenian. I find it very difficult to communicate with my grandparents on my father's side because I cannot seem to find the words in Armenian. (21M25)

I have no Armenian friends. The school I went to was a local one. Even there, half of the student body was Armenian, but I refused to mingle with them. I was there to learn Arabic and make friends with the Arabs. Now that I am in college, all my friends are Arabs and like me they are multilingual. So we keep on jumping between Arabic, English, and French all day long. That is also what I do at home with my younger sister. (20M22)

I use Armenian a little when I am home. Outside, I use only Arabic and English. I sometimes feel guilty though, especially when I go visiting my grandmother, and she recounts how her ancestors often paid with their lives for their choice to remain Christian and Armenian. (21M25)

You should interview my younger brother. He can hardly make a sentence in Armenian. I at least can manage, but I use it only at home. (23F13)

These extracts from the youngest interviewees in the study highlight their interpretation and perception of their knowledge of Armenian and motivation in their choices. 21M25's words above echo what De Vos (1995) alludes to as feelings of guilt for failure to remain in one's group. Furthermore, her ancestors' act is explained by Fishman (1997) as a struggle for a life with dignity for the beloved language which is "often a struggle not merely metaphorically and defensively put but quite literally and physically expressed as well" (p. 336).

It may be too ambitious to present a detailed reconstruction of language use patterns in the last ninety years, the time when the survivors arrived in Lebanon; however, these insights and comparisons between speakers of the same age but different generations show that language use in the community has changed. It is interesting to note that the decrease in knowledge of Armenian is reflected both in the decreased frequency of use of Armenian and in the increase in knowledge and frequency of Arabic, English, and/or French use. Evidently, the frequency of Arabic, English, and French among Armenian speakers is increasing, and in the young ages it is becoming the dominant tendency. It also shows that speakers below 40 are more likely to use Arabic, English, and French. They are more likely to use it because they have more opportunities to, as this is also the period when life changes from having a close affinity to the Armenian community to a more Arab-oriented life based on demography, communication, education, and employment.

In the next section some of the issues mentioned in the interviewees' accounts will be analyzed based on their perspectives on ethnic identity, aspects of Armenian culture, and hopes for the linguistic future of the Armenian community in Beirut. These examinations

will help us understand the patterns of language use presented above and explore the reasons for the differences between the generations.

Changing Ideologies and Their Impact on Language Shift

Increasingly, researchers are recognizing that language shift is caused, ultimately, by shifts in personal and group values and goals (Kulick 1992; Gal 1979). These investigators point out that urbanization or industrialization may lead people to revise their views of themselves and their world. But to say, as Gal does, that urbanization or other social change causes shift seems to ignore the essential step of comprehending the way that change has come to be viewed by the people themselves. Second, it also requires an explanation of how such change has come to be explained in such a way that it dramatically affects everyday language use in a community.

This section of the chapter, then, will present Armenians' conceptions of themselves in relation to one another and to their changing world, and how those conceptions are encoded by and mediated through language. What is particularly striking is that the changes which affected the Armenians since their coming to Lebanon in the early decades of the last century are not primarily material changes, but rather ideological transformations. Therefore, the next section presents the interpretations of the interviewees of the individual and collective changes the Armenian community in Beirut underwent and that have influenced their perception of Armenian.

Sense of We-ness: From the Center to the Periphery

In the lore of the Armenians who came to its shores, Lebanon symbolizes survival. They arrived here after spending months walking under the scorching desert sun of Deir Zor, Syria. During those long marches from Turkey to Syria and then to Lebanon, they witnessed the death of their children from thirst, hunger, and disease, the cruel raping of

their mothers, wives, and daughters, and the brutal torture of the remaining men, mostly the elderly, for the majority of the young males had already been massacred in Turkey. Having witnessed those atrocities and survived them was overwhelming for many survivors. Nor were their offspring spared their share of grief and psychological problems. Their communal and personal histories were overpowering, a fact which, as shown below, retarded the process of integration into Lebanese society. Armenian proficiency became a prerequisite for survival in face of the Young Turks' plans to obliterate Armenians.

Boyajian and Grigorian (1986) argue that the children of genocide victims feel that there is an obligation placed on them to be the bearers of the hopes and aspirations of a whole people. Hence, they see life as a "serious business...they are required to be serious and in some sense, almost sad" (p. 181). 55F18 explains how this linguistic minority, hardly settled, reacted with language maintenance strategies and increased overt language loyalty when they felt threatened. She said,

> I was ashamed to admit that my parents spoke Turkish at home. My Armenian
> history teacher used to say that speaking Turkish was an act of treason. For
> him, speaking Turkish meant we were being unfaithful to the memory of the
> one and a half million Armenians massacred by the Turks. So, I remember
> boycotting Turkish and urging my parents to speak Armenian. (55F18)

I totally identify with this stance and can add that for a very long time I managed to keep the fact that my father spoke only Turkish or that *I* knew Turkish a secret by not inviting my friends over to our house. For Fishman (1997) this amounts to a moral imperative to believe in and defend the language against all who would detract from it or deny it its due because not only does the language deserve to be protected and fostered, but it is one's duty to do so. Thus, what is said for Irish, that it is a sacred national trust whose

enhancement is a national duty (Fishman, 1997), applies equally to Armenian, whose speakers are called upon to respect the ancestors.

This determination is further revealed by the recollection of 75M48 whose words echo Crystal's (1992) definition of language loyalty as "a concern to preserve the use of a language or the traditional form of a language, when the language is perceived to be under threat" (p. 219). The interviewee said,

> I remember my mother recounting how an elderly lady taught some of the surviving children the Armenian alphabet by writing the letters on the hot sands of the Syrian desert. It took great courage and determination to do that, especially, as they were being closely watched by the soldiers. But I guess she knew deep in her heart that that was her way of getting back at the Turks. (75M48)

Similarly, the following quotation from 72M49 exemplifies some of the factors that influenced language transmission,

> My father did not speak Armenian. But that did not stop him from volunteering to build a tin-roofed school in the neighborhood for teaching Armenian language and history. He had lost his family and lands and had had enough of Turkish. It was too late for him to learn Armenian, but I could see his determination to make his children learn it. For him, learning Armenian meant defeating the enemy who had killed his father and uncles.

We also learn from the interviewees' accounts that the Genocide survivors preferred to live in Armenian neighborhoods, totally discarding the Arabic language. They thought that holding onto their past identity would provide them with meaning, comfort, and strength.

They believed, as the older interviewees maintained, that their presence in Lebanon was transitory, and that they would soon leave for their motherland, Armenia. As explained in Chapter Two, repatriation was made possible after WWII, and around 150,000 diaspora Armenians immigrated to the Armenian Soviet Republic (Dekmejian, 1997). 70M85 described those days in these words,

It was like a big wedding. The days of being a refugee were over. Many Armenians, including my uncles and aunts, spent days at the port, waiting for the ships to take them to Armenia. Their insulated milieu, practically no knowledge of Arabic, and dreams of a permanent home facilitated their decision of repatriation. They did not know what conditions were awaiting them there, yet they chose to live in their ancestral homeland.

65M33 recalls,

I often heard my grandparents saying that soon we were going to leave Beirut and go home. Eventually, they left for Armenia with my two uncles and two aunts. We had to stay back because the last ship left before my father's papers were ready. My father had to start all over again because he had liquidated his business. But he was shattered and spent the rest of his days in depression.

These comments from interviewees who witnessed their parents' longing for the motherland, adamant decision to raise the next generation proficient in Armenian, and determination to discard Turkish and Arabic, reflected their attitude towards the Genocide, its perpetrators, and their perception of the future of the Armenian Cause. Many of them think that Turkey's continuous denial of the Genocide is a serious issue that needs to be addressed professionally and politically. They hold strong feelings against Turkey as the

root cause of their familial and national tragedies, humiliating experiences in foreign lands, and arduous struggle for the recognition of a crime still denied. They believe that there is a close connection between the memories of the atrocities of the massacres in 1915 and the manner in which they were chased out of their homes and their homeland on the one hand, and on the other, the way their parents raised them believing in the homeland, resolving to learn Armenian, working hard to keep the language, and maintaining feelings of affinity, of closeness, of belongingness, of group worth and esteem.

The following statements sum up the position of some of the older interviewees concerning the Genocide: "How can I forget the tears my father shed while recounting what he had witnessed" (78M70), "They did not make distinctions by gender, age, or social status. Thousands of children became orphans, and young women in their teens were gang-raped. I hate what they did to my people" (72M49), "My grandmother, who witnessed the massacres, always wore black" (68M76), "They took our lands and now still pretend that they are theirs. We are refugees as long as we do not live on our lands. But they will have to return our lands one day" (65M33), "April 24 is a special but sad day because it commemorates the biggest injustice that was done to the Armenian people" (57M42), "I always attend requiem services on April 24 because I do not want to forget the atrocities the Turks committed" (55F26), "They made us live as refugees in foreign countries. I will not rest until they accept their guilt and return our lands back to us" (56M62), "We will persevere and make Turkey recognize its murderous past, apologize, and make compensations for its crime against humanity" (47M58), "The stories my father recounted kept me awake all night" (45F34), "I feel angry whenever this subject is brought up" (43M45), "I always feel there is something missing" (44F24).

By contrast, there seems to be a significant shift in the way the younger interviewees perceive the Genocide, describe its impact, and express their feelings about it. There

seems to be a steady increase in the number of younger people who feel indifferent towards the Genocide and suggest that Armenians should forget the past. Many of them reported that they hardly participated in any activities or requiem services commemorating the Genocide. Only a handful of the fifty-four 18-39 year olds responded that they attended a special lecture that day. As presented in Chapter Two, the Genocide has become an ideology, providing Armenians with a sense of peoplehood, cultural rebirth, linguistic loyalty, and historical continuity. The following comments made by some of the young interviewees, however, underscore the decreasing affiliation the new generation maintains with the Armenian Cause and the diminishing knowledge of the event itself, relegating a historic, central issue to the periphery.

Here are some of their responses that shed light on the perceptions they have concerning the tragic event that radically transformed the demographic, social, and psychological makeup of the Armenian people: "I am not interested" (23F13), "I have no knowledge of the Genocide. I did not live it" (21M36), "This is the first time I hear that Armenians were massacred. I had no idea" (21M39), "What is April 24" (21F25), "I do not have anything against the Turks" (20M22), "I do not know much about it" (20M8), "Like other nations, there will always be good and bad people" (19M79), "They will have to admit it one day. I feel angry, but we need to look forward" (19M59), "Massacres happen all the time. I am not going to judge the Turks" (19F56), "I do not want to think about it" (19M5).

These statements seem to corroborate the concerns some of the older interviewees expressed about the indifferent, passive stances young people take towards the Armenian Cause and the subsequent repercussions these attitudes might have on the future of the Armenian Cause and on the Armenian language especially. They also believe that individuals who speak their heritage language will be able to explore their roots – literature, art, history – and have a firmer sense of who they are. "At this pace," said

66M76, "we will soon be in short supply of people to lobby for the recognition of the Genocide by Turkey and the big powers." "We have an unresolved cause. If we assimilate and forget the language, who will fight for our rights, for compensation. for justice." asked 53F68. For these interviewees, the Armenian language is closely linked to the experiences of their ancestors, hence, it is about "ethnic allegiance", "history", "homeland". "culture", "nation-building", "belongingness", "identity", "faithfulness to the memory of the one and a half million martyrs", "keeping history alive", "staying connected", "reclaiming a lost homeland", and "survival".

These thoughts were repeated by some of the other interviewees, but not by those between 18 and 24. The majority of the latter expressed themselves thus: "We are not living in Armenia. Armenian is not necessary in Lebanon" (21F39), "I do not think it is necessary to speak Armenian" (21F29), "In a globalized world Armenian is not important. It is not an international language" (20M8). But there were a few who expressed themselves thus: "It is important for my identity" (21M36), "Language is in the blood. It gives a sense of roots" (19M5).

The generational disparities in attitudes and perceptions demonstrate that along with the significant changes in the way different generations of Armenians grasp the impact and meaning of the Genocide there are also considerable differences regarding the feelings of loyalty to one's ancestral language and the meaning of maintaining that language for retribution purposes. The responses of those interviewed for this study attest to the fact that the Genocide, for some a symbol of death and resurrection. has, after ninety years, lost that symbolism for others, especially the third and fourth generations. Hence, a fundamental issue that sustained the first couple of generations' determination to ensure a sense of we-ness and historical continuity, has been downgraded by the subsequent

generations, casting doubts on the just conclusion of an internationally unresolved national tragedy.

Identity and Belongingness: "I went to Armenia with great hopes, but I realized that I do not belong there either. Where do I belong? I do not know." (21F1)

The differences in perspective presented above are underpinned by the variations in the views held by the interviewees concerning their ethnic identity. At one end is traditional Armenian identity, at the other Lebanese identity, and in between are hyphenated combinations. Karmsch (1998) is fundamentally right when she asserts that identity is about belonging, "about what you have in common with some people and what differentiates you from others" (p. 41). At its most basic, it gives one a sense of personal location, a stable core to one's individuality. But it is also about social relationships, one's complex involvement with others.

In Beirut, the Armenians interviewed for this study hold a wide range of positions concerning identity. The following older subjects chose to put emphasis on their Armenian identity: "I consider myself Armenian even though I was born in Lebanon" (80M75), "I am forever grateful to Lebanon for the safe haven it provided my family, but I cannot but feel and be Armenian" (70F63), "It is true that I hold a Lebanese passport, but my blood is Armenian blood" (63M32), "My parents were proud of their history and culture, and they taught us to be proud too" (61M72), "Armenians have special reasons to hang onto their historical definition of self. Armenians as a nation survived wars, famines, occupations, persecutions, deportations. To culminate this turbulent history, they survived the Genocide" (56M62), "I always say I live in Lebanon but am Armenian" (55F26), "I am a Lebanese citizen, but I am 100% Armenian. We were forced to leave our homeland. We did not come here voluntarily" (47M58), "The precarious situation of the Armenian homeland places more responsibility on us to perpetuate Armenianness" (47M46), "I feel a

strong connection to being Armenian. I feel it in my spirit. I like being Armenian" (45F34), "We are in Lebanon because of the Genocide. That is the case with all diaspora Armenians. If we melt into the communities of our adopted countries, then that will, in my opinion, result in a second genocide" (41M54). How prevalent these feelings are among the younger generation of Armenians is hard to say; however, judging from the results of the present sample, it cannot be very popular or widespread.

The way participants talked about their identity points to its multiple nature, and for some raises problematic questions regarding identity and home. Several pointed to the interplay of their two ethnic identities, that is, being Armenian and Lebanese. Bromley (2000) defines the latter situation as the third time-space and Hall and Du Gay (1998) 'the third scenario'. This notion of hybridity and heterogeneity rejects the notion of ethnic identity formation as a simple assimilation to the host society or as retaining the original ethnic traits (Bhabha, 1994). Instead, a space is chartered in the interstices between the displacement of the histories that constitute it and the rootedness of these histories in the politics of location. These researchers observe that the hyphenated time-space is a process not of becoming a something but one that remains active and intransitive, one that "does not limit itself to a duality between two cultural heritages. It leads, on the one hand, to an active search of 'our mother's garden'…the consciousness of root values…and on the other, to a heightened awareness of the other 'minority' sensitivities" (Bromley 2000, p. 159).

For instance, 35M69 said, "I usually see myself as Lebanese-Armenian. First, I am Lebanese, and then I am Armenian. It also depends on the situation. When with my family, I feel more Armenian, but when I am with my friends, I feel more Lebanese." Similarly, many others responded in this manner: "I feel a part of both of these worlds. These different cultures have shaped me" (39F44), "I am Armenian-Lebanese, since the

Armenian part came first and the Lebanization followed. But you know. The hyphen fractures identity" (38M31), "Armenians are hard-working. The Lebanese took us in when we needed shelter" (27F43), "I am Lebanese-Armenian. Armenian symbolizes my ability to survive. My Lebanese identity gives me roots" (25F14), "I am a global person" (25F87), "I am not a Lebanese because that would make me an Arab, and I am definitely not an Arab. I am not an Armenian either because I do not have an Armenian passport. I have a Lebanese passport. It is a vicious circle" (25F41).

With each passing generation there seems to be a linear increase in the proportion of people who identify themselves as Lebanese. Some of these discuss their identities as an inseparable part of the Lebanese context in which they were born, raised, and lived. Here the emphasis is seen to shift to being simply Lebanese: "I love Armenians, but we must never forget that we are Lebanese" (23M9), "My family is Armenian, but I grew up in a Lebanese environment" (23F13), "I would not fight a war for Armenia or Lebanon" (20M8), "I live in Lebanon" (19M79), "I have no Armenian nationality" (19M56), "I do not have an Armenian passport. I was born in Lebanon" (18F11).

Interestingly enough, in the attempt to investigate their perceptions of where home is, the variations in opinions concerning ethnic identity fade away, and a consensus prevails among the interviewees concerning Armenia. What unfolds through these interviews is how the homeland is viewed by a diaspora community that is geographically not that far from it, yet there seem to be, in the eyes of the interviewees, tremendous gaps between them and the people living in Armenia, and between Lebanon and Armenia. To illustrate, I quote:

> Armenia is my motherland. It reminds me of my roots, history, and culture.
> But I get depressed when I think about the people living there. They are so

backward, uncultured, and poor. (75M48)

I wish to be buried in Armenia but not live there. I cannot start all over again. I feel settled here. Besides, I cannot get along with the people there. We are not the same people. Our paths diverged hundreds of years ago. We do not even have any relatives living there. (80M75)

We have the same roots, but we are like two different peoples. We do not even understand their language, which is very rough, and grammatically very different from our refined, western Armenian. (63F52)

They did not experience the Genocide. They did not go through the ordeals we went through. That is why, I believe, we are more resilient and determined. (55F26)

I remember Ararat whenever Armenia is mentioned. But I feel sad about the way the people in Armenia live. They are poor, yet they do not lift a finger to do something about it. I cannot imagine myself living among such people. (47M21)

I studied in Armenia and have wonderful memories of the country and its people. But I cannot live there. I visit it every now and then, but I do not think I can live there because we do not understand each other. (47M55)

We are more cultured, open-minded, multilingual, and ambitious. (35F82)

We were raised in a free, democratic country. But when you meet with people from Armenia, you can clearly recognize Soviet traits in them. You have to be

careful when dealing with them. (25F10)

I went to Armenia with great hopes, but I realized that I do not belong there either. Where do I belong? I do not know. (21F1)

The above responses represent the lived experiences of people whose lives have unfolded in myriad communities and hence are marked by hybridity and heterogeneity – linguistic, ethnic, and national. Thus, it is apparent that these diasporic subjects have experienced double and even plural identifications that are constitutive of hybrid forms of identity that are affiliated with constructions of nation or homeland (Hall and Du Gay, 1998). Clearly, with subsequent generations, these identifications vary in form and meaning, in some cases complicating belongingness, and in some others creating an absence of choices. The following words by Aurora Livens Morales (1986) seem a suitable way to conclude this section, as they echo some of the interviewees' feelings.

I am not African. Africa is in me, but I cannot return.

I am not taína. Taíno is in me, but there is no way back.

I am not European. Europe lives in me, but I have no home there.

I am new. History made me. My first language was spanglish.

I was born at the crossroads and I am whole. (quoted in Benmayor and Skotnes 1999, p. 14)

Transmission Trends: Weighed Down by Stereotypes and Exogamy

It was highlighted by some of the interviewees that the decision on the part of the survivors to learn and teach Armenian was made possible by the fact that Armenians were given citizenship, the right to establish schools, and the right to teach their language and history soon after they settled in Lebanon. According to O'Reilly (2001) the policy of the state in

which a minority language group is located is a significant factor for the vitality and long-term survival of the language, even though not necessarily the most important one. O'Reilly mentions the case of the Irish language which is both a minority language and an official language of the Republic of Ireland, yet it has a weak position, indicating that state support alone is not enough. Similarly, we will see that this fact alone does not guarantee language maintenance. A minority language may still lose ground even though it enjoys governmental support. This may be explained by Edwards' (1985) assertion that history shows that most minorities have always been "willing to make alterations" or "compromise" if these were seen to be in their best interests (p. 95).

Hence, even though Armenians had the right to construct schools and churches, the interviewees pinpoint certain factors that played an important role in the third and fourth generations' decisions to part ways with the mainstream Armenian community and attempt to identify with the majority population. Interestingly enough, some of the responses reveal the fact that governmental support was overshadowed and undermined by public resentment and intolerance. It is clear that cohabitation has generated both positive and negative feelings and attitudes on both sides. Some of the interviewees show gratitude to the protection the Lebanese people provided the survivors and their families. As this study focuses on the analysis of Armenians' opinions of their circumstances, I believe studying the Lebanese peoples' opinions of Armenians would prove a valuable research in that it could help both sides overcome prejudices and misunderstandings.

Before delving into the responses, it is necessary to shed light on certain factors that according to the interviewees have obscured governmental support. For reasons already presented above, for a long time Armenians preferred to live in close communities. One of these areas, Bourj Hammoud, became increasingly associated with Armenians, as subsequent groups of refugees chose to settle near relatives or families from their own

villages in the old country. In the early sixties and seventies, some of the residents of the tin-roofed, shanty-like dwellings and small apartments in Bourj Hammoud, left first for nearby areas, and then to bigger, more expensive houses in the suburbs, or immigrated to the US and Canada during the war in Lebanon. After the war was over in 1990, more Armenians left Bourj Hammoud, as Beirut underwent an intensive rebuilding and reconstruction phase. The buildings and apartments in Bourj Hammoud, though still owned by Armenians, became increasingly occupied by Indian, Sri Lankan, Pakistani, Syrian, and Egyptian migrant workers and businesses.

In the process, clearly the Beirut community experienced great physical and demographic dislocation and consequently severe social and cultural dislocations, all identified by Fishman (1991) as leading to language shift. Intellectuals and journalists highlight this issue in their writings and attribute the abandonment of the original residents of Bourj Hammoud to their increasing affluence and desire to disperse from their concentration areas to establish residences in neighborhoods with better educational and business circles, thus weakening their language network (Nazarian, 2004). This is significant because according to some researchers (Clyne, 2003) the highest intergenerational shift is recorded among the group where the community-family-neighborhood links are the weakest.

For reasons identified earlier in this chapter, for a long time Armenians' exposure to Arabic was quite limited, and when they attempted to use it the locals accused them of not speaking it well and of committing especially gender mistakes. Armenian grammar and syntax do not carry gender inflections, unlike Arabic, which, exists in a diglossic situation, Colloquial Lebanese Arabic and Standard Arabic. While the latter may have been mastered by Armenians, the former proved to be difficult for many. This has led to jokes, and jokes are the most prolific vehicles for spreading stereotypes. "Speaking like an Armenian," came to mean generally making mistakes in Arabic. It became the most potent

negative stereotype of Armenians in Lebanon. Through the interviewees' accounts, we can further investigate the impact Arabs' attitude has had on the subsequent generations' proficiency in Arabic, their effort to be accepted by the majority Lebanese, and their determination to master Arabic even at the expense of disregarding Armenian and to some extent Armenianness. Liebkind (1999) sees this as a basic feature of most multicultural societies where it is important to speak the language of the dominant group and where it is to the advantage of the minority ethnolinguistic group to be able to speak it.

The following excerpts from the interviewees' responses highlight the way they grasp their relationship with the Lebanese and the way the latter's stances have urged the older interviewees in particular to override the stereotype and in the case of the younger interviewees to heed criticisms and comply with the majority population's expectations: "The majority of the Lebanese do not regard us as Lebanese" (73M35), "They resent the fact that we and not the Palestinians were given citizenship" (70F63), "They used to tell us to leave their country. In 1978, they killed and kidnapped many Armenians in order to make us leave Lebanon. So, we always need to be wary of them" (65M33), "They are jealous of our ambition and craftsmanship" (63M32), "They regard us as outsiders, even though we contributed a lot to Lebanon's advancement in education, industry, and economy" (61M72), "They do not like us because we cannot speak Arabic like them" (55F26), "They do not like us, especially when we speak Armenian together" (53F68), "My neighbors make fun of my Arabic" (49M67), "They see us as visitors, but as hard-working, trustworthy visitors" (47M55), "They make fun of us" (23F3), "They do not like us. During the student elections in college, they do everything possible to stop us from getting elected to the Student Council. They are jealous of us, but they deny it" (23M9), "They do not like it when we speak Armenian" (21F29), "They hate us in politics but like us socially" (21M36), "My friends in college do not want to have anything to do with Armenians" (21M27), "They say we smell of *soujouk* and *basterma* (types of very spicy

Armenian sausages)" (20M22), "My father sent me to a Lebanese school so they would not make fun of my Arabic" (18M20).

What unfolds through these interviews is the fact that the first two generations of Armenians managed to ignore and endure the locals' standpoints, as they were still engulfed in their own notions of home and repatriation, ethnic and linguistic allegiance, and familial and communal affinity and strength. By contrast, as is revealed through the interviewees' accounts, with the realization that Beirut could be their permanent home, followed by a steady decrease in affiliation with the Genocide and an increase in identifying with their Lebanese identity, subsequent generations evidently took note of their neighbors' comments and made an effort to make the requested changes in improving their communication skills in Arabic.

Another closely related issue to cohabitation that seems to have effected changes in ideologies and hence enhanced language shift is exogamy. Of the ninety-two interviewed for this study, three reported to be married to Arab women, one to an Arab man, and seven to having Arab mothers. There is a popular belief that mixed marriages with either Christian or non-Christian Arabs are on the increase in Beirut, and that the number of marriages among fluent Armenian-speakers is in decline, but there are no statistics to substantiate this. Historically and according to the interviewees' accounts, Armenians maintained a low level of exogamy, but this appears to be changing dramatically. Traditionally, the taboo against exogamy was so powerful that Armenian parents actually disowned children who married non-Armenians. The few non-Armenian wives who married into the Armenian community remained *odars* (outsiders) even though they had to be resocialized into the husband's culture. They had to learn the language, the norms and values, and the small and great traditions alike. On the other hand, if on rare occasions an Armenian woman married outside her congenital community, she was considered lost.

Today, however, exogamy has become so commonplace that the Armenian community has been forced to relax its stringent objections even in cases of conversion to Islam. The harsh reality is that if the community assumes a tolerance for inter-ethnic and inter-religious marriages that did not use to exist in Armenian society, the conditions for language maintenance might not be very promising.

Brenzinger (1997) views such changes in language behavior of members of an ethnolinguistic minority as disturbing the fragility of the status quo. The following remarks from some of the interviewees appear to accentuate these concerns: 72M49 said, "Young people do not care who they marry anymore. My daughter had a wealthy Muslim suitor that I turned down. Now she refuses to talk to me. How can I give my consent to somebody who does not share our values, faith, and convictions?" "I see no hope for the Armenian Cause if our young people continue marrying outside their group at this rate. They have to speak the language and form Armenian families to stand up against Turkey and demand our rights. Four of my seven nieces and nephews are married to Arabs, and their children do not speak Armenian. It is unbelievable," lamented 63F52. "I am so worried about my children because I know they do not mind marrying non-Armenians," said 55F18. The response the next interviewee gave was reiterated by many in his age group: "Intragroup marriage is very important, especially in the diaspora. It will ensure our survival and the survival of our language and culture. However, today things have changed greatly. The future is very bleak" (47M37).

There is evidence that these concerns are not shared by younger interviewees, even though a handful of them deemed intermarriage important because it might minimize marital conflicts and make their parents happy. The majority regarded intragroup marriage as unimportant and deemed it highly possible that they would marry outside their group: "Armenian men have no respect for women. The Lebanese are more open-minded.

Armenian families tend to be conservative and isolated from the rest of the Lebanese society" (23F3), "You cannot control matters of the heart. It's destiny" (23F6), "Armenian girls are beautiful, so I do not mind" (21M25), "It is highly possible that I will marry outside my group" (20M8), "I do not see any difference" (19M88), "So far I have not met an Armenian guy to my liking" (19F84), "I have no problem as long as I love her and she is a good wife. But thank God my mother is Lebanese and not Armenian" (19M59).

The first part of the latter response, about conservatism and isolationism, is another "accusation" voiced also by the dominant majority, but one that has, as shown above, become out-dated like the primary stereotype, that of "speaking like an Armenian". Yet they seem to be perpetuated as demonstrated by 23F3's answer above. What is clear from the accounts of the majority of the interviewees is that day-to-day experiences have a decisive influence on this ethnolinguistic minority's decisions, attitudes, and behaviors. The conduct and ways of each passing generation underscore the fact that the "modifications" are having detrimental effects on its linguistic and ethnic heritage in Beirut.

Language Choice and Functional Load: Pragmatic Considerations

Fishman (1991) specifies four types of media that constitute language use in society: understanding, speaking, reading, and writing. Based on the interviews and my observations, there is a state of equality in proficiency between the first two media among speakers older than 40. But in the younger age group, the competence in these two media starts to diverge. This is evidenced by the reported increase in instances when the younger speakers continue a discourse either in Arabic, English, and/or French and the increase in the amount of CS in a single speech turn. As shown above, speakers who are unable to express themselves in Armenian switch to using either or both or three languages of their repertoire. In fact, the majority of those over forty years old held negative opinions about

CS and complained that the language was not as healthy as before. Although they admitted that certain words like *internet, website, network, mobile, computer,* and other technical words are easier to say in English than their equivalent in Armenian, or that certain Arabic words have been incorporated into the Armenian language, like *yalla* (come on or hurry), *yaani* (that is), they thought that CS was a sign of weakness in Armenian and lack of faithfulness to the mother language. Rightly, the majority of the interviewees below forty and especially those younger than twenty-five and who knew Armenian, claimed that often they switched to any language that came to them at the moment because they could not continue in Armenian, lacking words or structures.

One of the findings of a study I conducted among Armenians in Lebanon was that CS betrays a lack of knowledge of Armenian (Jebejian, 2004a). CS was viewed as an escape mechanism used by Armenian bilinguals to make themselves clear or to express themselves better. As they did not know the Armenian equivalent of a word or could not remember it, Armenian bilinguals chose to continue their conversations in Arabic, English, and/or French or borrow a word or insert a sentence here and there to complete their discourse.

There seems, however, to be a consensus among researchers (Romaine 1995; Muysken 2000), and as presented in Chapter Three, that CS does not mean incompetence in any of the languages concerned. It results from complex bilingual skills and emerges in various places among multilinguals of similar circumstances, such as a multilingual context, group awareness, and permeability of cultural and linguistic norms (Romaine 1995; Muysken 2000). But as shown from the above accounts of the young speakers, most of the CS is done because their first language stops providing the necessary material for them. This indicates that for some, Armenian no longer serves as a means of communication. It is no longer an automatic, subconscious response. Words and phrases have to be thought of and

formulated carefully or given up totally by switching to other, better known languages. If this is not lack of competence it at least indicates lower degree of competence, perhaps in a particular domain, thus leading to a disagreement with the consensus referred to above.

To illustrate, here are some of the young interviewees' words repeated by more than one speaker: "I feel I am weak in Armenian. I cannot find words easily" (23M9), "I am criticized for switching to Arabic or French, but I have to. Everybody does it. It is natural in multilingual societies" (22F66), "It is difficult to concentrate on one language. It is easier to have several languages at hand" (22M12), "It takes time to make myself clear in Armenian because I do not know many Armenian words, so I use Arabic words" (21F77), "I do not know if I will ever be able to conduct a conversation in only one language" (21F1).

The latter statement rings true because not only Armenians CS but almost all bilingual Arabs in Lebanon CS between Arabic, English, and French. However, one of the prominent differences between the two groups' linguistic practices is that Arabic, and to a certain extent English and French, dominate the media, politics, economy, school, administration, and other domains, unlike Armenian which is limited to being used exclusively within the speech community. Brenzinger (1997) describes such a situation as a hostile environment for a minority language to exist in. He adds that the external threat to a minority language derives from these other domains and "the weight of pressure falls in line with the importance these domains hold within the community" (p. 276). Even though I find Brenzinger's use of 'hostile' an exaggeration, I totally agree with the second part of his comment, as the expansion of dominant languages is achieved by the means of spreading ideologies through the mass media, economy, and the education system. "Terms such as westernization, christianization, islamization, modernization, industrialization," Brenzinger remarks, "point towards reduction of diversity," and, consequently,

assimilation by choice "will be the main cause of the worldwide decline of minority languages" (p. 282).

Fishman (2001) joins Brenzinger and argues that it is an unequal fight. Moreover, what makes it difficult for minority languages to defend their position is that globalization as a whole is not rejected, but "an internal re-allocation of languages to functions is pursued that will also be partially acceptive of the culturally stronger Big Brother language" (p. 7). These insights might help explain why the domains related to linguistic prestige and power in Lebanon are not controlled only by Arabic but also by English and French. Edwards (2004) is convinced that when other languages are in competition with English, the decision to use another language requires particular commitment, for English after all is "the language of power and glitter – Coca-Cola, Bill Gates, MTV, and the mass media. In comparison minority languages can seem old-fashioned and unglamorous" (p. 81). It is true that the interviewees frequently reported using more Arabic and being more proficient in Arabic than either their parents or the older interviewees, but their anecdotes reveal almost equal instances of using English or French or patterns of CS that involve Arabic, English or French. The pattern is regular and shows that the frequency of use of these languages is increasing, and in the younger speakers is becoming the prevailing practice, reflecting, at the same time, a voluntary decision to shift.

The decrease in ability to communicate in Armenian is followed by an equally precipitous drop in the ability to read and write the ancestral language. The majority of those below 40 responded negatively to the question "Do you know how to read and write in Armenian?" While the majority of the rest of the interviewees responded positively, only those over sixty reported reading Armenian newspapers "to stay updated," "to know what is happening in the motherland,' "to read the Armenian perspective of local issues," and "to enjoy our culture". Young people show little interest in reading Armenian

publications. The main reason was that they did not know how to read Armenian. Other reasons were "I am not motivated to know" (20M8), "I have never seen an Armenian newspaper" (20M22), "I am not missing out on anything" (20F7), "Writers use difficult words" (19M56), "I like to read other newspapers, in other languages, especially English" (19F4), "I do not like reading in general" (19M79).

These responses reinforce the belief that there is a steady decline in the number of Armenians who attend Armenian schools (schools that follow the Lebanese curriculum but also teach Armenian language, history, and religion). Interestingly enough, the interviews reveal that there is likely to be a further decline in the future, as those already married and with children or future parents seem decided in their choice of non-Armenian schools for their children. Once again, there appears to be a sharp divide in opinions concerning the schooling of children and the transmission of the Armenian language, history, and culture to the next generation. While the majority of interviewees between 80 and 40 viewed sending children to Armenian schools "a must", "a national duty", "a source of ethnic identity and national pride", "a way to inculcate religious ethics", "an instrument of communal belongingness", "a medium for the transmission of historical knowledge", "a means to stay connected with the homeland", and "a successful medium for university studies", interviewees between 18 and 39 considered the Armenian school "a waste of time", "out of place in the Lebanese context", "an unsuccessful venture", "a channel of Armenian fanaticism", "unnecessary in a global world", and "a method of raising close-minded Armenians".

Concurrently, the majority of those below forty expressed unwillingness and no intention to send their children to Lebanese schools in the future. The following guided their reasoning in this matter: "We do not live in Armenia" (39F44), "I will destroy their future if I send my children to an Armenian school" (39M28), "They will only learn Armenian

there and be weak in Arabic, English, and French" (35M69), "Other languages are more important" (25F41), "Armenian schools are not good. They only give a lot of homework" (23F3), "I will kill their hopes" (22F89), "Armenian schools are weak in teaching foreign languages" (22M66), "They will grow up narrow-minded" (20M8), "The teachers are not qualified for their jobs" (19F81), "I want my children to be French educated" (19F91). At the same time, though, they expressed their readiness to speak Armenian with their children.

Clearly, almost all interviewees expressed their wish to teach their children to speak Armenian, but it was a different matter for the younger interviewees when it came to sending their children to Armenian schools. They believe, as Mackey (2001) rightly points out, that educating their children in Arabic, English, and French will guarantee success and financial and social advancement. Fishman (2001) reiterates this position and explains that parents do not want their children to be held back, or subjected to ridicule or abuse, the way they may feel they themselves have been. According to Dorian (1982) this can be best understood in terms of pragmatic adjustment to new requirements. She asserts that "language loyalty persists as long as the economic and social circumstances are conducive to it, but if some other language proves to have greater value, a shift to that other language begins" (p. 47). Coulmas (1997) puts it thus:

> Today the future of many languages is uncertain not only because their functional load is scaled down, but because they are never used for, and adapted to newly emerging functions which are from the start associated with another language... Lack of functional expansion and adaptation is thus a correlate and counterpart of scaled-down use. (p. 170)

Similarly, Edwards (1985) believes that retention of an original language is seen as disadvantageous as it interferes with internal desires of social mobility, power, and material advancement. This is reiterated by Grenoble and Whaley (1998) who observe that repeatedly researchers find out that "the relinquishing of a native tongue is tied in part to the belief that success in a non-native language is crucial to economic advantage" (p. 37). In fact this perspective was expressed by some of the interviewees who thought that not only proficiency in Arabic, English, and French are the key to success, but that Armenian would impede their and their children's social and material advancement. The following present the opinions the majority of the young interviewees hold about whether Armenian is favorable for a good job and a better life: "Armenian is good only if you have Armenian clients" (39M28), "Armenian is good only for communication in Bourj Hammoud" (34M68), "It is good for becoming an Armenian teacher only" (34M73), "Armenian is not a language that you can use at the workplace" (25F41), "Armenian makes no difference" (25F14), "I even have the impression that Arabic is not that important. English and French are seen as more important by most employers" (25F30), "Definitely not an asset at the workplace" (23M15). Dekmejian (1997) interprets the persistent quest for economic well-being as a compensation for the Armenians' inability to develop their homeland as well as a mechanism to achieve a sense of security in foreign environments. Yet this quest for excellence and economic elitism, he argues, has "often proven detrimental to many Armenian communities" (p. 437).

Pragmatism is not the only value operating, however. There seem to be cultural-historical and socio-political dispositions that favor language shift. As shown above, the Armenian neighborhoods supported a pattern of social networks which were very localized and restricted in spatial scope well into the later years of the last century. The relative stability of these network boundaries was an important factor in sustaining Armenian-speaking communities. However, the sixteen-year-long civil war in Lebanon caused population

levels to change drastically. By the mid 1980s, the population had been halved, and major structural changes continued happening within the community in the years following the cessation of the conflict, that is, in the early 1990s. Population levels were no longer able in many areas to support traditional activities like schools, parish, and socio-cultural events. Changes in shopping and recreation patterns, and shifts in migration patterns signified major transformations of social network patterns which occasioned significant changes in patterns of language use. These developments in the structure of the community and young people's choices of working outside the community served to intensify the frequency of interactions between Armenian-speakers and Arabic-speakers. There was also a growing involvement in social and occupational networks outside of the Armenian-speaking area.

The interdependence of changing language use patterns and other changes has been demonstrated in this model: limited use of the minority language leads to limited exposure to that language, which results in a circle of decreasing competence, lack of confidence in using the language, and increasing reliance on the dominant language (Brenzinger, 1997).

Perspectives on Language Maintenance: Future Directions

Almost all the interviewees commented that the Armenian language was degenerating and that there was a growing feeling of insecurity in carrying on communication in Armenian. However, while the older interviewees seemed to lament the fact and try to pinpoint the reasons leading to this unacceptable phenomenon, the younger interviewees accepted it as a matter of fact and a natural consequence of globalization.

In their assessment of the current linguistic situation of the Armenian community in Beirut, most of the older interviewees seemed to agree that the degeneration of the language was a new phenomenon. However, we do not have enough evidence at hand to permit firm

conclusions. Many more studies of attrition are needed to assess the viability of the spoken language. Therefore, as it is beyond the scope of this study to delve into the structural changes the Armenian language has undergone and is still undergoing, the following discussion will serve only to present the current perceptions of the linguistic problems faced by the Armenian language and its speakers. Their responses will pave the way to finding out the speakers' reasons for maintaining the language and the methods they suggest for maintaining it.

Most of the interviewees were of the opinion that increasingly speakers think in Arabic, English, or French, and then express themselves in Armenian, betraying a lack of grammatical knowledge, lack of vocabulary, and an increasing reliance on CS. These, they believe, distort the language, hamper smooth communication, and predict a further decline of the Armenian language. Among other reasons that seemed for many to be responsible for the weakening of spoken Armenian are: parents' indifference towards the Armenian language; parents' socio-economic aspirations for their children; parents' indifference towards Armenianness and Armenian issues; parents' emphasis on teaching their children Arabic, English, and French; parents' integration into the Lebanese society and the subsequent adoption of Lebanese values; young people's disinterest in learning the language; and their ever-increasing preoccupation with the Internet and satellite television.

Their perspectives verify the findings made so far. It is very clear to the older interviewees how things were in the past, are in the present, and will be in the future. Even though they aptly recommended solutions for the maintenance of the language, they appeared skeptical as to how and by whom these will be implemented. Their responses sounded nostalgic, as they missed the commitment their grandparents and parents possessed to everything Armenian: church, Genocide, demographic insulation, history, intergroup marriage, literature, motherland, national belongingness, media, and school. Clearly, they were

convinced that the Armenian language must be preserved "to preserve our values, culture, and literature" (75M48), "to be able to fight for our confiscated lands" (74M47), "to keep the memory of the Genocide alive" (70F63), "to feel Armenian" (63F52), "to stay Armenian" (61M72), "to safeguard our identity" (58M74), and "to survive as a nation" (50M19). Coincidentally, for some of the fourth generation interviewees it was hard to identify reasons for the maintenance of the language, while some others were more concerned about their future and believed that it was up to the community leaders to deal with such issues.

Despite this range of opinions about the importance of maintaining the language, the majority of the interviewees, however pessimistic or skeptical, were ready to offer strategies that could guarantee the survival of at least spoken Armenian for probably yet another generation. Their skepticism stood out, though, as they seemed convinced that the countdown had already begun and nothing could stop it. At the core of their responses was disillusionment with their political and religious leaders who had lost the trust of their supporters and lost touch with their people. 80M75, however, expressed his faith in the Armenians' ability to struggle and preserve their language: "Our nation has always been surrounded by hostile powers and overwhelmed by foreign influences such as Persian, Russian, and Turkish. We have paid a high price to survive, but survive we did. Now, our battle is against globalization, a giant, yes, but we will endure".

The perspectives offered in this matter were mostly accusatory, the old accusing the young and vice versa. However, notwithstanding their doubts, passivity, and accusations, young and old recommended the following plausible ways for the maintenance of the language: improving the academic standards of the Armenian schools; producing new, interesting textbooks for the teaching of Armenian language and history; reintroducing the teaching of geography, science, and mathematics in Armenian especially at the elementary level;

holding seminars that would target the equipping of Armenian teachers; providing more financial aid to needy Armenian students; rekindling parents' interest in Armenian issues; teaching the last one hundred years of Armenian history instead of the last three thousand years; producing cultural events that would imbibe pride in the young; making Armenian culture known to the Lebanese public; organizing special language and history courses for those who attend Lebanese schools; encouraging parents to speak Armenian with their children; eradicating rivalry between the political parties; organizing trips to Armenia; and discouraging exogamy.

It is significant that only one interviewee mentioned the input the Church may have in maintaining the language, as some studies have revealed the important role religion plays in mother tongue retention (Wang, 2002). The patterns of migration, settlement, and survival over the last fifteen centuries of dispersion point to the epicentric role of the Armenian Apostolic Church as preserver of ethnocultural identity. The Church followed the immigrants and survivors wherever they went, and church buildings functioned as the centers of Armenian cultural life. Consequently, Dekmejian (1997) believes, the Armenian Church was called upon to transcend its spiritual mission to become the cultural steward of the diaspora to the extent of overshadowing its spiritual mission. The Armenian Church played a key role in teaching the language and literacy of the community, forestalled the assimilation process in many communities, and helped ensure an enduring national identity. Nevertheless, the Church is not perceived as a trigger of language maintenance. This standpoint is substantiated by the accounts of the interviewees. For example, while some of the older interviewees admitted that they attended church only for funerals and weddings, some of the younger interviewees reported that if they ever attended church, they preferred the local church, as they understood Arabic more easily than the *krapar* Armenian used in the Armenian Church.

In conclusion, the words of 35M69 will serve to illustrate the weight of socioeconomic trends for language reproduction and their implications for Armenian-speaking networks and communities:

> We stopped sending our daughter to the nursery in our neighborhood because we objected to the presence of an Armenian teacher there. I did not want an Armenian to look after our three-year-old daughter because both will end up speaking in Armenian which will impair my child's chances of learning the three other languages, Arabic, French, and English used in the nursery, and consequently retard her future chances of entering the Lebanese social web.

Dorian's (1999) words come to mind here: "like a traditional costume or a special cuisine, language identifies the people who belong to a certain group" (p. 31). However, because it is only one of many potential identity markers, it is easily replaced by other markers, making the ancestral ethnic language functionally expendable.

CHAPTER SIX

LANGUAGE SHIFT, AND SHIFTING EXTRALINGUISTIC DETERMINANTS

Introduction

As pointed out in the preceding chapter on language shift and shifting ideologies, the Armenian language and linguistic attitudes have been undergoing a process of fundamental changes during the last few decades. The overall linguistic and extralinguistic systems are changing drastically, and the language is losing certain communal, national, and cultural distinctions. Evidence of language shift put forward in Chapter Five is the overall low competence of Armenian speakers, increasing reliance on other languages, the changing self-identification of the speakers, and the changing association of language with social and economic advancement. As noticed in the previous chapter, limited use of Armenian, which is more conspicuous as the speakers' age decreases, is closely linked to broad social, economic, technological, and political changes and determinants.

The main goal of this chapter is to create a clearer view of the ideological and socio-economic basis of the shift and project realistic prospects about the linguistic future of the community. Individuals' perspectives and statements about language, reasons for shift, and maintenance efforts were generated through two focus group interviews. The latter tool enabled me to gain powerful insights into how meanings of important concepts such as diaspora, identity, and language are jointly shaped and negotiated during discussion. Data gathered through the two focus groups also shed light on the issues pertaining to cultural, socio-economic, and political factors, clarified the participants' interpretations of the reasons leading to shifts in linguistic and attitudinal behavior, and complemented the conclusions reached through the individual interviews.

The chapter starts with a brief description of the dynamics of each focus group, as details of the makeup of the groups have already been presented in the methodology chapter. Then, it focuses on the discussions generated during the group interviews. The subsequent analysis is organized according to the prompting questions asked during the discussions.

Focus Group One

The prompting questions were the same for each group. However, there was considerable variation in the significance of the questions for each because each group had its own dynamic and intensity of discussion. In group one, participants tended to avoid open conflicts in the group and to work towards achieving group consensus. This meant that extreme positions were only rarely expressed, and they were able to express different viewpoints openly and comfortably. The number of contributions made by the participants was fairly balanced. It was obvious that the 20-year-old participant contributed whenever the topic of discussion seemed relevant to her experiences, such as CS and the relevance of Armenian in daily activities. She seemed skeptical about positive changes, called on the other members to be realistic, and shared very little in the discussion on Armenia and significant stages in the history of the Armenians.

The condition of the Armenian school triggered a lengthy discussion. Also striking was the strong emphasis on the impact of technological innovations and globalization on ethnic identity and the future status of a linguistic minority in a diaspora context. Worth noting is the interest in Armenia, and Armenia-diaspora relations were discussed at great length.

Focus Group Two

The participants in group two managed to express different points of view in a friendly and relaxed atmosphere, as well. One notable feature of this group was its more critical

attitude towards globalization during the discussion on 'future directions'. The Armenian school and its needs figured prominently in this group's discussions too.

On the whole there was great interest in linguistic issues. Prompted by the question on maintenance efforts, participants engaged in a critical discussion of the challenges facing the Armenian community and voiced nostalgia for the status the community held before the Lebanese civil war and the way the community conducted itself then. The frequent references to the Internet and Americanization were striking. Particularly detailed and discerning discussion in the group centered on the present socio-economic status, demography, and the prevalent consumerist mentality and behavior.

Analysis

The following analysis focuses first on the perceptions of participants concerning individual and communal perspectives on linguistic, social, cultural, and political trends in Beirut. This discussion is followed by a section on identity issues and links with the homeland and another section on the necessary or possible steps that would help maintain the Armenian language in Beirut. The analysis emphasizes the specific content of the participants' utterances and examines their viewpoints and their assessment of the prevailing standpoints of other members of the Armenian community in Beirut. The extracts from the first focus group discussions are preceded by F and the second by S. The contribution, for example, of a 44-year-old male from the first group will be designated as FM44, and so on. Each extract will also contain the number of the lines referred to in the transcripts.

Changing individual and communal perspectives about linguistic and extralinguistic issues

An initial spontaneous question was triggered by a conversation between two participants about the dilemma of one of the Armenian schools in finding a school principal. Hence,

after a brief introduction, as detailed in Chapter Four, participants were asked about the reason why the school was unable to find a principal, a relevant and closely related question to the purpose of this study. As mentioned above, this query generated a vigorous discussion and elicited the participants' perceptions about the diminishing degree of interest and trust in the Armenian school, the current evident shift in the priorities of the community, the challenges faced by parents, and the latter's handling of the situation in a changing environment and increasing economic, cultural, and social pressures. The following extracts are from the first focus group discussions:

Moderator: I heard you discussing the difficulty you are facing in finding a principal. Can you tell us more? (lines 1 to 19)

FM39: We have not had a principal in our school for the last six months now, yet people are not worried. We are preparing our students for the official baccalaureate exams, but there is no one to be in charge and assume responsibilities. Unfortunately, the community has lost its priorities. The school comes last.

FF39: The struggles faced by the Armenian school reflect the problems the community is going through. I believe that when Armenians started getting rich, they began separating themselves from the Armenian school and the Armenian community. They prefer to send their children to well-known Lebanese schools rather than to Armenian schools. There is more prestige in that.

FF20: I think they do it because they think their children will not need Armenian in the future. They will need Arabic, English, and French, and Armenian schools are unable to produce students who are well versed in these languages. Today, how many are majoring in Armenian literature? None. My friends, for

instance, are all majoring either in computer science or business administration. We are studying practical things. In this day and time, we are not worried about maintaining Armenian or being helpful to the Armenian community. It is survival of the fittest. We have to be well-equipped to be successful and make money.

As if in a complementary sequel to the above thought, the following discussion among participants in the second focus group identifies the reasons why they think Armenians are avoiding engaging in undergraduate or graduate work in Armenian language or history. In addition, they believe unqualified teachers' lack of passion and the little importance given to Armenian subjects in schools are affecting the way Armenian and Armenian history are taught.

SM67: The problem is that our schools pay teachers of Armenian less than what they pay the other teachers. (lines 5 to 24)

SM39: Yes, unfortunately, that is true.

SF49: Moreover, degrees offered by the Jemaran Institute are not accredited and graduates' degrees are not endorsed by the government. So those who are qualified to teach end up doing all kinds of jobs except teaching Armenian.

SM49: Because it is a matter of demand and supply. When there is more demand for good teachers of foreign languages, mathematics, and the sciences, it is logical that they will be paid more.

SF47: But, you see, the demand is even greater for good teachers of Armenian because there is little or even no interest among our people to become teachers of

Armenian.

SM67: But who is going to pay them enough to survive? I have been in this profession

for 40 years. In the 1960s and 70s, many went to Armenia to study Armenian

literature and history. When they returned they were disappointed. Thus, they

were obliged to choose professions outside the community. This led to the rise of

unqualified teachers. Yet because Armenian is not included in the official exams,

schools are not careful enough in their selection of teachers of Armenian. They

are not even supervised the way the physics, mathematics, or Arabic teachers are.

And believe me it will only get worse...

SF47: I know from my daughter's teacher. She lacks passion. She does not make the

lessons interesting for the students, especially Armenian history. Our books are

outmoded, I know, but teachers have to be innovative in their approach so that

students would get interested and not be bored hearing about things that happened

thousands of years ago. (lines 29 to 56)

SF49: It is our duty to instill in children love of the Armenian language so that when they

grow up they would want to teach it to others.

SF47: If this is how schools are operating, then how can we blame parents who believe

that Armenian has become redundant. They do not see it as an asset for their

children's future and success. It would not put bread on the table. So they believe

that if their children are not going to need Armenian, why then waste time learning

it.

SM49: My wife and I decided to send our children to a well-known Lebanese school

because we did not want to take risks. Armenian schools have low academic and social level. I want to make sure that my children will receive the best education. Look around you. Who are our representatives in the parliament toady? They are a group of weak, unmotivated people who were educated in Armenian schools. On the other hand, the big schools in Lebanon have produced presidents and ministers. This made me think that if I send my children to a well-known school there is high probability that my children too will reach high places.

SF47: I have heard that before from parents who think that Armenian has become redundant. They do not see it as an asset for their children's future and success. They are convinced that Lebanese schools have better teachers and teach foreign languages more professionally. So they believe that if their children are not going to need Armenian, why then waste time learning it. So they prefer to send their children to foreign schools from the very beginning to master the foreign languages. In most cases, parents become proud of their children mixing their languages instead of seeing it as harming the Armenian language and weakening its importance.

SM67: There are other reasons, too, like the birth rate. When I started teaching in the 1960s, most families had either four or five children. Now we rarely have families that have three children. Most have two, and many more have only one child. For these reasons we have very few students in our kindergartens. The other issue is the Lebanese schools. Our concentration areas do not exist anymore. Bourj Hammoud, Dora, and the camps do not exist anymore. Armenians have dispersed in the suburbs, away from the Armenian schools. Therefore, parents do not want to send their children to schools that are far. Some do, but others prefer to send them to schools that are close to their residence. Yet others are influenced by the

propaganda that Lebanese schools offer better education. We lost a big number of educated people like engineers, doctors, architects, and professors to migration. They were all educated in Armenian schools and had reached important places in the community. At one time, when you asked parents what their children would be in the future, they would have said doctors and engineers. But what we failed to produce is lawyers and experts in the Arabic language. Our difficulties rise from the fact that for a long time we lived in ghettoes and could not come out of them easily... (lines 78 to 94)

SF47: Let us not forget that our schools are spending a lot of money to employ the best teachers, especially in the upper classes. But if you listen to parents who send their children to Lebanese schools, they say that there are certain things that are so different from ours. For example, they are interested in the psychology of the students. They take care of the psychological well-being of their students. But they also charge three or four times more than our schools. (lines 106 to 117)

SM49: From my brief experience with Armenians, I can tell you that those who lived in Bourj Hammoud sent their children to Armenian schools because they were poor. Those who were wealthy sent their children to Lebanese schools because they could afford it and they had different national and international experiences. They did not care if their children knew Armenian or not. These also end up marrying with Lebanese men and women...

SF49: How many families subscribe to Armenian dailies? Very few. Children have to see Armenian books and newspapers being read at home so that they too would get used to reading them, identify with them, and imbibe Armenianness. (lines 134 to 146)

Moderator: Why do you think this is not happening?

SF47: How many parents are interested in their children these days? Many of them say

that I have to live my life. I cannot spend my entire life looking after my children.

They go out every night, and their children without parental supervision spend

hours either chatting or surfing the Internet.

SM67: The other day an 11-year-old student became sick at school. He had high fever.

We called home to his mother, but she refused to believe us, saying that her son

was lying. We told her that he was really sick. At last she said that she had an

aerobics class, and that she would pick him up after her class. This is the

mentality that we are facing now.

Interestingly, both groups alluded to the fact that neither they nor their community in

Beirut were exempt from the current changes around them. For example, FM39 referred to

the increasing economic concerns, growing uncertainties, and constant political instability

in the Middle East that consume a lot of energy and that render the argument over

Armenian irrelevant. Similarly, FM48, through a brief historical glance, provided his

perspective of the factors that have affected the Armenian community:

The newcomers did not even know Armenian. They spoke Turkish. But they were

determined to teach Armenian to their children. Besides, they lived in insulated

areas. The school was close to their house. The church was in the next street.

Relatives lived close by. The cemetery was near. Their lives revolved around five

streets. This went on till the 1970s. With the commencement of the civil war in

1975 things started to change. Immigration was at its climax. The leadership left.

The so-called fence that used to protect the Armenians started to fall down. The

Internet finished the process and tore down all kinds of fences. (FM48, lines 31 to

38)

In agreement with FM48's explanation, FM44 argued, "Twenty years ago people used to

get together more often, visit grandparents or relatives, and spend Christmas or Easter

together. Now people hardly visit each other, and young people have little or no contact

with their cousins. The Internet has replaced everything and everybody" (lines 39 to 42).

This stance was explicitly endorsed by FM39 who mentioned the example of an Armenian

family who spend most of their evenings with the father watching football matches on one

television set, the mother watching Mexican soap opera on another and the son playing

games on the Internet. He concluded, "There is little or no communication among the

three" (lines 45 to 46). In a similar vein, FF39 referred to the time when grandparents used

to live with the family and play an important role in maintaining the ethnic language and

history: "Grandmothers used to tell stories about the massacres and the long deadly

marches in the desert. She was a survivor and had stories to tell. She would cry while

recounting the atrocities. She would pray and teach her grandchildren how to pray.

Things have changed greatly now" (lines 47 to 50).

The participants showed great interest in the issue, and they expressed their view of the

impact of the Internet and English on the role and usage of Armenian in everyday life. As

we will see, the youngest participant believes that change is unpreventable and proposes to

be realistic about it. Her perception of CS falls in the same category, whereas FF39

interprets it as the result of negligence and lax behavior:

FF20: The Internet and chatting are all in English. What is the use of Armenian? Why

do I have to spend years learning something that will be redundant at the end?

Besides, my generation is not that ignorant. We know enough Armenian to use at

home. And it is not only us who mix our languages. Look at the Lebanese. Very

few speak only Arabic. The rest either mix their languages or speak in French

or English. (lines 51 to 69)

FF39: I do not blame you for thinking like that because it is our fault. We have failed in

giving the young enough incentives to learn and appreciate Armenian. Visit an

Armenian school and listen to the children talking. You will hear them speaking

broken Armenian mixed with Arabic, English, and French. Teachers do not care

anymore. We used to be rebuked for mixing our languages and were told to

speak 'clean' Armenian. My children, at least know that if they use a foreign

word, they have to repeat it in Armenian.

FF20: How long do you think you can keep on doing that? How long can you control

your children? We are living in an era where we are being influenced

tremendously. Even the French have a problem with the spread of the use of

English in France. Therefore, it would be a good idea if Armenians stopped seeing

code-switching wrong and unacceptable.

FM44: If we accept code-switching Armenian will suffer irrevocably... (line 71)

FM39: My students often complain that I am very demanding when it comes to speaking

Armenian. This is a century where everything is quick. We cannot keep up

because Armenian is a slow language, like our character. Our ancestors lived in

a mountainous country. In chatting they are so quick that we cannot expect them

to appreciate the long words we have in Armenian. (lines 77 to 81)

Moderator: What do you propose must be done? (lines 87 to 102)

FM39: Armenian has to show a little flexibility if it is to survive and make the new

generation like it.

FF20: I do not think that will make any difference. We have grown used to mixing our

language and depending on Arabic and English to finish our conversations.

Besides, it takes a lot of effort and time to remember Armenian.

FM39: I understand what you are saying. The Internet and computer language is

developing so quickly that the Armenian language cannot cope, especially with the

new technological words, and linguists have a hard time making up words, which

so often are so complicated and superficial that we prefer to use the original

version, that is, the English words.

FM44: I think expert linguists in Armenia have to deal with this issue and make up

Armenian words for *computer, network, email, website*, and so on. But they have

their own problems. Their Armenian is so saturated with Russian words that they

have enough on their plate.

Interestingly, the discussion in the second focus group took a similar turn, and the debate

concentrated on the possibility and impossibility of controlling CS, something SF47

considers harms the Armenian language, weakens its importance, and encourages shift. In

agreement, SM67 shared the following with the group:

SM67: I have friends who every time their children code-switch remind them to switch

back to Armenian. The mother interrupts them constantly. Their daughter is so

influenced by this that if her mother or a visitor uses a foreign word she reminds

them to say it in Armenian. (lines 57 to 68)

SM49: Today if I tell my children that they have to speak only Armenian at home. I will be in trouble. Their teacher will be upset.

SF47: Something must be done though to preserve our language from everything we have been talking about. As an Armenian, my language comes first. It will help my children feel Armenian. Leniency in this issue sends the wrong message to our children. It is as if we are telling them that it is all right if they do not know or remember words in their mother language. Plus, language mixing is a bad habit that distorts the meaning of a conversation.

These extracts emphasize the findings of the previous chapter, and thus underline the linguistic and ideological changes the Armenian community in Beirut has experienced and still is. These passages highlight a very important issue, but a disturbing one to some of the participants, and that is the community's shifting priorities and its impact on the status of the Armenian school, especially in producing culturally and linguistically well-equipped individuals, and the increasing attractiveness of the Lebanese school. These concerns echo Bakalian's (1994) comment that American-born Armenians contend that under ideal conditions it is desirable to retain language use, but not if it is at the expense of their ability to make a comfortable living and achieve mobility in the dominant society. These emphasize integration and accuse the "defenders of 'language at all costs' of operating in a vacuum; of being dream merchants who are oblivious of reality" (p. 253).

These lengthy discussions in the focus groups on issues already highlighted in the previous chapter also shed more light on the changes experienced by the community and the adjustments members of this community have opted to make to cope with the social, economic, and technological transformations. From the participants' interpretations we understand that education in the mother language and the seriousness with which that

education is passed on play a crucial role in the transmission of a minority language. However, we also gather from their discussion that Armenian subjects are not taught as passionately as they used to, and that increasingly the Lebanese school is viewed as the vehicle for a successful educational and social future. Even though the majority of participants in both groups upheld the importance of multilingualism, some of them lamented the fact that their importance was being overstated and that not enough was being done to circumvent the repercussions especially of the Internet on family life, language maintenance, and CS. Hence, apart from the fact that the above extracts seem to reinforce the findings of the previous chapter, they offer additional insight into some of the crucial matters affecting language maintenance and enhancing language shift.

Impact of identity and identification with the homeland on language shift

Crystal (2000) maintains that to make sense of a community's identity, we need to look at its language, as language is the primary index, or symbol, or register of identity. Closely related to Crystal's perception of ethnic identity is Joshua Fishman's (2001) use of the same term. Fishman uses ethnic identity to signify "belongingness" (p. 329), a term that was often alluded to in the data gathering process of this study. This is also a term that surfaces in any discussion on diaspora, a displaced community of people who have been dislocated from their native homeland through the movements of migration, immigration, or exile (Braziel and Mannur, 2003). The latter researchers assert that diaspora, in today's world, speaks to groups of displaced persons and communities moving across the globe. Many people find themselves exiles without really having moved very far – Croats in Bosnia, Hindus in Kashmir, Muslims in India (Braziel and Mannur, 2003). However, what emerges is the ambivalent relationship or double loyalty that diasporans have to places and that subsequently affect identity formation, in Rushdie's (1991) words, "out-of-country, ... even out-of-language" experience (p. 12).

In this sense, the extracts below, which are taken from the discussions of the first focus group, presents a very clear picture of the different phases the Armenian diaspora in Beirut seems to have experienced concerning its ethnic identity. It is remarkable the way the focus group participants' perspectives echo some of the individual interviewees' descriptions in the previous chapter, especially the way they have come to perceive their ethnic identity and their rationalization of their feelings towards the homeland, and the fact that the 20-year-old participant felt comfortable in her Lebanese identity and did not feel as concerned as the others did concerning the issue of shifting loyalties. The extracts also manifest the reasons why this specific diasporic community feels alienated from the motherland and its inhabitants. The discussion the participants had in this group elucidates, in a manner similar to the individual interviews, their dilemma concerning belongingness. In short, it can be condensed to the formula: 'I do not 100% identify with Lebanon, yet I do not seem to get along well with my emerging homeland either'.

FF20: I am speaking from experience. At the university we hardly speak Armenian. Some of us have graduated from Armenian schools, but the Armenian we speak is a mixture of Arabic, English, and French. (lines 105 to 119)

Moderator: What language do you speak at home?

FF20: Armenian, but after a very long day at the university, Armenian does not seem very important. I do not feel that I need to speak correct Armenian because I know I will not need Armenian when I graduate. I do not live in Armenia.

Moderator: What about your identity? What do you say you are?

FF20: I believe I am Lebanese.

FM39: I do not blame her. Many think like that. For years we said we were Armenian. Then, we began saying that we are Lebanese-Armenian, imitating the American-Armenians. That led us into thinking like the Lebanese and living like the Lebanese.

FM48: There is a growing trend among our people which says that we are Lebanese of Armenian descent...

FM39: What you said is true because we do not feel proud of being Armenian any more. 15 years ago we were very proud of our culture and heritage. We used to look down at the Lebanese and consider *them* as second-class citizens. (lines 124 to 132)

FM44: Now we are underestimating ourselves and our culture and praising the Lebanese culture. Is it because our number has dwindled? I do not think so. Something has changed in our psychology. We see ourselves as second class citizens and try to look good in front of the Lebanese by saying that we are Lebanese like you but somewhere we had Armenian ancestors. These are people whose *parents* are Armenian...

FF39: My assessment is that the educated Armenians left Lebanon during the war and that harmed the community a lot. They were true leaders who made the community proud of them and their achievements. They held the community together. Their departure created a huge vacuum in leadership. (lines 148 to 164)

FM48: Our priorities have changed. We have become too submerged in the Lebanese life, especially in politics.

FM39: Exactly, and that is taking a lot of our time. We could invest that time in thinking and planning how to maintain our identity and language. Our grandparents and parents had great pride, integrity, honor, and ethical values. Now those Armenians born here have acquired Mediterranean traits, discarding Armenianness and Armenian value.

FM44: For instance, I find it extremely unwise for two of our members of Parliament to argue about issues concerning our community in parliament. What would the Lebanese say? Surely they would make fun of us.

FM48: When are we going to wake up? When will we realize that Lebanese politics is very complicated. We cannot get involved in their disputes. But unfortunately our leaders have gotten too involved...

Moderator: What do you suggest they do? (lines 170 to 174)

FM48: During the Lebanese civil war, we were more Armenian. We were able to decide not to be dragged into the war and take sides, and we succeeded. We were threatened for not getting involved. Some of our best men were killed, but we endured. They can decide to do the same now.

FM39: One of our well-known poets has a famous saying, "Armenians are people of dark days. In times of trouble, they hold together. In times of prosperity, they become vulnerable". In my opinion, giving in to pressure from the majority was bound to happen. We have been here for more than ninety years. (lines 176 to 184)

FM44: You have a point there. You cannot keep a diaspora community intact for long.

Diaspora communities are temporary. Assimilation is inevitable.

FM37 and FF39: Look at what happened to our community in Egypt.

FM44: Our community in Poland was also one of the strongest ones, but they assimilated.

Those who went to Russia a hundred years ago, now have names ending in –ov.

Apart from exposing the complexity of the issue, the discussion above reveals the conviction of the twenty-year-old university student of her Lebanese identity and the position of the other older participants whose debate, triggered by the opinion put forward by the young participant, provides a historical analysis of the change in the perceptions and self-identification of the Armenians before and after the civil war in Lebanon. Their conversation depicts the initial identification and pride of the survivors in Armenian values and attributes the current decrease in affiliation to that legacy to changes in self-association, self-confidence, leadership, political stance, prosperity, pressure from the majority, and the time factor. Their allusions to the fates of the communities in Poland, Egypt, and Russia signal the inevitability of the assimilation of the community in Beirut. Akin to the opinions voiced in the individual interviews, the participants in this group discussion too seemed to conclude that complete integration into the Lebanese society is inexorable, and that current efforts serve merely to postpone what is inevitable.

Suleiman's (1999) perspective on this issue is that language issues in diasporas will most probably endure partly because of the fact that only in rare cases do individuals belonging to the majority learn the languages of minorities living among them. Linguistic diasporas, he asserts, are generally well aware of their peripherality in the political, social, and

economic life of their host country; hence, their efforts, as the case may be, to reach some degree of acculturation or feel more committed to the home country.

The discussion in the extract below confirms Suleiman's latter remark. Armenia and Armenia-diaspora relations are contentious issues both in the homeland and among the diaspora communities. In brief, the independence of Armenia caught the diaspora off guard. Although some immediately rushed to support the new Republic with all their financial resources, others complained that such efforts were draining funds and were detrimental to important projects in the diaspora. Diaspora grants in millions of dollars were allocated to the renovation of schools, hospitals, houses, and energy supplies. The churches connected with the Cilician See had to justify their continued existence and pressures for an ecclesiastical union with Echmiadzin began to surface. The existence of diaspora political parties too became superfluous. The inaccessibility of the homeland and its inhabitants during the 70-year-long soviet rule seemed to have created an independent, organized diaspora that found it extremely hard to dismantle. The 1988 earthquake, the independence, the conflict with Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karapagh, and subsequent poverty, power cuts in sub-zero conditions, destruction, and countless orphaned children and maimed parents, brought the diaspora into close contact with the homeland that implied to put an end to decades of severed links between the two. However, as expressed below by the discussion among participants of the first focus group, the 'reunion' was and has not been a smooth process.

Moderator: What role do you think Armenia can play? (lines 185 to 187)

FM39: After Armenia got its independence, we started to think about the rationale behind keeping our language in the diaspora and staying Armenian...

FM48: The independence of Armenia should make us want to cling to our identity and

language more forcefully, but you are right. There are a few whose love for the

homeland was rekindled by the independence, but the majority felt let down. (lines

198 to 201)

FM39: Until the independence we were determined that we should remain Armenian and

defend the Armenian Cause. However, after the independence of Armenia some

of us seem to be tired of struggling to maintain our identity in the diaspora.

Moderator: Would you explain, please?

FM39: It is because we used to have a dream, the dream of Armenia. Armenia was a

dream for us. The day the dream became a reality, and we got to know who the

real Armenians are, we were greatly disappointed. (lines 205 to 211)

Moderator: Why were you disappointed?

FM39: They are totally different in customs, language, character, and mentality. We

constantly have to send them money to build schools, to renovate their homes, to

take care of their daily expenses. This is not the Armenians we dreamed about…

FM44: We think all Armenians are one, but Armenians in Armenia do not think like that.

We believe immigration is bad for Armenia because Armenia is being emptied of

its citizens and especially its brainpower, but they do not see it that way…

FM48: Let us be frank. Today Armenia has ceased to inspire the diaspora. In the soviet

times, we had joint committees that dealt with repatriation, cultural, and relational

issues and that coordinated communication and relations between the motherland and the diaspora. We even had a joint committee that initiated and planned activities to forestall assimilation in the diaspora and implement linguistic, cultural, and historical maintenance-oriented procedures. (lines 217 to 251)

Moderator: So, how would you like to see relations evolving between the homeland and Armenia?

FF39: Let me answer that question. The diaspora is prone to myriad influences that have and will lead many such communities to total integration into the majority and complete assimilation. Armenia has to realize that a strong diaspora that affiliates itself with the homeland will contribute greatly to the improvement of its economic, political, and educational sectors. Therefore, more efforts should be invested in coordinating relations between the two because both complement each other.

FM44: That is very good, but we need to be realistic. The American Empire has established threatening conditions that have to do with life or death. This Empire has declared war on all national histories, historical rights and memory, national economies, boundaries, authorities, and cultures, and it wants to impose its marketing regulations, and cultural and ethical values on all of humanity, regarding them as its enemies and punishing those who disobey. These conditions endanger the fate of minorities like us and especially the Armenian Cause.

Moderator: How?

FM44: The Armenian government has started giving in to this American politics and

some of the political leaders in Armenia refuse to act against Turkey joining the

European Union. Some of them have even been bold enough to announce that

Armenia and the Armenian people have no land claims from Turkey and that they

are ready to open the borders between the two countries and initiate joint business

ventures.

FM48: Exactly. And these have greatly disappointed us in the diaspora. For years we

struggled to stay Armenian and keep the Armenian Cause alive, and now our

people in the homeland show readiness to overshadow our century-long struggle.

These and other such stances are having catastrophic repercussions on the

Armenians in the diaspora. We are totally disillusioned.

In the extract above the participants reveal the gap that seemed to surface in the aftermath

of the independence and as a result of the increased contact between the diaspora and the

homeland. The generated discussion mirrors the disillusionment the interviewees

experienced, as described in the previous chapter, and prompts questions such as: to what

extent does the "old country" function as a framework and regulate transplanted identities

within the diaspora? Should the old country be revered as a given absolute, or is it allright

to invent the old country itself in response to people's contemporary locations? Whose

interpretation of the homeland is correct: the older generation's, that of the younger, the

insider's, or the diasporan's? The participants' standpoints bring to light the complexity of

such queries and hence the complicated nature of reestablishing relations with a homeland

they hardly had any contacts with for more than seventy years. What is more challenging

is that the differences in the agendas of both, the homeland and the diaspora, has left some

Lebanese diasporans, even after fifteen years of traffic between Armenia and the diaspora,

struggling with issues of belongingness and fostering ambivalent feelings.

Future endeavors and hindrances

Fishman (1991) stresses the important relation between the process of language shift and the need for culture change in schools, or change in the ethno-cultural patterns, and symbolic and value systems of the community. He calls for "indigenized schools", where the minority language and culture are valued as much as any majority language (p. 62). The participants in both focus groups voiced similar opinions in their discussions above. Therefore, the recurrence of this theme in the extracts below simply indicates the value they accord the school. Interestingly, as illustrated below, the data emphasize the need for concrete agendas for language maintenance and at the same time pinpoint the communal, global, technological, and socio-economic challenges that would hinder maintenance efforts. Still, both groups suggested feasible steps whose successful implementation would guarantee ethnic, cultural, and linguistic maintenance. The following extracts are from the discussions carried out in the first group.

Moderator: What do you suggest would redress the current situation? (lines 253 to 290)

FM44: Perhaps what needs to be done is to take the number of the community into consideration and then think about whether we need all the schools that we have now. However, many wonder whether parents would be willing to take their children to Armenian schools that are far from where they live or would they simply take them to the Lebanese school that is around the corner. This is a real problem.

Moderator: Has anything been done lately to address these issues?

FM39: For the last couple of years, some of the Armenian Orthodox schools handled the situation by making kindergarten free.

FM44: But that created a sensitive situation.

Moderator: What do you mean?

FM44: The students who registered came from other Armenian schools. Therefore, some

of the schools were upset by this measure.

FF39: Let me give you another example. Giligian was closed down three years ago

mainly for financial reasons. It was an elementary school. Board members

thought that the students will follow the principal, who was appointed at another

Armenian school. They even made transportation arrangements. But what

happened is that the majority of the students went to Lebanese schools, and only a

few went to the school the principal went to.

FM48: We know the mission of the Armenian school. It is to maintain the language by

transmitting it to the new generation. To do that at this time and age we need

professionalism. Sentimentalism is a thing of the past. We need attractive, new,

colorful, and interesting books for the teaching of the language and history.

FF39: Exactly. Dissatisfied with the existing textbooks, some teachers use materials they

have collected. But what disturbs me the most is that until now we do not have

textbooks that teach the Genocide.

FM39: All these need planning and human resources. I believe that a committee, made

up of representatives of all the factions of the community should get together and

discuss these issues and agree on future plans. Armenian must be preserved, so

we need to take practical, efficient steps.

Moderator: How would you go about doing it?

FM44: What is happening is that everybody wants to work alone. Such problems cannot be solved alone. The political parties and different denominations need to come together and plan together. It is a matter of to be or not to be. When people see their leaders sitting together and planning the future together, they will take heart and be optimistic. What they see in front of them now is each struggling alone and criticizing each other's work. All the diaspora is facing the same problem...

FM48: True, and that makes me even more worried about the future of the Armenian community in Beirut. Logic says that the number of schools will decrease. There are families that cannot even pay the discounted fees of the Armenian school and consequently send their children to public schools. This is a new phenomenon that we need to investigate and put an end to. (lines 293 to 314)

Moderator: What do you suggest?

FM48: What we need to do is find new sponsors who would give generously so that these students would remain in our schools and learn Armenian. Maybe we need to establish a special fund that would take care of scholastic expenses.

FF20: I understand what you are going through to preserve the language, but you need to be realistic. For me it is more important to feel Armenian.

FM44: I do not agree because if we start saying that we will stop being faithful not only to the language but also to our identity, heritage, and history.

FF39: One way that would help is work towards making Armenian part of the official

baccalaureate exams.

FM39: We lobbied for it some years ago. We wanted Armenian to be the fourth

language in the official exams. The government asked us to present them with

books for authorization, but nobody took it seriously and the whole issue was

forgotten.

FF20: If that happens, I believe students may start to take Armenian into account and

prepare their lessons more seriously.

FM39: It would also guarantee the maintenance of the language.

Indeed, this passage echoes Fishman's (1991) assertion above, as obviously the

participants focused on the importance of the school in transmitting the language, history,

sense of belongingness, and heritage. The proposals they offered, such as better textbooks,

cooperation among the different organizations and denominations, and the creation of a

special fund, sounded practical strategies towards the effective realization of language

maintenance. At the same time, though, as if in an effort to be realistic, a few of the

participants underlined the seriousness of the situation and expressed fears that not much

was being done, due to lack of concerted communal efforts. FM44, for instance, voiced his

concern thus, "Unfortunately, I am convinced that Armenian is losing its foothold" (line

315). FF20 observed that in schools "Arabic is a priority, especially when it is time to get

ready for the official exams. It is a tough subject that takes a lot of our time. During the

final month of school, our parents pleaded with the principal to cancel Armenian classes so

that we would have more time to concentrate on Arabic" (lines 316 to 319). While FM39

remarked, "We talk about the closure of a school with sadness, but others do not. Instead,

they gossip about it and blame people without knowing the truth about the circumstances that led the school to such a fate" (lines 320 to 322).

Apart from identifying some feasible steps oriented towards the maintenance of the Armenian language, the discussion in the second group tended to locate global challenges and trends that the participants thought were tremendously influential, totally oblivious of minorities, and unmindful of other cultures and their heritage.

SF49: As long as we are outside our homeland and live in the diaspora we have to put a greater effort on maintaining our Armenian identity. Parents should make Armenian relevant. (lines 201 to 215)

SM67: We are commemorating the 90th anniversary of the Genocide this year. As Armenians we have a heritage. We have a mission as a people. We have a duty to be faithful to our fathers', and our people's history. We are still a people with a cause. We have lands that we need to reclaim. This cannot be done by losing our Armenian identity or language.

Moderator: What do you suggest must be done?

SM67: Stay Armenian. I am not saying it is easy, and I believe by and by we will give in and assimilate. But it is our duty to at least fight indifference, fight assimilation. Our schools and churches were built when our people were still hungry. Now we are well-to-do, each household has two or three cars, and we complain that it is very hard to teach our children Armenian. It depends on our stance. Maintaining Armenian is our duty...

SF47: We have always struggled. Why stop now? (lines 218 to 229)

SM67: With globalization, it seems all cultures are destined to be downtrodden. If you watch the local television channels, there is nothing there that would make you feel Lebanese or proud of being Lebanese. It you watch the *BBC* or read the *Time*, all you hear or read about is: are we going to be a one-language world? In other words, they are trying to inculcate in us the mentality that why should we bother about minority languages. Read the last few issues of *Time* or *Newsweek*. Most of the stories and even cover stories are about dieting, tourism. technology, Hollywood, or business. It did not use to be like this. So they are telling us to eat healthy, travel, spend money, and not worry about anything else.

SM49: Pure consumerism! This is the trend. You are right, but we have to find a balance. This is what we are unable to do.

This passage demonstrates the variety of different positions that were put forward. There is, once again, reference to the prevalent global trends. Obviously, some of the participants believe that globalization is having negative effects not only on the Armenian community and its endeavors in maintaining its culture, history, and language. It is also affecting the Lebanese society and other societies worldwide. Under such circumstances and the growing indifference of the members of the community and their socio-economic aspirations, the participants in this discussion group seemed to conclude, similar to the individual interviewees, that maintenance programs would be difficult to implement and that maintenance efforts would be unfruitful.

Interestingly enough, though, this group pinpointed the importance of the part the Church can have in maintenance efforts. As explained in the previous chapter. historically the

Church played an important role in teaching and safeguarding the language. It is true that the remarks of some of the participants in the second focus group were critical of the gap between the church and the new generation. However, others' reference to the part the church can have in the communal efforts of transmitting the importance and relevance of the language, history, and culture is remarkable. Since, as observed in the previous chapter the strong bond that existed between the people and the Church in the days of the Genocide and the decades that followed seemed to have relaxed to the extent that the interviewees did not identify the church as capable of reestablishing the closeness that once existed or reinstituting interest in the church or language. SM49 remarked, "When the priest gives a sermon we do not understand him, so why keep on going to church if I do not learn anything or feel that the priest is relating to my needs" (lines 230 to 231). Nevertheless, SF39 offered practical ways that the church could adopt to reestablish relations with the community and rekindle the community's respect and love towards the language: "I believe the church can do a lot. For instance, instead of having a three-hour-long Sunday service why not make it for only half an hour. Instead of having everything in classical Armenian why not introduce modern Armenian. These can be the starting points to attract us back to the church. They can also develop new, untraditional, and interesting activities that would attract the young. These are ways that might draw us nearer to our heritage, keep us focused on our culture, and gather us around activities where we can hear and speak our language more often" (lines 232 to 238).

This chapter presented evidence that the participants in the focus groups perceive that the state of the Armenian language is deteriorating and that its speakers have undergone a considerable intense change in matters once held almost sacred by their parents and grandparents. The discussions provided an account of the Armenian community's understanding of past and present viewpoints on its mother language, its reading of its experiences, analysis of personal, communal, and global factors that contribute or have

contributed to the shrinkage of the domains in which Armenian is used and the subsequent accelerated pace towards language shift, and its viewpoints on the implications these may have on language maintenance possibilities. In the discussion of data, it will have been noted that the concerns the participants voiced and conclusions they reached complement the findings gathered through the ninety-two interviews.

In conclusion, it is interesting how the concern expressed by SM67 about the effect language shift would have on the future of the Armenian Cause is reminiscent of the case reported by Russell Bernard (1992) of a group of Mexican Indians who sued a power company. The latter had offered to pay for the thousands of acres of Indian ancestral land that in the process of building a hydroelectric generator the construction of a dam was due to flood out, but the Indians had refused arguing that

> the offer was inadequate, but they also said that they wanted their land so that they could retain their identity. The lawyers for the power company noted that only a few elderly people in the Indian community spoke the Indian language anymore and that none of the younger generation was learning the language. How, the lawyers asked, did the Indians expect to convince anyone of their claim to special ethnic status if they didn't speak their own language? How, indeed? (pp. 87-88)

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION: EVALUATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter will draw together the key issues that resulted from the analysis of the data in the light of the theoretical frameworks presented in Chapter Three. The focus will be on revisiting the main objectives of this study, and then summarizing the original knowledge that emerges from the research. This chapter will also offer a critical evaluation of the research and its limitations, and subsequently pinpoint new directions for further research in the future. A final section will pinpoint a set of recommendations based on the findings, whose implementation by the Armenian community in Beirut would be a positive step towards the maintenance of its ethnic language and a possible halt of the present trend towards language shift.

Original research objectives and limitations of the study

Despite the fact that the field of LMLS is relatively new, it is a very large field. The issue of contracting languages ties together many sub-fields and directions of research, like language spread, language shift, language maintenance, language planning, and language revival, which Clyne (1997) refers to as different paradigms with separate objects, all looking at the same phenomenon from different angles.

In this study the main objectives have been to identify dimensions of language use, speech behavior, and communicative functions of Armenian among the Armenian community in Beirut. The research questions focused on the effects of the history of Armenian speakers, their past and present socio-economic position, ethno-cultural character in a changing environment, cultural and religious features, political and constitutional structures, relevant outcomes like dominance and subordination of the language and power relationship, and the impact of education, technology, and media in language maintenance and shift. Taken

together, they reveal what LMLS literature reveals: that no single factor or group of factors explains what causes language shift (Gal 1979; Dixon 1997; Grenoble and Whaley 1998; Dalby 2003).

In order to explain the process of language shift, however, it is important to understand the reasons that have led adults to regard the new language, in this case, languages, as more important than their ancestral language. In the LMLS literature, researchers assert people learn dominant languages because they are pressured to do so through a numerically, socially, and politically more powerful and prestigious dominant-group members, demographic heterogeneity, stigmatization; and/or because people find the dominant language attractive, as it facilitates outward movement from the indigenous community and opens up new opportunities which members of the community wish to grasp (Swann *et al.* 2004; Crystal 2000).

These elements of pressure and socioeconomic ambitions are present in the Armenians' inclusion of Arabic, English, and French in their repertoire. To concentrate on these views as such, however, would overshadow the real motives of the members of this community. The reasons for the desire to learn these languages are, as Kulick (1992) discovered to be the case in Gapun, not so much "pragmatic" or "socioeconomic", as they are "ideological". It is true that the present-day Armenian community in Beirut is quite different from what it was at the beginning of the twentieth century, and that there have been far-reaching changes in livelihood, marriage patterns, and employment opportunities. The collected data show that the fading away of the bitter memories of the early years of settlement after the Genocide and the realization that Lebanon could become a permanent "home", eventually led to drastic changes in beliefs and loyalties.

For instance, feelings of attachment to the ancestral language, pride in cultural legacy, and the imperative of passing on a sense of loyalty to one's homeland as ways to keep the Armenian Cause alive have been obscured by the perception of the Genocide by the youngest generation as a pretext to stay in the past, a symbol of perpetual victimization, and fanaticism. This line of thought is accentuated by their parents' growing indifference towards Armenianness, aspirations for integration and engrossment into the Lebanese society and politics, and increasing emphasis on teaching their children Arabic, English, and French first. Their keenness for the metamorphosis to happen has been coupled with the desire to speak Arabic fluently, move out of the "ghetto", and augment their chances of socializing with the majority by sending their children to Lebanese schools and taking up residences away from Armenian-populated areas. Pride in ethnic identity, communal belongingness, the importance of transmitting the Armenian language and history, and connectedness with the homeland, have been replaced by the desire to behave, live, and speak like the majority. These "modifications", according to some of the interviewees, are having unfavorable effects on the linguistic and ethnic heritage of Armenians in Beirut. This echoes researchers' (Edwards 1985; Grenoble and Whaley 1998) belief that retention of an original language is seen as detrimental as it interferes with internal desires of social mobility, power, and material advancement.

This study demonstrates that Armenian is undergoing a process of change at different levels. Armenian was learned by virtually everyone in the community in the first two generations, when Arabic was gradually replacing Turkish. In the youngest age group, however, there is a sudden downturn in reported knowledge of Armenian. The oldest speakers are the ones who are the most comfortable with Armenian and younger speakers are better at Arabic and French, the two official languages of Lebanon, and English, the language of higher education and the Internet. The decrease in knowledge of Armenian is thus reflected in a decreased frequency of use and functional load of Armenian and an

increase in knowledge and frequency of Arabic, English, and/or French. Older speakers use Armenian in most circumstances, and younger speakers have advanced Arabic, English, and/or French in most domains. It is clear that Arabic, English, and French are used in the presence of the Lebanese who are themselves competent in these three languages and they too CS between the three languages quite frequently. These three languages are also more favored when talking to siblings and Lebanese friends. The data show that speakers below 40 are more likely to use these languages because of urbanization, communication, increasing number of Armenian students in Lebanese schools, higher education, exogamy, and employment. Taking these facts together, it is highly probable that they will contribute to a sharper decrease in the functional level of Armenian and a significant decrease in the Armenian linguistic competence of the speakers.

These are effecting another change that has been gaining momentum in Beirut since the late 1980s: marriage patterns. There is a sharp increase in the number of young men and women marrying non-Armenians, and this is a matter of great concern to the elderly. Such practices will most probably continue in the future, as many of the young people interviewed for this study expressed a preference to marry from outside the Armenian community. Based on the data for this study and observation, the chances are great that these marriages would produce children who are non-Armenian speakers.

Another change that is underway is the growing trend of illiteracy in Armenian. Even though the illiteracy has not been accorded importance in the LMLS literature, it is clear from the situation in Beirut that it has generated a remarkable indifference in those under 40 towards Armenian culture. With the number of Armenian students in non-Armenian Lebanese schools, it is envisaged that interest in Armenian music, history, media, literature, and liturgy will decrease even more sharply. There is a consensus that language

is an important part of culture and that even though cultural identity may be expressed through rituals, music, painting, norms and other forms of behavior, language plays the largest part of all (Karmsch, 1998). Some would go much further: "Language is not only an element of culture itself; it is the basis for all cultural activities" (Bloch and Trager 1942, p. 5). The actions of these members of the community also mean that there will be a severe decrease in the number of literary, cultural, and musical productions in Armenian in the future, reminiscent of the difficulties Armenian schools are encountering at present in finding principals.

In addition to a lack of interest in the centuries-old traditional legacy of the Armenian people, the majority of the young people interviewed for this study do not have a large vocabulary in Armenian, and they also have simplified the grammar. They rely increasingly on the other languages they know to convey what they mean. They alternate between languages freely. Armenian is being used less and less. In this way, Armenians feel closer affinity to the bilingual Arabs in Lebanon. However, one of the significant differences between the two groups is that Arabic, English, and French prevail in the media, politics, economy, administration, and other domains, while Armenian is restricted exclusively to use within the speech community. Hence, the older interviewees' opinion that increasingly younger speakers think in Arabic, English, or French, and then express themselves in Armenian, betraying a lack of grammatical knowledge, lack of vocabulary, and an increasing reliance on CS is true. These interviewees were also unanimous in their belief that CS harms the language, hinders smooth communication, and weakens feelings of loyalty to an ethnic language. One of the conclusions Kulick (1992) reaches at the end of his book on language shift in Gapun is that language shift may occur more quickly in communities where CS is frequent than in communities with little CS. However, while he admits that the existence of widespread CS patterns in itself may not necessarily result in

shift, when combined with other factors and patterns of language use it may lead to further imbalance in verbal input.

What is the future of the Armenian language in Beirut? Apart from the fact that predictions about language shift are hazardous to make (Kulick 1992; Fasold 1984), the present study is the first step towards understanding the historical, social, linguistic, and ideological circumstances which are giving rise to some drastic changes. Even though some conclusions may be reached and educated guesses made, we cannot make generalizations. The analysis and interpretation of further and larger amounts of empirical data are needed. Another limitation of this study is that the sample does not include interviewees younger than 18. As the topic had not been researched before, it was necessary to include a representative number of older speakers in order to be able to make comparisons. It would be worthwhile undertaking another study that would target the younger members in the community to have a more complete picture of the present situation in Beirut. This age group, who will be the parents of the next generation, reminds one of their peers in Wales who do not find it 'cool' to speak Welsh (Crystal, 2000). However, in order to obtain information and reach scientific conclusions, it is important to devote a separate study to examine the language patterns and linguistic and behavioral attitudes specifically of those below 18.

Even though some of the interviewees who had apparently been concerned about the issues raised in this study and were open to discuss them to reverse the present social, linguistic, and cultural trends prevalent in the Armenian community, a few, especially those between 45 and 65, asked that some of their views concerning the homeland, the local lay and religious leadership in the community, and the current commitments of the young generation not be included in the final writing of the thesis. Part of their concern had to do with the fact that the thesis was going to be read by *odars* (outsiders), and part of it had to

do with preserving traditions by keeping such matters private and not open for public scrutiny. Most of what was asked to keep private, however, was in the form of specific examples that backed up their general stance. Hence, the exclusion of such data has not affected the nature of the perspectives they expressed. Interestingly, their stance seems to be familiar to scholars. Crystal (2000), for instance, explains that such community members perceive similar inquiries "to be a denial of their ethnicity," and that "their language is under special protection" (p. 108).

An overall conclusion that can be drawn is that the idea that knowledge of a language opens a channel to power has generated an overwhelming dynamic. The process of shift in the community and the transformations in their understanding of themselves and their world are having decisive consequences for how Armenians in Beirut think about and use their languages. The nature and complexity of such a dynamic, however, needs to be continued to be studied in the future because, like many communities around the world, the Armenian community in Beirut is changing rapidly. It is not improbable that the perspectives presented in this study, especially those expressed and held by the younger generation, will effect more significant changes in language shift in a few decades' time.

New directions for further research

There are a number of important issues that could not be analyzed here, but could be worthwhile topics for future research, as further research into the Armenian situation could contribute to the wider field of LMLS. For instance, in their assessment of the current linguistic situation of the Armenian community in Beirut, most of the older interviewees seemed to agree that the Armenian language was degenerating. In future research, including data concerning actual level of structural changes in grammar, types of changes, as well as structural motivations of change may enrich the data presented in this study or stand as independent studies, and broaden our knowledge and contribute to the wider field

of LMLS. A closely connected issue would be exploring the phenomenon of CS and its relation to linguistic loss. For instance, it is interesting to note that Armenian is rarely used when CS, but Arabic, English, and French words and phrases are freely incorporated into Armenian, where they are made to conform to the rules of word-formation and pronunciation of the language switched to.

Another interesting dimension worth examining is the issue of Armenian students in public and non-Armenian Lebanese schools. In an effort to provide a picture of the current situation, I contacted the municipality of Beirut and the Ministry of Education to get a list of the public schools in Beirut so as to facilitate my task of locating Armenian students in their institutions. My inquiry was viewed with suspicion. After being sent from one clerk to the other to no avail, I gave up my endeavor not to be sidetracked from the main objectives of this study. However, perceiving the sensitivity of the issue but also its importance, it is worth pursuing the matter at a later stage and for another study. I was also refused interviews with the principals of two private Lebanese schools that are known to have a large number of Armenians among their student body. A clearer picture would definitely assist research in this area, which will also need to examine acquisition patterns of the young members of the community attending Lebanese schools. For the first time ever, a large number of Armenian children are not acquiring Armenian as their first language. However, there are no scientific studies to back this up, and observation alone is not enough. Thus it may be productive to extend the current research and examine a range of constructs, both at the level of language acquisition and at the level of individual speech behavior. Such a study would analyze the chances of the future transmission of the language and broaden and deepen our understanding of LMLS among Armenians.

The Mousa Lér refugees who in the aftermath of World War II settled in Anjar, a village in the Bekaa valley, Lebanon, spoke a dialect that is totally unknown to the third generation

but still serves the older ones as a secret language. A study focusing on the characteristics of the dialect, parent-child communication, and its ecological aspects would shed light on the reasons of its entering a phase of obsolescence. Another study would most probably explain the distinctiveness of yet another dialect spoken by the Armenian villagers in Kessab, Syria, and its endangerment with the demise of the present older generation.

As a pioneering study, it is beyond the scope of this thesis to prescribe a detailed, step-by-step procedure that would make language maintenance likely. Therefore, it is essential that future studies target the development of operational, realistic, and practical steps and programs towards deterring language shift and promoting language maintenance. In this sense, the present study might serve as a helpful resource for such future endeavors.

Recommendations

Understanding the place of languages in multilingual societies has acquired new and urgent relevance in the face of globalization and the ethno-nationalism which appears to have arisen as a counter-balance to it (Pfaff 1993; Connor 1993). Linguistic human rights and minority education are increasingly recognized as burning social issues that must be resolved if multilingual societies are to be culturally and linguistically democratic and avoid fragmentation through internal implosion or revolutionary explosion (Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson, 1994). Before the twentieth century, people speaking majority languages thought that speakers of minority languages such as Welsh were simply unlucky or backward (Dalby, 2003). Dalby informs us that such people were encouraged to abandon their language and their old-fashioned ways as soon as possible. In other words, attitudes were unfavorable to minority languages but benign (Dalby, 2003). Suleiman (1999) argues that this view is countered by sharply different perceptions in certain of the diaspora's home country: that language rights are basic to pluralistic democratic societies, indeed that they are part and parcel of human rights.

Hence, the main purpose of this study was to shed light on an issue that is "only just beginning to be taken seriously among linguists and their professional organizations" (Nettle and Romaine 2000, p. 23). It also needed to be brought to the attention of Armenians in Lebanon and the Armenian diaspora, and to contribute to the increasing number of case studies in the field of LMLS. It is important that people become aware of the sequence of events, particularly the effects of certain attitudes on their descendants "who will not be in any position to choose" (Crystal 2000, p. 106).

Holmes *et al.* (1993) who examined the language situation among three ethnic minorities in New Zealand, identify the following factors which affect transmission and maintenance:

- regular social interaction between community members;
- use of the community language in the home;
- positive attitudes to the language;
- residential contiguity;
- resistance to inter-ethnic marriage;
- support for community-language schools;
- a positive orientation to the homeland; and
- community-identified religious organizations.

Similarly, despite a passage of 100 years since Chechens first arrived in Jordan, Dweik (2000) concludes that third and fourth generation Chechen Jordanians have maintained the use of Chechen alongside Arabic, the language of the majority of Jordanians, and Chechen for a number of reasons: the existence of linguistic and cultural islands, the use of the Chechen language in the home and the community, the positive attitude towards the Chechen language and the Chechen homeland, their residential closeness, and their resistance to inter-ethnic marriages.

A significant conclusion that can be drawn from these models is that for successful language maintenance it is prerequisite for the whole or at least a large number of the community to be involved. The recommendations/suggestions provided by the interviewees in Chapter Five (pages 117-118) may be a plausible working strategy, especially when agreed on and adopted by the different factions of the community who would have to divide the work among themselves. This means that members of the community need to develop a sense of responsibility for language transmission.

The data gathered for this study shows that even though some put the greatest responsibility on the growing indifference of parents, the existing chasm between the Church and the community, and the lack of proper language and history textbooks, there was some uncertainty over who is actually responsible for preserving the language. However, there was a general consensus among the older interviewees that schools should perform the necessary miracle by, for example, considering replacing pride in the number of schools by pride in the academic quality of schools, thus becoming attractive institutions and tools for language transmission. This is what Dauenhauer and Dauenhauer (1998) have called the "bureaucratic fix" (pp. 69-70). These two Alaskan fieldworkers also identify, what a few of the 35-45 year old interviewees prescribed, as a "technical fix" (Dauenhauer and Dauenhauer 1998, pp. 69-70) – a new computer program or website that would help maintain the language by sharing personal and communal experiences, creating links among diverse diaspora communities, and posting tips on programs that have worked "miracles".

Fishman (2001) warns, however, that it is easy "to prescribe 'fixes' that cannot be undertaken" (p. 13). It is somewhat naive to recommend that Armenian children should attend Armenian schools only, should learn to love their language, should feel more Armenian, should uphold the Armenian Cause, or should be more committed to their

homeland. "It is of no help," asserts Fishman (2001) "to tell a patient that he should attain health by getting better, or that he should get better by being healthier" (p. 13). Researchers, like Holmes *et al.* (1993), concur that neither institutions nor technology can replace individuals or home-based activities. Thus, optimally, efforts need to be exerted towards creating a linkage system, whereby young parents and adolescents engage in functions organized by cultural, sports, literary, or historical clubs in order to utilize their ethnic language or to relearn it and to socialize children into an environmentally utilized language (Fishman, 2001). As researchers (Crystal 2000; Dalby 2003; Fishman 2001) agree that intergenerational mother-tongue transmission is crucial, it should constitute the goal of every activity in language maintenance efforts. Fishman (2001) concludes, however, that for these functional objectives to be successful they should be coupled with "a continuing ethnohumanistic, ethnoreligious and ethnocultural constellation of beliefs, behaviours and attitudes," for only these have the potential to take precedence over the materialistic view of a globalized world (p. 17).

A similar scenario would hopefully reinforce the ideological patterns that support maintenance, as "a language is the emblem of its speakers", according to Dixon (1997, p. 135). That is, the words people utter refer to common experience. They express facts, ideas, or events that are communicable because they refer to a stock of knowledge about the world that other people share (Karmsch, 1998). From this membership, Karmsch deduces, they draw personal strength and pride, as well as a sense of social importance and historical continuity.

While these recommendations seem worthwhile, I agree with Crystal (2000) who asserts that researchers must create opportunities for the people "to improve morale so that they come to think of their language with feelings of confidence, self-esteem, and pride. Only

in this way will the community develop an ability from within to deal with the pressure of

ongoing change" (p. 111).

Appendices

Appendix A: Countries and cities that are home to Armenians living in the diaspora (Bournoutian, 2003)

Albania
Alexandria
Argentina
Astrakhan
Australia
Austria
Azerbaijan
Baku
Baltic States
Belgium
Boston
Brazil
Bulgaria
Burma
Cairo
Chicago
China
Cleveland
Connecticut
Cyprus
Czech Republic
Detroit
England
Estonia
Ethiopia
Florida
France
Fresno
Georgia
Germany
Greece
Hong Kong
Hungary
India
Iran
Iraq
Israel
Italy
Jerusalem
Jordan
Kuwait
Latvia
Lithuania
Los Angeles
Malaysia
Massachusetts
Melbourne
Moldova
Montreal

New Jersey
New York
New Zealand
Oregon
Palestine
Poland
Romania
Russia
San Francisco
Seattle
South Africa
Sudan
Sweden
Switzerland
Sydney
Syria
Tennessee
The Netherlands
Texas
Toronto
Transcaucasia
Turkey
Ukraine
United Arab Emirates
Uruguay
Utah
Uzbekistan
Venezuela
Virginia
Washington DC
Watertown
Wisconsin

Appendix B: Newspaper headlines in twenty-five issues of *Aztag* and *Zartonk* between October 14 and November 12, 2004 classified by the following categories: front-page headlines, feature articles, calendar of events, and classifieds.

Front-page headlines
Armenian Genocide discussed at an EU session in Istanbul
Kerry is determined to get the Genocide recognized
Germany backs Turkey's membership in the EU
The language of the liturgy remains unchanged in the US
Rabbis in the Old City of Jerusalem apologize to the Armenian community
The Ramgavar Party in the US supports Kerry
Shirag, the Tekeyan quarterly, resumes its publication in Lebanon
Three Armenian victims in the Beslan tragedy
19 new priests ordained in Yerevan's St. Gregory
Aram I congratulates Bush on his reelection
Interview with Kevork Vartanian, Armenian member of the Iranian parliament

Feature articles
50th anniversary of Aleppo's Najarian-Geulbenkian high school
Founders' Day at Haigazian University
5th anniversary of Catholicos Kerekin I's death
Participation of the Cilicia Catholicosate in the Edjmiatsin International Conference in Milano
On the occasion of the publication of *Pakine*, a monthly literary journal
Easy Armenian: a new textbook
600 public schools in Buenes Aires participate in writing a 44-page paper on the Genocide
The 90th anniversary of the genocide at the crossroads of the past and the present

Calendar of events
Armenian University Students' meeting on October 16
Dinner and bazaar organized by the Armenian Evangelical College on December 3
Armenian Dentists' meeting on October 20
Halloween Party by Armenagan Junior Club on October 29
Dinner organized by the Marash hometown organization
Jivan Kasbarian, a flutist from Armenia, in concert on November 25
26th exhibition of Armenian books in Catholicosate, November 14-30, on the occasion of the 1600th anniversary of the invention of the Armenian alphabet
Let's write correct Armenian, a spelling competition for 8-12-year olds, November 18 and 19

Advertisements
Armenian restaurant
Armenian Mutual Fund
Hardware store
Apartments, homes
Travel service offers tour to Armenia
Technical school
Photo shop
Sports wear
Hair stylists
Bookstores

Appendix C: A summary chart of the main historical dates and events related to Armenians in Lebanon

Date	Event
1915	The immigration process to Lebanon reached its peak with the systematic killings of Armenians by the Young Turks.
1924	Armenians were granted Lebanese citizenship by the French mandate authorities.
1926	There were some 75,000 Armenians and the Lebanese Constitution granted them civil rights which enabled them to elect their own members of parliament.
1927	*Aztag,* a daily, was established by the Tashnak party.
1930	The Armenian Relief Red Cross was founded.
1934	*Zartonk,* a daily, was established by the Ramgavar party.
1937	*Ararad,* a daily, was established by the Henchag party. It became a daily in 2001
1937-40	A new wave of refugees arrived from Alexandretta after the annexation of the latter by turkey and the evacuation of Sanjak by the French forces.
1940	The Karaguezian Social and Relief Center was founded.
1945-50	In the heady milieu of repatriation, thousands of Armenians left Lebanon and repatriated to Soviet Armenia.
1958	Fierce fighting broke out between the Henchag and Tahnak political parties, the former supporting the anti-Maronite factions, and the latter joining the pro-western coalition.
1966	The Jinishian Social and Relief Center was founded.
1975	Civil war broke out in Lebanon. The Armenian political parties decided to stay neutral and not take sides with any of the fighting factions.
1991	The war in Lebanon was over and the amended Constitution guaranteed that one of the four vice-presidents of the nation's Central Bank should be Armenian.

Appendix D: Questions used during the individual interviews.

Characteristics of the participants in this survey
Name (optional):
Telephone number:
Age:
Sex:
Education:
Profession:
Did you receive your education in an Armenian school?
How do you consider your knowledge of

Armenian:	very good	fair	poor
Arabic:	very good	fair	poor
English:	very good	fair	poor
French:	very good	fair	poor
Turkish:	very good	fair	poor

Questions on the use of language
1. List the places in which you use the Armenian language.
2. List the places in which you use the Arabic language.
3. List the places in which you use English/French.
4. With whom do you speak mainly Armenian?
5. What language do/did you speak with your grandparents?
6. What language do you speak at home?
7. What language do you speak in the street in Beirut?
8. What language do you speak with friends you meet?
9. What language do you speak in restaurants?
10. What language do you use at the supermarket?
11. What language do you use in a bank?
12. What language do you use in a group of friends where there are both Armenian and Lebanese people?
13. What language do you use to email Armenian friends and relatives?
14. Do you know how to write in Armenian?
15. Do you know how to read Armenian?
16. Can you tell of times when the expression you want to use comes to you only in Armenian, but you can't say it because you're in a group that does not speak Armenian?
17. Have you ever wanted to conduct a discourse in Armenian, but you couldn't think of the words, and so you had to speak Arabic/English/French? Can you mention one or two situations in which this has happened?
18. How is/was the Armenian spoken by your parents?

Questions on language, identity, and culture
1. Would you like to be simply Armenian, Lebanese, or Armenian-Lebanese? Explain.
2. What does that mean to you? (You can say the first thing that comes to your mind).
3. Is it important to speak Armenian?
4. Is it necessary to speak Armenian to be Armenian?
5. What is the most important part of being Armenian?
6. Do you feel proud for being Armenian and speaking Armenian?
7. Would you like your children to learn Armenian?
8. Would you (do you) send your children to an Armenian school? If not, why?
9. Would you like to learn to speak Armenian?

10. Do you think speaking Armenian is favorable for a good job and a better life? Why or why not?

11. How important is it for you to have an Armenian boyfriend/husband or girlfriend/wife? Explain.

12. In your opinion, what is the view the Lebanese people hold about the Armenians in Lebanon? Why do you think this is so?

13. Do you read Armenian newspapers?

14. Do you read Armenian books?

15. Do you listen to the Armenian radio station?

16. Do you listen to Armenian music?

17. Did you lately have the chance to attend a concert of Armenian songs and dances? If yes, what effect did it have on you?

18. How often do you go to church?

19. How often do you go to church when there are religious festivals?

20. Did you attend requiem services for April 24 this year?

21. How do you describe your feelings towards Turkey's denial of the Armenian Massacres?

22. Have you visited Armenia? Would you like to go and live there?

23. What is the first thing that comes to your mind when Armenia is mentioned?

24. In your opinion, what are the distinctive characteristics of the Armenian people in Lebanon, compared to the Armenians in Armenia?

25. In your opinion, is Armenian degenerating recently or not? How?

26. Would you like the Armenians in Lebanon to maintain their language?

27. In your opinion, what are the ways that could be used to maintain Armenian language and culture?

28. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Appendix E: Participants in the interviews.

Age	Female	Male	Number
18-24	18	18	36
25-39	11	7	18
40-54	6	13	19
55 and older	4	15	19

Age	Attended Arm. schools
18-24	13
25-39	9
40-54	18
55 and older	18

Educational level	Number
Elementary	9
High school	6
University students	41
BA/BS	14
MA/MS	20
PhD	2

Occupation	Number
University student	41
Housewife	4
Administrator	5
Taxi driver	3
Journalist/Editor	5
Writer/Poet	4
Medical doctor	4
Educator	12
Businessman	7
Unskilled jobs	5
Priest	2

Appendix F: Detailed profiles of the participants in the group interviews.

Focus Group One

Sex	Age	Education	Profession	Attended Armenian school	Knowledge of Armenian	Other languages
F	20	Second year university	University student	Yes	Weak	Arabic, English.
F	39	High school	Housewife	Yes	Very good	Arabic, English, French
M	39	Graduate degree	Teacher	Yes	Very good	Arabic, English, French, Turkish
M	44	Undergraduate degree	Church administrator	Yes	Very good	Arabic, English, Turkish
M	48	Graduate degree	Executive secretary	Yes	Very good	Arabic, English, Turkish

Focus Group Two

Sex	Age	Education	Profession	Attended Armenian school	Knowledge of Armenian	Other languages
F	39	Undergraduate degree	Housewife	No	Fair	Arabic, English, French
F	47	High school	Travel agent	No	Good	Arabic, English, Turkish
M	49	Undergraduate	Businessman	No	Fair	Arabic, English, French
F	49	Undergraduate degree	Librarian	Yes	Very good	Arabic, English, Turkish
M	67	Post graduate degree	Writer/Teacher	Yes	Very good	English, Turkish

Appendix G: A sample transcript of an individual interview (22F66)

Characteristics of the participants in this survey
Name (optional):
Telephone number:
Age: 22
Sex: F
Education: Civil Engineering/Water and Environment
Profession: student
Did you receive your education in an Armenian school? No.
How do you consider your knowledge of
Armenian: poor
Arabic: very good
English: very good
French: very good
Turkish: none

Questions on the use of language
1. List the places in which you use the Armenian language.
   Sometimes at home
2. List the places in which you use the Arabic language.
   Everywhere: home, public places
3. List the places in which you use English/French.
   I use little English, while emailing and surfing the Internet. I tend to use French more, almost as much as I use Arabic.
4. With whom do you speak mainly Armenian?
   My parents, but I see them *shway* during the day.
5. What language do/did you speak with your grandparents?
   Armenian.
6. What language do you speak at home?
   Metel ma elt, a combination of all our languages.
7. What language do you speak in the street in Beirut?
   Sometimes it's Arabic, English, or French, or all of them together. *Shway min kel shi.*
8. What language do you speak with friends you meet?
   Mainly Arabic and French .
9. What language do you speak in restaurants?
   The same.
10. What language do you use at the supermarket?
    Kellou bilaarabi.
11. What language do you use in a bank?
    Everybody speaks Arabic, English, and French. So it depends on what language the cashier uses. I have no problem with languages.
12. What language do you use in a group of friends where there are both Armenian and Lebanese people?
    I have no Armenian friends. So, *mafi meshkle.* I respond in Arabic very easily.
13. What language do you use to email Armenian friends and relatives?
    English, of course. My friends are Lebanese.
14. Do you know how to write in Armenian?
    No.
15. Do you know how to read Armenian?
    No.

16. Can you tell of times when the expression you want to use comes to you only in Armenian, but you can't say it because you're in a group that does not speak Armenian?
   It's weird, but yes.

17. Have you ever wanted to conduct a discourse in Armenian, but you couldn't think of the words, and so you had to speak Arabic/English/French? Can you mention one or two situations in which this has happened?
   Me ben zeij, aadi, because I don't know Armenian words, so I use the Arabic word. I am criticized for switching to Arabic or French, but I have to. Everybody does it. It is natural in multilingual societies. I can't give you an example because it happens all the time. I can't express myself well in Armenian.

18. How is/was the Armenian spoken by your parents?
   Oh, it's much better than mine.

Questions on language, identity, and culture

1. Would you like to be simply Armenian, Lebanese, or Armenian-Lebanese? Explain.
   I'm Lebanese. I'm Lebanese more than Armenian. *Libnaniye.*

2. What does that mean to you? (You can say the first thing that comes to your mind).
   I don't know anything about Armenians. I live in an environment that's so Lebanese, my schooling, my education were all in Lebanese.

3. Is it important to speak Armenian?
   No, but it could be a tool to speak with other Armenians. It doesn't make me less Armenian.

4. Is it necessary to speak Armenian to be Armenian?
   Shou yaan?

5. What is the most important part of being Armenian?
   Culture. Now, we are communicating in English, but that doesn't mean we're less Armenian.

6. Do you feel proud for being Armenian and speaking Armenian?
   It makes no difference.

7. Would you like your children to learn Armenian?
   Yes.

8. Would you (do you) send your children to an Armenian school? If not, why?
   No. Armenian is a plus, but *lezouner chen kider.* The academic level is very low. They don't teach all the languages equally. Only Armenian is stressed. Lebanese schools stress French, but French and English are international languages.

9. Would you like to learn to speak Armenian?
   Maybe I should hire a teacher. *Bus ma fi waet.*

10. Do you think speaking Armenian is favorable for a good job and a better life? Why or why not?
   Not at all. Not in Lebanon.

11. How important is it for you to have an Armenian boyfriend/husband or girlfriend/wife? Explain.
   Not important at all.

12. In your opinion, what is the view the Lebanese people hold about the Armenians in Lebanon? Why do you think this is so?
   They criticize their Arabic. That's why I'm happy that I attended a Lebanese school so they won't make fun of me.

13. Do you read Armenian newspapers?
   No.

14. Do you read Armenian books?
   No.

15. Do you listen to the Armenian radio station?

No. I'm not used to it.

16. Do you listen to Armenian music?
No.

17. Did you lately have the chance to attend a concert of Armenian songs and dances?
If yes, what effect did it have on you?
No.

18. How often do you go to church?
Ma brouh.

19. How often do you go to church when there are religious festivals?
Never.

20. Did you attend requiem services for April 24 this year?
No.

21. How do you describe your feelings towards Turkey's denial of the Armenian Massacres?
I don't feel something personal. What they did is against humanity, but it doesn't concern me. I know I shouldn't feel like this. I feel guilty, I started reading about the Genocide, but I stopped.

22. Have you visited Armenia? Would you like to go and live there?
No; maybe. I don't want to live there. I don't know the language.

23. What is the first thing that comes to your mind when Armenia is mentioned?
Almajzara.

24. In your opinion, what are the distinctive characteristics of the Armenian people in Lebanon, compared to the Armenians in Armenia?
Nihna gher. Because we live in another environment. They are educated the Armenain way. Even when some here go to an Armenian school, they grow up in a Lebanese milieu.

25. In your opinion, is Armenian degenerating recently or not? How?
Look at me. *Ma baaref ehki kelemteyn.*

26. Would you like the Armenians in Lebanon to maintain their language?
They should. It's their identity. It belongs to them. The culture won't be Transmitted then. They are a minority. They have to so their culture would continue.

27. In your opinion, what are the ways that could be used to maintain Armenian language and culture?
Talk about the Genocide. My family never talked about the Genocide.

28. Is there anything else you would like to add?
The questions were hard. I had never thought about Armenian stuff. But it made me think. *Luv er. Bedk e medatzem.*

Appendix H: A table summarizing the major tendencies in the study according to age group

Age group	18 - 24	25 - 39	40 – 54	55 and older
Opportunities for using Arm.	few	few	many	many
Competence in Arm.	poor	good	very good	very good
Competence in Arabic	very good	very good	good	poor
Rate of Arm. literacy	13 out of 36	9 out of 18	18 out of 19	18 out of 19
Attitudes towards CS	natural; helpful	natural; very common	sign of weakness	unfaithfulness to Armenian
Attitude to enrolling children in Arm. schools	never	never	of course	of course
Views on Arm. schools	low academic level	unattractive social milieu	identity	transmission of language/culture
Knowledge of the Genocide	poor; in some cases non-existent	some knowledge	knowledgeable	Very knowledgeable
Perspectives on the Genocide	indifference	fanaticism	belongingness; loyalty	identity; survival
Importance of language maintenance	unimportant; pointless	a little important	very important	very important
Importance of speaking Arm.	unimportant	a little important	very important	very important
Views on own ethnic identity	Lebanese	Lebanese-Armenian	Armenian	Armenian
Views on intermarriage	unimportant	unimportant	very important	very important
Attitudes towards the homeland	negative	negative	negative	negative

Pages 174 - 176 of this thesis have not been digitised - they are maps that the author does not have permission to reproduce electronically

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