The impact of residential location on language practices among Lebanese Armenian adolescents
An investigation into the Western Armenian language in Lebanon

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Awarding institution: King's College London

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The impact of residential location on language practices among Lebanese Armenian adolescents: an investigation into the Western Armenian language in Lebanon

By
Chaghig Filian

Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

KING’S COLLEGE LONDON

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To Mom and Dad, the most important people in my life

To Cynthia, Kiki, Chahe, Kevin, Prescilla, Karlou and Gia

To Medsmama
List of abbreviations

Area of residence – AOR

Armenian Revolutionary Federation – ARF

Bourj Hammoud – BH

Group interview one – GI1

Group interview two – GI2

Heritage language – HL

Heritage languages – Hls

Language maintenance and language shift – LMLS

Language practices – LPs

Lebanese Armenian adolescents – LAAs

Lebanese Armenian – LA

Lebanese Armenians – LAs

Non-Armenian area – NAA

Non-Armenian areas – NAAs

The United Nation’s Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization – UNESCO

Western Armenian – WA

Western Armenian language – WAL
Abstract

This study looks into the impact of residential location on the language practices (LPs) of Lebanese Armenian adolescents (LAAs). It explores to what extent residential concentration within the established Armenian quarter of *Bourj Hammoud* (BH) has contributed to the vitality of the Western Armenian language (WAL) in Lebanon. The study also looks into how the recent geographical dispersal of Lebanese Armenians (LAs) into different areas of Lebanon, which traditionally have had less Armenian presence (non-Armenian Areas, NAAs), might lead to modifications in the perceived use and formal properties of the WAL.

The study explores how residential location can shape the identification and self-perceptions of LAAs from BH and NAAs. It also looks into the influence this can have on social interactions, cultural practices, ideologies, attendance and involvement in Armenian schools and institutions and attitudes towards the WAL and other more widely spoken languages in Lebanon and explores how these elements may shape LPs and thus influence the status of Western Armenian (WA) in the country.

Data were collected both quantitatively and qualitatively between summer 2014 and summer 2015 through ten individual interviews, two focus group interviews, two nonparticipant observations and one hundred survey questionnaires distributed to fifty LAAs from BH and fifty LAAs from NAAs.

Findings in this study reveal changes in the demographic situation of the Armenian community in Lebanon, both in BH and NAAs, with increasing openness to integration into Lebanese society. Data also suggest that the changes attaining the fabric of the Armenian
community in Lebanon and its geographical dispersal have a significant influence on the attitudes of LAAs towards Armenian education and schools, leading to increased unfavourable attitudes towards them.

This study also reveals the complex and multidimensional nature of the identity of LAAs who whether from BH or NAAs display different perceptions of their identity and sense of self. The complex nature of ideologies and cultural practices of LAAs is also discussed in this study. While many continue to be actively involved in Armenian community life, take part in major Armenian cultural practices, join Armenian community institutions such as sports clubs and youth associations and have the intention of bringing up an Armenian family in the future, others reveal signs of detachment from the Armenian community and its cultural practices.

The attitudes of LAAs towards the WAL continue to be mainly favourable, as the majority believe in the importance of maintaining it as a way to maintain Armenian identity. The LPs of LAAs vary as the spoken form of WA continues to be the main language of communication in most domains. However, geographical dispersal mainly influences WA language literacy as a large number of adolescents from NAAs attend non-Armenian schools and report that they cannot read and write WA.
Chapter 1

Introduction

Background of the study

Conventional studies on heritage languages (HLs) often reveal a direct or indirect link between residential location and language maintenance or shift (Dorian, 1980; Lieberson, 1981; Li, 1982; Fishman, 1989, 1991; Finegan and Rickford, 2004; Tsunoda, 2006). It has been demonstrated that when ethnic groups concentrate within a particular geographical space, they increase the possibility of maintaining their HL. By contrast, the more geographically dispersed an ethnic community is, the greater the chances of a significant shift in its HL. Nevertheless, in a globalized world, dimensions of mobility have been rapidly changing in the past few years, leading to a refined understanding of place and space and a reappraisal of their impact on HL (Pennycook, 2007).

Gesing et al. (2014) explain that in our time, geographical locations such as villages and neighbourhoods are not restricted to inhabitants, buildings or streets. Global dynamics increasingly influence even very remote places as mobile communications, roads, migration flows and individuals moving across different places create connections and relations that expand places and go beyond physical locality (ibid). This concept that overcomes the disconnected and isolated view on places and localities and understands them as being more than solely territories, is referred to as translocality (ibid). It captures the various forms of
exchange, interconnectedness and identity constructions that can arise not only within a particular territorial space but also between different localities.

In this increasingly mobile and connected world, boundaries between languages are questioned and fundamental assumptions about language are reconsidered due to the constant contact of languages and cultures with one another. The constant movement of people across nations has given rise to prevalent practices of hybridity that have changed the conventional notion of language as a bounded or homogeneous entity that somehow encapsulates and protects the cultural values of a community (Pennycook 2007, 2010; Park & Wee, 2017). As Pennycook (2007) discusses, the recent mobility of people leads to translocal forms of language use and involves the mobility of sociolinguistic resources, which then can generate unexpected sociolinguistic changes.

While conventional notions of regional limitations are challenged with recent perspectives of a world that transgresses physical boundaries and while places are defined in terms of interconnections and networks rather than scales and size (Castells, 2007), in this thesis, I revert to the materiality of locality by looking into how geographical space and place influence the Western Armenian Language (WAL) in Lebanon. I study the impact of residential location on the language practices (LPs) of Lebanese Armenian adolescents (LAAs) as there is a popular perception among Western Armenian (WA) speakers in Lebanon that language shift is taking place and its maintenance is seen as desirable. I explore to what extent residential concentration within the traditionally established Armenian quarter in northeast of Beirut, Bourj Hammoud (BH), may contribute to the maintenance of the WAL in Lebanon. I also look into how the recent geographical dispersal of Lebanese Armenians (LAs) across Lebanese territories with traditionally less Armenian presence (Non-Armenian Areas, NAAs) might lead to a shift from WA to Arabic or other more widely spoken languages in Lebanon, such as English and French.
While I adopt Pennycook’s (2010) view of language as an outcome of local and flexible practices rather than a bounded entity and I regard language as a fluid and ever-changing result of linguistic, social, ideological, physical and translocal practices, I believe it is still important to study the impact of geographical space on the WAL because as Gesing et al. (2014, 26) comment, migrants “do remain anchored at specific localities” regardless of the fact that the fluidity of social spaces blurs geographical space. In line with Johnstone’s (2010) and Blommaert and Dong’s (2010) discussions, I believe that different dimensions of mobility collapse in concrete spaces where actual people live and interact with one another and their language practices become less predictable and significantly more complex. As Hannerz (2002) points out, the role of geographical space has not totally vanished. The principal means of cultural transmission might still be a result of everyday local encounters, which are face-to-face and sensually more immediate and immersive than global or digital encounters (ibid). Accordingly, I believe it is important to look into the impact of geographical space on the LPs of LAAs before looking into how these are influenced by more fluid or translocal social spaces. I do not deny the importance of studying the impact of the recent global and digital communicative practices of LAAs on the status of WA. However, I believe that understanding the impact of bounded territorial units on the status of WA can be a primary step that enhances the understanding of the impact of remote interactions on WA in future studies.

Geographical space played an important role in shaping the life of the Armenian diaspora in Lebanon, particularly upon its arrival. As a refugee community, Armenians concentrated in particular geographical areas, such as in BH and Anjar, as they regarded geographical dispersal as a threat to their continuity (Voss, 2007; Migliorino, 2008; Sahakyan, 2015). They instinctively concentrated within specific geographical spaces and maintained strong non-assimilatory solidarity by helping each other and staying detached
from an alien environment where its locals spoke a different language (Migliorino, 2008; Sahakyan, 2015). While clustering together gave Armenians a sense of security (Greenshields, 1981), it also gave them the opportunity to recreate their own communal lifestyle in Lebanon and restructure their community around its institutions, organisations, churches and schools (Sanjian, 2001). This contributed to preserving Armenian customs, traditions, and culture, including the WAL (Greenshields, 1981; Tachjian, 2009; Sahakyan, 2015).

Today, Lebanese Armenians (LAs) with improved socioeconomic conditions have been increasingly relocating outside of BH seeking better living standards in the suburbs and buying houses away from Armenian concentrated areas (Arsenian-Ekmekji, 2001; Jinishian Memorial Program, 2004; Voss, 2007; Jebejian, 2007). The change in the patterns of residential settlement and the increasing geographical dispersal of LAs in Lebanon is perceived to be one of the factors leading to a gradual transformation in the use and formal properties of the WAL (Jebejian, 2007), nonetheless, it is an area that is yet to be explored.

The standardization of the Western Armenian language

Before I discuss the popular concerns concerning the vitality of the WAL in Lebanon, I provide a brief historical background on the Armenian language, its development, its standardization and the efforts made by the Armenian diaspora to maintain it.

The Armenian language, spoken today by around six million people, is a branch in the family of Indo-European languages, which became a literary language in the fifth century AD
following the invention of the Armenian Alphabet by the monk Mesrop Mashtots (Weitenberg, 2002; Bakalian & Chahinian, 2016, Karapetian, 2017). Although, according to Oshagan (1997), Bakalian and Chahinian (2016) and Karapetian (2017), Classical Armenian, Krapar, was for centuries the literary language, its spoken counterpart, Ashkharapar, also known as the language of the people, developed faster.

The political and cultural enlightenment of Armenians in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries along with the rise of their national consciousness contributed to the process of modernization of Armenian (Oshagan, 1997, Karapetian, 2017), which, according to Bakalian and Chahinian (2016, 39), “was a process that sought to draw the literary language closer to the spoken vernaculars”. Educated and elite Armenians invested in developing national structures in urban centres with Armenian presence such as Smyrna, Constantinople, Moscow, Tbilisi and Paris. They established schools, opened printing presses and published periodicals, books and literature. This resulted in the pluricentric development of the Armenian language with two linguistic forms: Eastern and Western (Karapetian, 2017). Eastern Armenian mainly developed in Tiflis, the Ararat plain, the Caucasus under Russian rule and the Persian Empire. As for WA, it developed in Constantinople based on the dialects in Western Anatolia under Ottoman rule (Weitenberg 2002; Bakalian & Chahinian, 2016). Apart from some morphological, grammatical and phonetic differences, the two variants share largely common vocabulary and grammatical fundamentals that make them mutually intelligible to a certain degree.

According to Oshagan (1997), Armenian educators within the Ottoman Empire were debating the advantages of developing the spoken language, Ashkharapar, based on classical Armenian or the vernacular spoken by the people there. Nevertheless, as mentioned, the language of the people became more popular due to numerous publications such as works of poetry, grammar books and important translations from other languages into Armenian.
(Bakalian & Chahinian, 2016). WA, which was a minority language in the Ottoman Empire, was then standardized based on principles that rejected classical Armenian grammar, avoided regional dialects, eliminated words borrowed from Turkish and invented new Armenian equivalents to them (ibid). As Bakalian and Chahinian (2016) report, due to the resistance against incorporating regional dialects and the absence of a dominant spoken vernacular, the dialect of the city of Constantinople became the standard as Constantinople was the hub of Armenian cultural production and the majority of WA intellectuals were based there.

When during the 1915 genocide (see Chapter 2) Armenians were deported from the Armenian provinces in the Ottoman Empire and the majority of intellectuals and academics were executed in the city of Constantinople, WA literary tradition reinvented itself in cosmopolitan cities of Europe and the Middle East where Armenian refugees settled. Beirut, particularly in the 1950s, became the hub of the Armenian diaspora where Armenian scholars, writers and academics focused on language as a way to achieve and maintain a unified Armenian identity (Karapetian, 2017). Consequently, as Bakalian and Chahinian (2016) discuss, WA went through a second process of standardization in the Middle East and the pre-genocide Constantinople variant was used as a model. This led to creating a relatively homogenous linguistic Armenian community in Lebanon regardless of its culturally diverse background. For example, some Armenian refugees in Lebanon and Syria came from parts of the Ottoman Empire such as Adana, Ankara and Ayntab, where they mainly spoke Turkish as their everyday language of communication (Sahakyan, 2015), and others came from Eastern Anatolia and predominantly spoke Armenian (Migliorino 2008; Bakalian and Chahinian, 2016). Some, according to Shemmassian (2011), spoke Armenian dialects that were not necessarily mutually intelligible and many were ignorant of the WA dialect that was spoken in Constantinople. Thus, as Bakalian and Chahinian (2016) comment, the attempt to create a linguistically homogenous Armenian community in the Middle East, particularly in
Lebanon, was a carefully designed political agenda that aimed at preserving Armenian national identity by using the WAL as a key cultural marker and a unifying element.

Beirut’s rich Armenian cultural reproduction achieved its peak of prosperity prior to the Lebanese civil war which began in 1975 (Voss, 2007; Boudjikanian, 2009). Today the continued turmoil in the region is believed to influence the size of the community and reduce the consumers of the WAL (Bakalian & Chahininan, 2016). In addition, as Bakalian and Chahinian (2016) report, since WA is a stateless language, the process of Armenian integration sometimes leads to linguistic assimilation. Eastern Armenian conversely, has a rather secure position as a national language as it underwent a series of reforms, specifically in the fields of orthography and terminology building when Armenia became an independent republic in 1991 following the collapse of the Soviet Union (Dum-Tragut, 2009). This is believed to have created a linguistic gap between Eastern Armenian and WA, which has not undergone any state imposed reforms (Dum-Tragut, 2009; Karapetian, 2017).

**Importance of the study**

*Insufficient empirical data addressing the status of the Western Armenian language*

This study is important due to the short supply of research and publications on the WAL in Lebanon despite the fact that the Armenian diaspora in Lebanon, as Tololyan (2000), Boudjikanian (2009) and Ter-Matevosyan et al. (2017) comment, is regarded as the heart of the Armenian diaspora as a whole. As Armenian diaspora specialist Boudjikanian (2009)
discusses, it is essential to look into the past and present aspects of the Armenian community in Lebanon as several remain unexplored.

The shortage in the literature is often attributed to the 1975 Lebanese civil war, which as Boudjikanian (2009) reports, hindered the progress of the intellectual Armenian community that was still in the process of recovering from the aftermath of the genocide. As Chahinian (2010) discusses, with the absence of scholarly studies, assessing the status of WA proves to be challenging as much of the diaspora’s work is published in newspapers or journals rather than through publishing houses.

To date, Jebejian (2007) is the only researcher who has empirically looked into the status of the WAL in Lebanon in a qualitative study exploring the language use and domains of language use of different generations of Lebanese Armenians (LAs) in Lebanon. In her study, Jebejian (2007) explores how LAs perceive their ethnicity and she looks into their attitudes towards WA. Jebejian (2007) reports that WA is losing its communal, national and cultural distinctions and observes changes in language use across generations, with increased use of Arabic, French and English instead of WA as LAs associate such languages with social and economic advancement. Jebejian (2007) particularly reports limited use of WA among the youth and associates that to economic, technological, social and political changes. She raises a caution flag and warns about the potential deterioration of WA in Lebanon due to the fundamental attitudinal change towards it. Finally, she provides recommendations to improve the chances of maintaining WA in Lebanon (ibid).

While Jebejian’s (2007) study is the first to explore the status of WA in Lebanon, it does not focus on the LPs of LAAs, which this study aims to explore. More specifically, the study looks into the role residential location plays in shaping the perceptions of identity of LAAs and explores the social interactions of BH and NAAs adolescents, their opinions about
social integration, their attendance and involvement in Armenian schools and institutions, their cultural practices and ideologies, their attitudes towards WA and other languages they speak and their LPs. I believe it is important to explore the experiences and perceptions of particularly LAAs because they are the inheritors of WA and they might face multifaceted issues of adaptation involving both Armenian and Lebanese cultures, customs and habits. As Rumbaut (1994) and Phinney et al. (2001) discuss, issues of ethnic identity are salient amongst adolescents with immigrant backgrounds who grow up being taught to retain their heritage customs, values and language while at the same time trying to adapt to a society that emphasises the importance of learning the dominant language and culture. Accordingly, this study is an important contribution not only to the field of Armenian studies in Lebanon but also more generally to the fields of sociolinguistics and language revitalization as it addresses issues adolescents face in relation to ethnic identity and HL maintenance.

Some scholars in the field of Armenian studies have alluded to the WAL in their work without a thorough analysis of its status and the possible factors that can contribute to its shift or maintenance. A few examples of prominent researchers who have explored several aspects of the Armenian diaspora in Lebanon are Hovannisian (1974), Greenshields (1981) Sanjian (2001), Migliorino (2008, 2009) and Tachjian (2009) who discuss the settlement and development of the Armenian community in Lebanon and the Middle East, Arsenian-Ekmekji (2001), who studies how LAs are perceived and stereotyped by broader Lebanese society, Voss (2007), who talks about the customs, traditions and achievements of the Armenian diaspora in the contemporary world, Attarian (2015) who looks into the challenges of Armenian schools in Lebanon, and Sahakyan (2015) who looks into the political and institutional conditions that shaped the identity of the Armenian diaspora in Lebanon, France and the United States. The works of these scholars serve as a starting point for this study as they provide a better understanding of the Armenian diaspora in Lebanon, the deportation
from their homeland, their arrival and settlement in Lebanon, the humanitarian, financial and political difficulties they faced, their establishment in refugee camps before the establishment of Armenian neighbourhoods as well as the evolution of their Armenian identity throughout their presence in Lebanon. These researchers also discuss the cultural and intellectual life of the Armenian community in Lebanon and address socio-political questions and the struggle of dealing with the Armenian genocide denial. While addressing such aspects of the Armenian community provides ground for better understanding the status of WA in Lebanon, as discussed, Jebejian’s (2007) study is the first to empirically reveal a change in the usage and formal properties of the WAL.

Despite the scarcity of empirical studies directly targeting the WAL in Lebanon, Boudjikanian (2009) comments that future publications look more promising with the rising generation of scholars. For instance, the Armenian communities department of Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, the funder of this PHD study, is committed to the attainment of knowledge in the field of Armenian studies globally and supports researchers in the domain with full and partial scholarships. While the foundation privileges modern and contemporary Armenian subjects that focus on current issues faced by Armenia and the diaspora and while it prioritizes WAL promotion and maintenance, it is not confined to a particular area of research. It understands Armenian Studies in a broad sense and supports research in any area including “politics, cultural studies, archaeology, history and other disciplines within the social sciences and humanities” (Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation; Armenian Communities, 2017). The Foundation has contributed to a gradual return to vigorous research and the emergence of new scholarly names in the general field of Armenian studies, to name a few, Al-Bataineh (2015) who studies the role of school policies in attracting Armenian parents to enrol their children in Armenian schools and Bakalian and Chahinian (2016) who study WAL instruction in Armenian schools in the United States.
My personal interest in conducting the study

Gulbenkian Foundation’s lack of confinement to a particular research area gave me the freedom as well as the opportunity to pursue my interest in studying the impact of residential location on the WAL, an interest that stems from my personal experience with WA. I was raised in a predominantly Christian Lebanese neighbourhood in a small village, Cornet el Hamra, in the Metn district of Lebanon, where we were the only Armenian family there. As a child and an adolescent, I managed well in reconciling between the demands of ethnic belonging and social integration. My parents were committed to giving my siblings and me an Armenian education and instilling “the love of Armenianness”, Hayaseroutyoun, in us. They sent us to an Armenian school and made sure we learned to read and write WA. “The problem”, according to my father, was that we were far from Armenian concentrated areas and most of our friends were non-Armenian. Interestingly, we were not only far from Armenian neighbourhoods such as BH, but we also established unique and exceptionally strong connections and friendships with our Lebanese friends, which developed in my siblings and me a strong sense of belonging to our Lebanese identity. While I do not recall struggling to be inclusive in the broader society without abandoning my ethnic identity, as an adult and a researcher I realize I did face identity conflicts and the dilemma of not knowing whether I was Lebanese or Armenian. Something in me really wanted to remain Lebanese while at the same time being in a group of Lebanese Armenian (LA) friends generated a sense of unity and group membership in me. Regarding the languages I spoke, despite receiving an Armenian education, I was often reprimanded for my poor competence in WA and for using more Arabic than Armenian. Conversely, my Arabic language was admired as
being of high competence. I would like to note here that I do not mean to use the term “competence” in its linguistic sense but rather in its ordinary or everyday meaning of skill.

My personal experience and my focus as a researcher on different aspects of identity in relation to language developed my interest in studying the LPs of LAAs as a way to understand how residential location influences the maintenance or shift of WA in Lebanon.

The general concern over the status of the Western Armenian language in Lebanon

Another factor that makes this study important is the popular concern among LAs about the longevity of WA often expressed in public outcries and reported in articles and papers written by professionals in the field, such as Chahinian (2009, 2010), Jebejian (2007, 2012), and Al-Bataineh (2014). For instance, in 2005, on the 1600th anniversary of the invention of the Armenian alphabet, the head of the Armenian Apostolic Church, His Holiness Aram I, wrote an encyclical addressing himself to LAs urging constant use of WA within families, schools, organizations and everyday interactions (Armenian Orthodox Church, 2005). His Holiness saw using WA as an “urgent necessity” and an “imperative obligation” and addressed himself particularly to the youth stressing the importance of “proper” and “authentic” use of WA, with its conversational and written forms (Armenian Orthodox Church 2005, 3). His Holiness wrote,
“Let us not forget that the decline of our language will also degenerate us in the spiritual, national and cultural sense. Let us not forget that the indifference displayed by us toward our language will lead us toward alienation. We consider the healthy and living preservation of the Armenian language a sacred, top-priority and pan-national obligation for the Armenian government, our church, and our cultural, educational and social institutions and organizations” (cited in Armenian Orthodox Church 2005, 3).

Such public outcries, as mentioned, are a reflection of the concerns within the Armenian community. Being a member of it, I often witnessed enthusiasm about maintaining the WAL, particularly by older members of the community. The expression “hayereh khosir”, “speak Armenian”, is commonly used in instances where younger members shift to Arabic or other widely spoken languages in Lebanon. Such instances are not restricted to the Armenian community in Lebanon. For example, Tsunoda (2006) and Pauwels (2016) discuss how older generations within ethnic communities display language loyalty by imposing HL use on younger members and reprimanding them when shifting to another dominant language. Similarly, when older members of the Armenian community encourage or even impose WA use, they would be manifesting their positive attitude towards it because, as Panossian (2002) and Vaux (2004) discuss, the Armenian language is often perceived to be intertwined with the Armenian identity.

The generational differences in attitudes towards the WAL reported by Jebejian (2007) are also reflected in poetry, literature, novels and scholarly articles. For example, in his semi-autobiographical novel *Seuils*, Beledian (1997), a prominent Armenian writer, narrates aspects of his childhood in Beirut and expresses with grief the disparity between the
attitudes and sentiments of diaspora born Armenians and their ancestors. Beledian (1997) expresses that the new Armenian generation in the diaspora will never understand how their ancestors “ached” when they heard their children utter their first word in a foreign language.

Intergenerational language shift is not restricted to the Armenian community in Lebanon as it is a commonly experienced phenomenon among ethnic communities (Dalby, 2003). As Giltrow (2002, 158) comments, language shift generates unhappiness in older generations with the status of their language and causes them to deplore it and announce its “decline from an earlier perfection”. Milroy and Milroy (2012, 24) refer to expressions of concern and disapproval of the perceived decline in the speech and writing standards of a language as the “complaint tradition”. Particularly, as Giltrow (2002) comments, it is often the younger people’s language that becomes a complaint target. Indeed, as Jebejian (2007) reports, older members of the Armenian community complain about how the youth merge with “Arabs”, Arap, and how that affects WA, when on the other hand, the younger generation sees its success and prosperity in its integration with the Lebanese.

Western Armenian on UNESCO’s map of endangered languages leading to awareness or despair

In 2010 the United Nation’s Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) added WA to its map of endangered languages (Moseley, 2010) categorizing it as a “definitely endangered” language, i.e. “a language that is mostly used by a parental generation and up” (UNESCO, 2003). Rating WA as “definitely endangered” was
“shocking” to some LAs, yet at the same time generated awareness of their current trends of language maintenance and language shift (LMLS) (Jebejian, 2012). Jebejian (2012) comments that “definitely endangered” leads to an assumption that WA is declining in terms of oral fluency. She adds that the new generation of Armenians has a different understanding of Armenian ethno-cultural identity and its attitudes as well as feelings of loyalty towards its HL might be different from those of previous generations (ibid).

Chahinian (2010) looks at UNESCO’s classification of WA as “definitely endangered” from two different perspectives: the pragmatic and the idealist perspectives. She comments that from the point of view of “pragmatic” Armenians, it would be of no use to try reversing the perceived shift in the WAL, as its linguistic properties will most probably head towards extinction when eventually it becomes categorized as “severely endangered”, then “critically endangered”, until it reaches the stage of extinction. On the other hand, Chahinian (2010) comments that from the point of view of “idealist Armenians”, it is very likely to reverse the endangerment of WA as UNESCO’s Atlas of the World’s Languages in Danger also includes the possibility of language revitalization, which gives WA the possibility of “upward mobility” (Chahinian, 2010).

I look at UNESCO’s classification of WA as “definitely endangered” as an important opportunity to study the status of WA on a local level in order to understand the degree of its endangerment specifically in Lebanon. What I suggest is the possibility that WA might be endangered globally but not particularly in Lebanon, because until today a large number of LAs continue to speak WA and actively use it as their primary language of communication (Migliorino, 2008; Al-Bataineh, 2014; Ter-Matevosyan, et al., 2017). This could be an indication that UNESCO’s framework, which classifies WA as a definitely endangered language, is a universal framework that does not take into consideration local context and
conditions. For instance, in a paper that looks into the social, cultural and educational activities of a major Armenian organization in Lebanon, the *Hamazkayin Armenian Educational and Cultural Society*, Al-Bataineh (2014) reports that WA is the main language of communication of the Armenian community in Lebanon and that interacting in a language other than WA is not generally acceptable. She also discusses that with only rare exceptions, LA students attending the *Lyceum of Hamazkayin, Djemaran*, arrive to school as native speakers of WA and would be either dominant or monolingual in it. Conversely, as Al-Bataineh (2014) points out, the language situations in the programs of *Hamazkayin* organization in the United Kingdom, France and Australia are different to the one in Lebanon as Armenians in those countries are more likely to use non-Armenian languages in the home domain and in *Hamazkayin* activities. Concerning WA in the United States, a recent study conducted by Bakalian and Chahinian (2016) reveals that the majority of immigrant households speak Armenian at home; nonetheless, the majority of Armenians born in the United States speak English at home. The diversity in the linguistic status of WA in different countries of the diaspora makes it important to study the notion of endangerment in relation to WA in more depth and at a local level by looking into the status of WA in Lebanon and understanding the perceptions of the community towards it.

My critical stance on UNESCO’s framework is that it does not take into consideration the practice of mixing languages, but rather looks at languages as separate entities. A language is not necessarily endangered when its speakers use more than one language in some domains, particularly in a country like Lebanon where LAs and non-Armenians alike are multilingual. As Park and Wee (2017) comment, languages, particularly of minority communities, are not pre-existing entities preowned by a distinct or separate cultural community. Many native Armenian speakers in Lebanon, as Al-Bataineh (2014) reports, experience quadrilingual contexts where they might for example speak only Armenian with
their parents, a possible combination of Armenian and/or Arabic and French with their siblings, and Arabic and/or English and French with their non-Armenian friends.

I do not deny the importance of UNESCO’s language mapping system, nor do I question its reliability. It is, as Lewis (2005, 28) concluded after evaluating its usefulness, accuracy and generalizability, a clear framework that can help assess language endangerment and a “very useful research agenda for investigators of the world’s languages that is based on a sound theoretical orientation to language maintenance and shift”. However, I believe it is important, as Park and Wee (2017) suggest, to take into consideration the sociodynamics of language contact situations in pluralinguistic societies where speakers of different languages interact, influence each other and possibly lead to the formation of hybrid varieties.

What exactly “definitely endangered” means according to UNESCO

UNESCO’s Atlas of the World’s Languages in Danger categorizes WA as “definitely endangered” by placing it on one of the six levels of endangerment rating from “safe”, “unsafe”, “definitely endangered”, “severely endangered”, “critically endangered” to “extinct” (Moseley, 2010). This designation according to UNESCO’s framework means, “children no longer learn the language as a mother tongue in the home” and that the language is most likely to die within one hundred years (Moseley, 2010). This implies that the new generation of Armenians in the diaspora are not using WA with their parents at home, which as discussed, is a subject that requires an in depth exploration on a local level.
UNESCO’s rating of WA as an endangered language comes on the basis of its evaluative framework of language endangerment that includes nine factors that determine language functionality in society, its viability as well as the measures that can be applied to maintain or revitalize it (UNESCO, 2016). The combination of the nine factors together determine language vitality, which is not very likely to be determined by focusing on a single factor alone. Before explaining which factors on UNESCO’s framework are most relevant to this study, I briefly explain each factor alone and provide a discussion of other important language vitality tools.

The first factor on UNESCO’s (2003) framework is *intergenerational language transmission*, the process through which all members of a community use a language and transmit it from one generation to another. UNESCO (2003) suggests that a language is more likely to be endangered when it is not used in the family domain and transferred from one generation to another.

The second factor is *absolute number of the speakers*, which either contributes to restricted or extensive language use. Although, it is not possible to provide a valid analysis of the status of a language by simply taking into account the absolute number of its speakers, UNESCO (2003) discusses that a small speech community is more vulnerable to losing its language as it would be under higher risk of decimation by natural disasters, diseases or wars and it would more easily merge into larger neighbouring groups.

The third factor on UNESCO’s (2003) framework is *proportion of speakers within the total population*, i.e. the percentage of people within the total population who speak the language and associate with it. UNESCO (2003) suggests that this is a better indicator of language vitality than the absolute number of speakers.
The fourth factor on UNESCO’S (2003) framework is trends in existing language domains, which determine where a language is used, with who, and in what domains. The larger the domains of language use the greater the chances of a language to be transmitted from one generation to the next.

In line with the fourth factor, UNESCO (2003) also discusses response to new domains and media, which is the fifth factor on its framework. As the living conditions of communities change, new domains of language use may emerge and influence HL status. Although sometimes a speech community succeeds in expanding its language to new domains, with the help of new language environments and new media, usually the dominant language expands in scope and power at the expense of the minority language (ibid). This, according to UNESCO (2003), means that a language becomes increasingly endangered if its speakers do not meet the challenges of coping in new domains of language use.

The sixth factor on UNESCO’s (2003) framework is material for language education and literacy. For a language to maintain its vitality, books and material on all topics are needed as education in the language is essentially important. When communities are provided with the right language material, they maintain strong language literacy, which in turn increases or maintains the vitality of the language they associate themselves with (ibid).

Governmental and institutional language attitude and policies is the seventh factor on UNESCO’s (2003) framework. The linguistic ideology of a state can motivate members of minority communities to maintain or abandon their HL, which means that the maintenance or shift of a minority language is highly dependent on dominant linguistic cultures and attitudes.

With its eighth factor, UNESCO (2003) suggests that community members’ attitudes towards their own language play a significant role in determining the vitality of a language as
different members of a speech community hold different attitudes towards their HL. While some community members promote their HL and hold positive attitudes towards it seeing it as essential in preserving their group identity and culture, others conversely, might be ashamed of using it and consciously avoid it if they believe it delays their economic prosperity or integration into larger society (UNESCO, 2003). In such instances, as Fishman and Garcia (2010) comment, it becomes more challenging for a minority language to maintain its vitality.

The last factor on UNESCO’s (2003) framework is amount and quality of documentation, which may be essential in determining language vitality. The quality and types of language material such as written texts, transcribed recordings or natural speech contribute to language maintenance as they enable community members to use their language and linguists to design projects that assess language vitality (ibid).

There exist other language vitality evaluation frameworks such as Fishman’s (1991) Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (GIDS) and the extended GIDS introduced by Lewis and Simons (2010), which are highly important evaluative frameworks that reveal levels of language vitality. Fishman’s (1991) GIDS for instance, is one of the most influential language vitality assessment tools and the foundational conceptual model for assessing the status of endangered languages. It is an eight level scale that reflects the transmission of a language from one generation to the next, with level one indicating the lowest degree of language disruption and level eight the highest. The first six levels indicate the maintenance of a language, whereas levels seven and eight indicate language shift due to lack of language transmission from parents to children.

According to Fishman (1991), intergenerational language transmission is critical in determining language vitality and continuity and is a key factor in language maintenance.
However, Fishman (1991) also discusses that parental decisions to transmit their language or not are often influenced by social or institutional factors that create domains of language use. When a language is used in fewer social domains, parents may stop transferring it to their children as they think it is of less value than the dominant language of the region.

Another important language vitality assessment tool is the Extended Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (EGIDS) by Lewis and Simons (2010) which is an extension of the tools proposed by Fishman (1991) and UNESCO (2003). Lewis and Simons’s (2010) framework consists of twelve factors and retains Fishman’s (1991) focus on language domains and intergenerational transmission. In order to evaluate a language in terms of the EGIDS, five factors, “the identity function, vehicularity, state of intergenerational language transmission, literacy acquisition status, and societal profile of generational language use” are addressed (Lewis & Simons 2010, 2). Several factors suggested by UNESCO such as absolute number of speakers, community language attitudes, governmental and institutional language attitudes, and amount and quality of documentation are not taken into account in Lewis and Simon’s (2010) EGIDS.

While both the GIDS and EGIDS are important language vitality assessment tools that provide insights into the dynamics of LMLS, my starting point to understanding the perceptions of LAAs and their experiences with WA is UNESCO’s framework, particularly because it is the framework that categorizes WA as a “definitely endangered” language (Moseley, 2010). I specifically assess to what extent the recent geographical dispersal of LAAs across Lebanese territories amplifies the effect of the factors listed by UNESCO. I explore the relationship between the factors on UNESCO’s framework and residential location, in order to understand the status of WA on a local level. However, due to time constraints, I do not thoroughly address all factors on UNESCO’s framework, but rather I focus on the following factors in relation to residential location: trends in existing language...
domains, response to new domains and media, community members’ attitudes towards their own Language. I concentrate on these factors, as I am interested in understanding the LPs of LAAs in relation their recent geographical dispersal, which might expose them to new domains of language use such as schools, social clubs and new social environments and therefore influence their attitudes towards WA.

Research questions

Based on the objectives of this study, I formulated the following research question:

To what extent do residential concentration and geographical dispersal influence the status of the WAL in Lebanon?

Supported by the following sub-questions:

1. To what extent do residential concentration and geographical dispersal influence the social interactions, cultural practices, ideologies and perceptions of identity and self-understanding of LAAs?
2. To what extent do residential concentration and geographical dispersal influence Armenian school attendance as well as the attitudes of LAAs towards Armenian education and schools?

3. To what extent do residential concentration and geographical dispersal influence the LPs and language attitudes of LAAs?

Overview of the thesis

The thesis is divided into eleven chapters including the current chapter. I briefly discuss the content of each chapter below.

In Chapter 2, I give background information on the Armenian people and their early history. I discuss Armenian life under Ottoman rule, the events that led to the Armenian genocide, the denial of the genocide and its impact on Armenian identity. I also discuss the life of the Armenian diaspora following the genocide, particularly in Lebanon, and give information about the reproduction of social, institutional and political life in Lebanon and the recent challenges faced by the community.
In Chapter 3, I present a review of the literature on LMLS, which I discuss in relation to residential location. I also justify the selection of some terminological concepts and provide a discussion of notions that lay down the foundations of this study.

In Chapter 4, I explain the research design and the challenges faced during the pilot study. I also explain the process of data collection through questionnaires, individual interviews, group interviews and nonparticipant observations and provide information about the population of the study and the techniques used to select participants. Finally, I explain the techniques I adopted to analyse data collected for the study.

In Chapter 5, I discuss the geodemographic dimension that shapes the Armenian community in Lebanon. I provide data on the daily interactions of two groups of LAAs, from BH and NAAs. I look into the relationship between residential location and the friendships of LAAs and explore their opinions about relocating outside of Armenian concentrated areas. I also provide data on the perceived gaps and differences between the two groups of adolescents.

In Chapter 6, I look into the various components of Armenian identity and their possible influence on the WAL. I provide data about how LAAs perceive and negotiate their individual, communal and national identities in relation to the WAL and I explore whether such negotiations are influenced by residential location.

In Chapter 7, I look into the impact of residential location on schooling and on the LPs of LAAs and I provide data about the education of LAAs from BH and from NAAs. I also explore their opinions about Armenian and non-Armenian schools and look into whether they are in favour of sending their children to an Armenian school in the future.
In Chapter 8, I explore the ideologies of LAAs and the way they envision their future families. I also provide data about their cultural practices and explore the relationship between residential location and involvement in Armenian religious, communal and political life.

In Chapter 9, I explore the attitudes of LAAs and their parents towards the WAL and other more widely spoken languages in Lebanon and I report on whether they think it is important to preserve WA. I provide data about the perceived functionality of WA and its emotional aspect and explore whether such perceptions are influenced by residential location. I also look into mainstream attitudes towards LAs and the WAL.

In Chapter 10, I provide data about the domains of language use of LAAs and look into when, where and with who they use WA. With a focus on the home domain and the social domain, I explore the relationship between residential location and the LPs of LAAs.

In Chapter 11, I close the study by discussing its key findings. I also discuss the contributions and limitations of the study and provide directions for further research and recommendations.
Chapter 2

The Armenian diaspora of Lebanon: from past to present

Introduction

In this chapter, I touch upon the historical background of the Armenian people and provide an account of the settlement of the Armenian community in Lebanon, its development, as well as integration into broader Lebanese society. I report on the social, political, economic, religious and educational experiences of LAs as such experiences may have contributed to shaping the status of the WAL. Researchers in the field of sociolinguistics such as Pennycook (2007), Fishman and Garcia (2010) and De Busser (2015) attribute HL maintenance, or shift, to extra-linguistic factors as well as historical and sociocultural events. In line with this, I find it important to look into the experiences of LAs within their Lebanese environment because such experiences might influence the structure and the development of WA in Lebanon. I begin by giving some background information on the early history of Armenia and Armenians. I report on the events and historical settings that paved the way to the Armenian genocide and discuss the impact of the genocide on Armenian identity. I also provide background information on the formation of the Armenian diaspora in Lebanon and discuss the current sociocultural, political, and linguistic status of LAs.
The Armenian people and their early history

Armenians are an ancient Indo-European people who are believed to have emerged in historic Armenia as a result of centuries of cultural blending amongst various native and migrating peoples, “perhaps extending as far back as to the Hurrians, Hittites, and Phrygians” (Payaslian 2007, 4). More recently, historians trace them back to the Iron Age kingdom of Urartu, in close proximity to Lake Van (Peterson, 2004).

Armenians label Armenia as Hayastan and themselves as Hay (Payaslian, 2007). The designation “historic Armenia” describes the region that was ruled and inhabited by Armenians from as early as 500 BC up until the twelfth century AD (Chahin, 2013). As Hewsen (1997, 5) discusses, historical Armenia is approximately 283,000 square miles, surrounded by “Georgian neighbours on the north, the Azerbaijani Turks on the East, the Iranians on the southeast, the Kurds in the south, the Arabs of Syria and Mesopotamia on the southwest, and the Anatolian people, long ago absorbed by the Turks, who live in the west”. Being physically surrounded by non-Christian neighbouring nations who continuously persecuted Christians, Armenia’s history has been a turbulent one (Hovannisian, 1997; Peterson, 2004). Armenians experienced centuries of frequent invasions and foreign domination until eventually in the fifteenth century, Armenia was absorbed into the rising Ottoman Empire, which had swept away Byzantium (Peterson 2004, 15). Today, as Hewsen (1997) reports, Armenians barely occupy a tenth of the historic lands that once belonged to Ancient Armenian kings (see Armenia in its historical setting in appendix 1, 1). Most of historic Armenia has become eastern Turkey, which includes Anatolia, the peninsula from the western coast of Asia Minor to the Syrian border with Turkey (Chahin, 2013).
The Armenian minority under Ottoman rule and the series of events that led to the Armenian genocide

According to Barkey (2005), by 1453, Turks occupied Constantinople and expanded towards the East into Cilicia and Armenia establishing the Ottoman Empire, a multinational state that embodied several ethnic and religious communities such as Jews, Armenians, Greeks and Muslims. Following a series of long wars between the Russian and the Ottoman Empires, in the first years of the twentieth century, the Armenian territory was divided between the two (Kaligian, 2017). Within the Ottoman Empire, Armenians were concentrated in Cilicia all the way to the north and north-west of the Gulf of Alexandretta as well as in the eastern provinces of Anatolia, bordered by the Black Sea, the Caucasus, Persia, Mesopotamia, Syria, Cilicia and the Mediterranean (Bloxham, 2005).

According to Barkey (2005) and Kaligian (2017), the Ottoman State retained control over the diversity in the region by establishing the Millet system, which included a set of administrative rules that allowed the non-Muslim minorities to rule themselves under their own jurisdictional regulations. The Millet system, according to Barkey (2005), gave the minority ethnic groups, including Armenians, a degree of autonomy and the freedom to practice their religion. However, the rules installed by the state across the ethnic groups were perceived as discriminatory rules that placed boundaries on non-Muslim minorities (ibid). Armenians for example, were considered second-class citizens who paid extra taxes and underwent inequitable laws that restricted their role in the government and took away their civil and property rights (Kaligian, 2017).

The Treaty of San Stefano signed in March 1878 between the Ottoman Empire and Russia, gave Armenians hopes that their conditions in the Ottoman Empire would improve, as the Russian troops were to withdraw from the occupied Ottoman territories only after the
Ottoman Empire would carry out reforms that improve the conditions of Armenians (Whitehorn, 2015). However, as Hovannisian (2009) and Akcam and Dadrian (2011) report, the Treaty of Berlin, which was signed in June right after the Treaty of San Stefano by the Ottoman Empire and several European states, left Armenians without military protection. Russian Military presence in what was referred to as “Armenian-populated provinces” was prevented (Kirakosian 2003, 340). Consequently, as Hovannisian (1997) discusses, the Turkish government under Sultan Abdul Hamid II openly disregarded its responsibility and obligation to protect its own citizens regardless of their religious affiliations, and instead, it turned its power against Armenians. This gradually led to the Great Massacres of 1894-1896 and later to the Armenian genocide of 1915 perpetrated by the Young Turk movement (Akcam and Dadrian, 2011; Kielsgard, 2015).

Bloxham (2005) explains that while there is no straight line that connects the Great Massacres to the Armenian genocide, the two occurred within the context of the terminal decline of the Ottoman Empire. The primary perpetrators of the Armenian genocide were the leaders of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), which was formed and developed in the late nineteenth century out of the diverse opposition groups collectively known as the Young Turks (Bloxham, 2005). The CUP, according to Boudjikanian (2009, 33), had a hidden agenda of “Turkification” and assimilation, which it turned against Armenians. The CUP also suspected a military collaboration between Russians and Armenians and thus according to its “professed logic”, the Armenian deportations were “a military necessity” (Bloxham 2005, 1912). As Kevorkian (2011, 1) puts it, the physical destruction of Armenians was “conceived as a necessary condition for the construction of a Turkish nation state, the supreme objective of the Young Turks”.

The CUP fiercely rejected a pluralistic society and strove to build a mono-religious and mono-ethnic Turkish nation state by disintegrating the multiple religions and ethnic
groups in the Ottoman Empire (Hovannisian, 1997). As Akcam (2012) reports, the genocide was prearranged, planned, and carried out with the clear intention of eliminating all Armenians from the Ottoman lands. Particularly on the days of April 24 and April 25, 1915, a large number of important Armenian figures such as political and religious leaders, intellectuals, doctors and artists were arrested and executed (Cohan, 2005; Hovannisian, 2011).

Bloxham (2005) reports that by summer 1915 the Armenian Christian population in the Ottoman Empire was decimated at the hands of the Ottoman government. Armenians of eastern Anatolia were brutally killed or deported to the deserts of modern day Iraq and Syria (Bloxham, 2005; Akcam, 2012). Along the routes of deportations, Armenians were subject to ongoing attacks. Thousands of women and children were either mass murdered, massacred, kidnapped and sexually abused by Ottoman gendarmes as well as Turkish and Kurdish irregulars (Bloxham, 2005). Many died of starvation and thirst under harsh weather conditions (Bloxham, 2005; Boudjikanian, 2009). As Bloxham (2003, 2005) reports, those who survived, were forcefully converted into Islam and assimilated into the new Turkish state. Some were Islamized due to being adopted and protected by Muslim families (Altinay & Turkyilmaz, 2011).

The wartime destruction policy that targeted all Armenians, left the six Armenian provinces completely empty (Kevorkian, 2011; Akcam, 2012) (see map of Ottoman Armenian provinces in appendix 1, 2). Ultimately, the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in 1918 brought a temporary relief to Armenians (Akcam, 2006). Nevertheless, the arrival of Mustafa Kemal (Ataturk) to power has forced the remaining Armenians out of Cilicia and the rising nationalist movement under his rule re-established Turkish control of Anatolia and relaunched the attack against Armenians in 1920 (Bloxham, 2005). According to Akcam (2012), the genocide, the human destructiveness on a previously incredible scale, the series of
revolutions and wars, the enforced population exchanges, the deportations, the massacres and the ethnic cleansing only ended in 1923 when the Treaty of Lausanne was signed and provided for the independence of the modern state of Turkey.

There is uncertainty about the total number of Armenians who lived within the Ottoman lands and the death toll of the genocide is in dispute (Toynbee, 1915; Dundar, 2010). While the pre-war Armenian population was estimated to be approximately between 2.1 million (Toynbee, 1915) and 2.5 million (Cox, 1893), the Ottoman government attempted to undercount the number of Armenians and halved these figures as numbers became vital in addressing the question of Armenian autonomy.

Concerning the casualties of the massacres and deportations although estimates vary, as Dundar (2010) reports, the commonly cited number is 1.5 million. It is for example the figure reported by the Armenian genocide Institute Museum (1995), Cohan (2005), Freedman (2008) and Boudjikanian (2009). However, according to Dundar (2010) and Akcam (2012), the Ottoman records of the Armenian genocide were falsified and historians in the republic of Turkey downplay this figure in order to cover up the atrocities.

Although today various sources prove the mass killing of Armenians, modern Turkey refuses to recognize the events between 1915 and 1923 as a genocide (Hovannisian, 2009). Turkish national security, as Akcam (2012) explains, adopts a genocide denial policy whereby an open discussion of history is perceived as treachery or a national security risk. As Freedman (2008) and Hovannisian (2017) discuss, the term “genocide” was first coined and defined by scholar Raphael Lemkin as the deliberate and planned killing of a group of people belonging to the same ethnic or religious group. Hovannisian (1998, 14) explains that, “according to the United Nations Genocide Convention, genocide means to destroy with intent, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group”. In line with this, what
is important is not the quantitative scale of victims but rather the magnitude of the tragedy that continues to be denied until the current day.

Today, there are two divergent narratives of the Armenian genocide and they both carry on as mutually exclusive historiographies revolving around two themes; one in which the great powers dismantled the Ottoman Empire by way of its Christian inhabitants; the other, an account of oppression and massacres by the Ottoman Empire (Akcam, 2012). The first narrative is unsurprisingly adopted by Muslim Turkish communities that gradually believed in the foundation of their nation after a struggle for life-or-death against the great powers and the disloyal Ottoman Christians (ibid). As Kevorkian (2011, 811) puts it, the logic of “destroying in order to build” continues to permeate the “ideological and cultural foundations of a society which rejects its past” and is unable to come to terms with its history. Akcam (2012) discusses that official Turkish policy and historiography justify and explain the traumatic events of the past as an existential urgency that had to be adopted to preserve the Turkish state at all costs. The notion of an encircling threat, as Akcam (2012) explains, not only motivated the massacres against Armenians, but was raised in retrospect, to rationalise the policies of destruction and perceive them as a legitimate national self-defence mechanism.

**Armenian genocide remembrance day**

The denial and the struggle for its recognition, as Sahakyan (2015, 378) comments, made the Armenian genocide “an important marker of Armenian identity transnationally”. Public commemorations have become an essential cultural practice every year on April 24th.
when Armenians around the world come together in order to honour the victims of the Armenian genocide (Panossian, 2002).

While initially, the commemoration was a religious memorial service, ever since its 50th anniversary in 1965, it has adopted a political aspect as the sense of grievance transformed into political strength (Panossian, 2002; Marsden, 2015). Armenian organizations around the world put a lot of effort in raising awareness about the genocide within both Armenian communities and their host societies (Ter-Matevosyan et al., 2017). The official ceremony, as Whitehorn, (2015) reports, involves a silent march of hundreds of thousands of Armenians in Armenia as well as the diaspora. It includes “church services, an evening of speeches calling for the recognition of the genocide by the world community and Turkey and, often, demands the return of the lost lands” (Panossian 2002, 139). There would also be cultural performances highlighting the mass killings, and in some cities public rallies or demonstrations” (ibid).

In Lebanon too, the occasion is marked yearly with historical events such as seminars, concerts and talks (Ter-Matevosyan et al., 2017). The focus of the commemoration day is also on the march of thousands of LAs as well as other Lebanese people who depart from the Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia, in Antelias, all the way to the heart of the capital. The collective participation in the memorial services, as Ter-Matevosyan et al. (2017) comment, creates a sense of togetherness and unity amongst LAs as it is a common cause that unites and mobilizes the community.

According to Panossian (2002), there are four major themes intertwined in the genocide commemorations and they all summarise post-Genocide Armenian identity. The first recurrent theme is the fact that Armenians are victims and all of the people who died during the genocide are martyrs. The second recurrent theme is that Armenians are still suffering as Turkey and many other countries continue to deny the genocide. The third theme
commonly put forth is that the lost homeland is waiting for the return of its true inhabitants, the Armenians. Finally, as Panossian (2002, 137) discusses, “more radical elements go beyond remembering the past and demand justice, revenge and retribution, often using the word *pahanjatiratium* (to demand and protect what is yours)”.

While Armenians do not have a direct memory of the genocide as its survivors are dead (Marsden, 2015), the traumatic Armenian experience has persisted as part of their collective memory and national identity. Bakalian (1993) and Panossian (2002) also discuss that the denial of the genocide has contributed to shaping a collective consciousness of a national identity amongst Armenians. Stories of the genocide are told and the tragic experience is transmitted from generation to another in order for the genocide not to be forgotten (Azarian-Ceccato, 2010; Altinay & Turkyilmaz, 2011). I discuss the concept of denial and its impact on the Armenian identity further in Chapter 3.

**The Armenian diaspora**

Following the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in World War I, the immense dispersal of Armenians who survived the genocide and the deportations produced Armenian settlements, which in a relatively short period transformed into distinguished communities in the host countries (Sahakyan, 2015). Meanwhile, Armenia gained its independence for a short while in 1918 until it fell under Soviet rule in 1920. Today and after around seventy years of Soviet rule, Armenia is an independent republic again with a population of around three million as per UN data (Kuznetsov, 2006; UN Data, 2017). The larger portion of
Armenians is spread across the diaspora, as Armenia is one of the few nations whose majority of people live outside their homeland.

Various sources report different numbers of Armenians around the diaspora. For example, Sanjian (2001) reports the presence of seven to eight million Armenians around the world, half of whom live outside of Armenia. Armenians are mainly located in Russia, the United States, Lebanon, Iran, France and even as far as Argentina (Krikorian & Masih, 1999). They are communities established around Armenian institutions such as the Armenian Church, schools and youth centres supported by different organizations and political parties (Ter-Matevosyan et al., 2017). An important Armenian community was also established in Syria prior to the civil war that broke out in 2011 (Hakobyan, 2016). However, the majority have now left the country seeking shelter mainly in Lebanon, Armenia and the United States. As Hakobyan (2016) reports, according to some non-official estimates, around 15,000 migrated to Lebanon.

The Lebanese Armenian diaspora

Armenian presence in Lebanon is believed to date back to the first century BC (Mutafian, 2009) although it was negligible until the influx of Catholic refugees from Constantinople between the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (Sanjian, 2003; Papkova, 2014). Major Armenian presence in Lebanon dates back to the 1920s, when large waves of Armenians poured into Lebanon in the years following the Armenian genocide (Schahgaldian, 1983; Papkova, 2014).

Upon arrival to Lebanon, Armenians were exposed to an environment that was very new to them as Lebanon was very different from their homeland (Sanjian, 2001). They
settled in temporary refugee camps under very poor conditions with the hope of returning to their homeland one day (ibid). Initially, Armenians who arrived to larger Arab cities were resented as they were regarded as an unskilled labour force (ibid). In Lebanon however, which then was a French Mandate, Armenians were hospitably received and within a short period, they proved to be a positive contribution to Lebanon’s economic and political life (Sanjian, 2001; Voss, 2007).

It is estimated that 150,000 to 200,000 Armenians arrived in Lebanon and Syria in the 1920s (Hovannisian, 1974a) and 12,000 to 19,000 settled in camps established in Beirut under miserable conditions (Tachjian, 2009). The French and the Christians of Lebanon, contributed to their permanent settlement, as Armenians were a crucial element to the fortification of the Christian population and a possible ally to the government (Voss, 2007; Papkova, 2013). Accordingly, in 1924 the government granted all Armenian refugees the Lebanese citizenship as a way to balance the number of Christians and Muslims (Hovannisian, 1974; Voss, 2007; Sahakyan, 2015).

The support of the French mandate and the Lebanese government along with the determination of Armenians and the effort of the international Armenian diaspora helped Armenians to finally integrate into the economic fabric of Lebanon and build their own Armenian quarters, the most famous one being Bourj Hammoud (BH), located North-East of Beirut (Tachjian, 2009).

Initially, BH was a large plain area with a few agricultural fields and farmhouses scattered over empty landscapes. According to Tachjian (2009) and Sahakyan (2015), the lands in BH were bought and organized into a grid of streets divided into different centres, each representing a region in Cilicia and named after places Armenians came from such as Marach, Zeitoun, Sis, Trad and Adana. The new streets were represented by churches and
schools, which became the major contributors to preserving Armenian identity (Migliorino, 2008).

Abramson (2013, 192) reports that a few years after their settlement and before the departure of the French mandate from Lebanon, Armenians were no longer an “alien element” in Lebanon. A thriving Armenian community was formed, particularly in BH where Armenians concentrated, remained physically close to each other and constructed a vibrant Armenian residential and economic quarter (Voss, 2007; Abramson, 2013; Sahakyan, 2015; Papkova, 2014). Being exceptionally skilled in trading and artisanship, such as jewellery making and leather and carpentry work, artisans surged into the heart of the Lebanese market and became the representatives of Armenian culture in Lebanon as they brought with them cultural practices and artefacts that Lebanese locals were not familiar with (Voss, 2007, Sanjian, 2001). Armenians also made use of their familiarity with the Western languages and cultures and became mediators between the West and Lebanon (Hovannisian, 1974).

BH is not the only town Armenians settled in. Upon arrival, Armenians also concentrated in a poor camp in Anjar, located in the Bekaa valley (Cheterian, 2015). As Cheterian (2015) reports, Armenian Diaspora foundations under French mandate bought Anjar to house refugees from Musa Dagh after receiving generous contributions from Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation. Despite difficulties, Armenians quickly succeeded in building their own village there and transformed it into a communal area as well as an agricultural and industrial destination. While for so many LAs, BH today continues to be a capital home, Anjar is another symbol of Armenian existence in Lebanon. It is known for its specific Armenian dialect and for being a stronghold for the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF), also known as the Tashnag party, one of the leading Armenian parties in Lebanon (discussed below) (Cheterian, 2015).
Today, apart from BH and Anjar, LAs live in many parts of Lebanon. They are most significantly concentrated in the Metn District to the north of Beirut. As Papkova (2014, 217) reports, “from Bourj Hammoud, the Armenian population spills over into the neighbouring boroughs of Dora, Fanar, Raouda, Jdeide, Zalka, Jal El Dib, Antelias, Mezher, Naccache, Dbayeh and Awkar” and some are settled northeast into the Lebanese mountains in the region linking Antelias to Bikfaya. In recent years, LAs have particularly started concentrating in Mezher, a small town almost six kilometres from BH, located in the Metn district of the Mount Lebanon governorate and just a few minutes from the Armenian Apostolic Church in Antelias. According to Papkova (2014, p, 173), “considerable concentrations of Armenians are also located in Beirut, particularly in the neighbourhoods of Greater Achrifiye and Hamra. In northern Lebanon, there are Armenian populations dispersed between Jounieh, Jbeil and Tripoli”.

The dispersal of LAs across Lebanon is often attributed to their economic success. As Voss (2007) and Jebejian (2007) discuss, the economic prosperity of LAs gave them a chance to adopt a better lifestyle than their early years in Lebanon and seek better living conditions outside of BH. According to Jebejian (2007), today financially comfortable LAs have a tendency to leave BH and move to different areas of Lebanon such as Rabieh and Naccache, affluent suburbs that have become significantly inhabited by LAs.

For many LAs, Lebanon represents a homeland due to the communal autonomy and the economic freedom the Lebanese government offers to them and to other confessions (Migliorino, 2008; Kotchikian, 2009). While the economic insecurity of the Lebanese civil war which started in 1975 caused the Armenian community in Lebanon to lose much of its prosperity with the emigration of a large number from Lebanon, as Abramson (2013, 213) comments “the distinctive features and manifold successes of the community yet remain”. 
Today, the exact number of LAs “is a matter of dispute” (Papkova 2014, 174). No official statistics provide the exact number of Armenians who left Lebanon following the Lebanese civil war as the last national census was conducted in 1932 prior to Lebanon’s independence (LIC, 2013). Migliorino (2008, 165) comments that there is a common perception among LAs that the war halved their number in Lebanon, “reducing the overall figure from perhaps 200,000 in 1975 to 100,000 in 1990”. The numbers provided by UNESCO (Moseley, 2010) and the Minority Rights Group International (2008) are 200,000 and 156,000 respectively. Nevertheless, these figures were collected prior to the civil war, which reduces their reliability.

Obtaining accurate figures at this stage proves to be quite challenging due to concerns about sectarian conflicts (Papkova, 2014). As the Lebanese Information Centre (LIC, 2013) states, revealing demographic information in Lebanon might be politically sensitive. On a personal level as well, it was challenging for me to obtain census data to base this study on, not merely due to the absence of up to date figures, but also because several organizations and institutions I had recourse to, one of them being a major source of statistical information, refused to provide me with more recent unofficial census, claiming that such information is strictly confidential, and revealing it might expose the vulnerability of the Armenian political situation. Migliorino (2008) suggests that, one of the ways to estimate the number of LAs is by referring to the figures of Armenian participation in parliamentary elections. For example, during the elections of the year 2000, the number of LA electors was 28,000, a number significantly low compared to previous elections (ibid). Migliorino (2008) comments that projections based on this figure would suggest that the present total LA population hardly reaches 53,000 individuals. Migliorino’s (2008) estimate is the closest to the one by the Encyclopaedia of Armenian diaspora (2003), which estimates the number of LAs to be 70,000 to 80,000.
From detachment to social integration

During the first years of settlement, Armenians were unable to establish any connections with the Lebanese due to their vulnerable situation, poverty as well as language restrictions (Sanjian, 2001; Miglierino, 2008). As mentioned, they remained concentrated in particular geographical spaces, such as in BH, and kept themselves distant from Lebanese society. As Sahakyan (2015, 139) discusses, having arrived in a foreign land, “clustering together was the natural response”. As a way to ensure their security, Armenians preferred to rely on their family members and community rather than on external powers such as the Maronites and French (Greenshields, 1981; Sanjian, 2001).

Armenians remained a detached refugee community for several years (Sanjian, 2001). Even following the years of settlement, when they became economically secure, they continued to cluster together. According to Hovannisian (1974), remaining socially distant from the Lebanese was a conscious act of self-isolation and a way to maintain Armenian culture, religion, identity and language. The first generation of Armenians, even some of the second and third generations, were only capable of speaking basic Arabic as it was not a language they needed to use on a daily basis (ibid). This phenomenon of isolation as a way to maintain culture and language is not unique to the Armenian community in Lebanon. Lipski and Roca (1991) for instance, discuss how social and physical detachment from a dominant society contributes to language maintenance and how close-king ethnic communities have higher chances of maintaining their language.

According to Sahakyan’s (2015, 142) comparative study on the Armenian diaspora in the United States, France and Lebanon, “wherever Armenians clustered together, they tried to recreate their communal lifestyle and community structures according to the old ways in their native towns and villages”. During the phase of adjustment, they established “predominantly
compatriotic communities and sub-communities within larger Armenian settlements” (ibid, 142). As Sahakyan (2015) reports, while Armenians in France and the United States experienced geographical dispersal due to employment and affordability of life, LAs did not experience geographical mobility due to the small size of the country. In addition, as Sahakyan (2015) reports, the social and political context in Lebanon did not challenge the clustering of LAs in compatriotic settings or lead to discrimination or social exclusion, unlike in the United States or France where Armenians had to give up at least some aspects of their ethnic individuality in order to assimilate in their host societies. The concentration of LAs within the Armenian quarters was relatively tolerated in Lebanon where they did not have to give up their ethnic individuality and their “social adjustment did not entail assimilation” (Sahakyan 2015, 160)

Today, LAs have become socially more open to mainstream Lebanese society, which has resulted in modifications in the relationships with the Lebanese on different levels. In the past, interactions with the Lebanese on a social level were frowned upon (Hovannisian, 1974). They were limited to the workplace and the university, rarely extending beyond the Armenian home threshold (ibid). Today however, LAs have accepted the Lebanese as part of their social life and have established contact with them on different levels (Migliorino, 2008).

The changes in the nature of relationships with broader Lebanese society might bring modifications to the cultural practices of LAs, particularly adolescents, and might influence the status of the WAL in Lebanon. It is believed that there is a whole generation of LAs who do not speak WA, and this, as Tchilingirian (1999) and Jebejian (2007) report, is reflected in the steady decline of WAL readership. While readership decline is not unique to Armenian newspapers, what is evident is that, as Tchilingirian (1999) reports, in recent years, bilingual publications of Armenian newspapers are on the decline as Arabic and English have become the preferred languages of LA youth.
Despite the challenges the Armenian community in Lebanon faces and the post-war shrinkage of its potential reflected in several domains, LAs continue to exert efforts to maintain a strong presence in Lebanon while preserving their cultural heritage, language and identity through their institutions (Ter-Matevosyan et al., 2017).

Armenian institutions in Lebanon and identity politics

In a study comparing the institutional structures of the Armenian diaspora in Lebanon and Russia, Ter-Matevosyan et al. (2017, 73) report how the Armenian diaspora is viewed as a “success story in terms of identity preservation and its active involvement in national causes” due to being socially and politically organized. It is through well-established and diverse organizations and institutions that Armenians have been capable of preserving their national identity, religion, language and culture for generations (ibid).

Today, Armenian institutions in Lebanon operate in political, cultural and philanthropic domains (Tololyan, 2000; Ter-Matevosyan et al. 2017). While these institutions were initially helping early Armenian settlers in Lebanon meet their basic needs, such as resettling from the refugee camps into houses and recovering from mental and physical exhaustion (Sahakyan, 2015), they later became major contributors in creating a distinctive community that is socially and politically structured (Migliorino, 2008; Tololyan, 2000). After only a decade in Lebanon, several schools were built due to joint efforts between community organizations such as Armenian churches and political parties that operated through their proxy organizations, patriotic unions and international aid organizations (Migliorino, 2008).
Armenian churches in Lebanon

Lebanon is regarded as the epicentre of Armenian religious institutions in the diaspora as it is home to the second Apostolic See of Cilicia, the centre of the global Armenian Catholic Church and the base of the Union of Armenian Evangelical Churches of the Near East (Sanjian, 2003; Papkova, 2014).

The Armenian Apostolic Church has been the leading religious institution in reorganizing the Armenian community in Lebanon (Sanjian, 2001). The Armenian Catholicosate of the Great House of Cilicia located in Antelias, has organized the life of the diaspora not only spiritually but also nationally, culturally and educationally (Papkova, 2014; Ter-Matevosyan et al., 2017). Ter-Matevosyan et al. (2017) discuss that the Armenian Church does not act autonomously and remains the essential institution around which Armenian political parties operate and perform their missions. The Church also has its own student and youth organizations as well as schools, and it is authorized by the state to operate as the body that “governs the everyday life of Armenians living in Lebanon” (Ter-Matevosyan et al., 2017, 76). For instance, the Armenian national schools, spread in various neighbourhoods, particularly in BH, operate under the auspices of the Armenian Apostolic Church. As Migliorino (2008) and Ter-Matevosyan et al. (2017) report, the church along with its schools and institutions plays a major role in preserving Armenian identity by being the common dynamic territory where all political and cultural institutions meet with the purpose of managing Armenian community life and maintaining Armenian nationalism.

In conjunction with the Catholicosate, the Armenian Catholic Church also plays an important role in organizing the life of Armenian Catholics. The Patriarchate of Bzoummar in Lebanon established in the eighteenth century in connection to the Vatican (Sanjian, 2003),
is the spiritual centre for Armenian Catholics globally and has its own network of institutions and schools (see list of Armenian churches in Lebanon in Appendix 2, 3-4).

**Armenian political parties in Lebanon**

In addition to Armenian churches, several traditional Armenian political parties in Lebanon play a major role in consolidating the Armenian diaspora and socially and politically organizing it (Der-Ghoukassian, 2009; Ter-Matevosyan et al. 2017). These are the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF), also known as the Tashnag party, the Social Democrat Henchagian Party (SDHP) and the Armenian Liberal Democratic Party (ALD) also known as the Ramgavar Party.

According to Ter-Matevosyan et al. (2017), through their network of organizations and schools, the mission of Armenian political parties is to promote the Armenian cause, maintain Armenian national identity and help Armenians remain attached to their history, language and culture. Their institutions create platforms for their members to socialize with their fellow LAs and remain part of the larger Armenian community in Lebanon (ibid).

There are also apolitical Armenian institutions in Lebanon that have their own sports clubs, scouting movements and educational and cultural youth associations, such as the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU). As Migliorino (2008) mentions, the AGBU institutions and schools offer relatively apolitical activities and education, although they are perceived to be influenced by the Ramgavar party. The Catholic and Evangelical churches have also remained relatively autonomous, which provides the community with opportunities of socialization far from political spaces (ibid).
Several transnational Armenian organizations that run projects in Lebanon are also apolitical. A few examples would be Howard Karagheusian Commemorative Corporation (USA) and Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (Portugal), the latter being the funder of this PhD study.

While the Armenian Church collaborates with all political, cultural and philanthropic institutions and often operates as one with them, it mainly cooperates with the ARF, which is the leading influence on Armenian political and communal life, particularly in BH (Migliorino, 2008). The ARF was founded in Tbilisi in 1890 and was a leading party in Western Armenia (Kaligian, 2017). Upon its establishment in Lebanon, the ARF “sought ways to establish itself as the legitimate government of Armenians in Lebanon”, which gave rise to temporary conflicts between the major political parties (Sahakyan, 2015, 237).

The ARF’s political tasks mainly focus on the Armenian cause and the Hay Tad revolutionist ideology that calls for the liberation of the Armenian lands of Turkey (Migliorino, 2008). It also strives to preserve the WAL, culture and history and believes that such components are essential for the continued existence of the diaspora (Ter-Matevosyan et al., 2017). ARF’s anti-Turkish nationalism and ideological foundations, goals, political propositions and socioeconomic proposals were released in a program in 1998 (Dserakir Hay Heghapokhagan Tashnagtsoutyan, 1998). Through its organizations and institutions, the ARF transfers its ideologies, above all its anti-Turkish nationalism to the Armenian diaspora, particularly to the youth, and strives to achieve its political, national and socioeconomic goals (Ter-Matevosyan et al. 2017).

Today, although the ARF continues to be in control of its leadership of the Armenian community in Lebanon, there are, as Migliorino (2008) comments, several issues weakening the party’s relations with the community and reducing particularly youth participation in
political activities. The same applies to other Armenian political parties, such as the Henchag party.

One reason, according to Migliorinon (2008), could be that Armenian parties are unable to produce a clear and credible vision of their strategies and aims in the twenty first century. In the case of the ARF, many LAs, as Migliorino (2008) reports, are starting to believe that it is defensive with changes and is unable to understand the needs of contemporary Armenian community. In addition, some LAs express dissatisfaction with how political parties continue to monopolize communal institutions and control Armenian social spaces, particularly when it comes to the ARF, which until today, is in control of BH, its traditional stronghold (Panossian, 2006). As Migliorino (2008) reports, the ARF is criticized for being a hegemonic force that maintains “traits of quasi territorial control” in BH (Migliorino 2008, 186) and for interfering either directly or indirectly in almost every aspect of Armenian daily life.

Today, regardless of the issues Armenian political parties face, they continue to appeal to the youth through their numerous cultural associations, student oriented programs, and particularly through their party affiliated sports clubs, such as Tashnag’s Homenetmen, Henchag’s Homenmen, and AGBU’s Antranik. According to Panossian (2006, 294), by controlling church councils, schools and institutions and by way of mass media and propaganda, the Tashnag party and other Armenian parties, were capable of achieving a “diaspora-style nation-building” (see list of Armenian associations by affiliation in Appendix 3, 5-6).

**Lebanese Armenians in the Lebanese Parliament**
With its strong influence on the Armenian community in Lebanon which continues to be relatively loyal to it, ever since the 1940s, the ARF has also been directly involved in Lebanese politics and has succeeded in entering the Lebanese Parliament and taking over the leadership of the community (Abramson, 2013; Ter-Matevosyan et al., 2017). This success is partly attributed to the plurality of the Lebanese society and the political system, which makes Lebanon a safe haven for Middle East minorities (Abramson, 2013; Ter-Matevosyan et al. 2017). The political differences within the Armenian community are channelled through its denominations, which in fact is how politics in Lebanon is conducted amongst other Lebanese sectarian groups (Traboulis, 2007; Avsharian, 2009; Papkova, 2014).

There are eighteen officially recognized sectarian groups in Lebanon roughly balanced between Christians, Sunnis and Shias who have representatives in the Lebanese parliament and who are granted the freedom to regulate their internal communal affairs (Traboulsi, 2007; Der-Ghoukassian, 2009; Papkova, 2014). The quota system of representation is reinforced by official accord as a way to avoid one group monopolizing another. In the case of LA's, and to satisfy the quota allocated to the Armenian community, all three denominations have representatives in the Lebanese parliament (Traboulsi, 2007; Der-Ghoukassian, 2009; Papkova, 2014). Six out of the total 128 seats in the Lebanese parliament are allocated to the Armenian community: five to Apostolics and one to Catholics (Traboulsi, 2007; Avsharian, 2009). Armenian Evangelicals also have the opportunity to be represented in the parliament, via either the seat allocated to the Lebanese Protestants or the one allocated to Lebanon’s minority Christian denominations (Papkova, 2014).

Apart from being politically represented in the parliament, in Lebanon, all communities are given the right to establish their own educational system in their schools and teach their language, history and culture (Migliorino, 2008; Sahakyan, 2015). The power-sharing democratic system in Lebanon which was established as a result of conflicts amongst
Lebanese religious, sectarian and ethnic communities not only gives communities the opportunity to coexist but also the freedom to identify themselves with their religions or denominations (Sahakyan, 2015). Accordingly, Armenian religious institutions, in collaboration with Armenian political parties, have full control over the internal affairs of the Armenian community in Lebanon, which helps them maintain Armenian culture, identity and language (Sahakyan, 2015; Ter-Matevosyan et al., 2017).

According to Ter-Matevosyan et al. (2017), this model constantly reminds LAs of their Armenian identity due to the political framework that affects their everyday lives. As Sanjian (2001) and Papkova (2014) discuss, belonging to one of the three Armenian denominations is conditioned by the unique Lebanese political system, which is set up in a way that religion becomes an inevitable or immutable Armenian characteristic, even when one chooses to adhere to a confession that is not recognized by the law of the Lebanese republic.

The status of Armenian schools in Lebanon

*The Foundation and development of Armenian schools in Lebanon*

A few years after Armenian settlement in Lebanon, the number of Armenian schools started to rise, reflecting the growth and development of the community (Migliorino, 2008). Throughout the 1950s, the quality of Armenian education improved, particularly in secondary schools, which were still insufficient and inadequate to fulfil the demands of the community. The development started with the enhancement of the material conditions of schools and the establishment of Armenian secondary schools and higher education, which completed the
process of foundation of Armenian education and contributed to adding significant depth to Armenian culture in Lebanon and the region (ibid).

When most subjects in Armenian schools were taught in Armenian and learning Arabic was not essential, later in the 1960s, Armenian school programs were changed in order to be in line with the standards of the national curricula (Migliorino, 2008). As Migliorino (2008) discusses, the purpose of the change in the program was to allow the younger generation integrate in the second homeland and obtain recognized degrees that would provide opportunities to gain access to higher education and new careers. Accordingly, the Armenian schools adopted the national Lebanese curriculum along with a selection of Armenian subjects and language classes, which placed additional pressure on Armenian students as it made them stay in schools for extra classes every day (ibid). By adopting this system, the Armenian schools paved the way for the new generations to be “Armenian and Lebanese at the same time” (Migliorino 2008, 117).

By the 1970s, Armenian schools reached full growth and became a reliable network of education. More than eighty schools were constructed with a peak enrolment of about 21000 students in 1975 (Hovannisian, 1974; Attarian, 2014). LAs had also founded Haygazian University, which placed significant importance on promoting the field of Armenian studies and supporting research (Sanjian, 2000). Nevertheless, the war resulted in a significant drop in the number of Armenian school enrolment due to the migration of a large portion from Lebanon (Tanielian, 2002; Migliorino 2008, 2009).

Armenian schools in post-civil war Lebanon
During the Lebanese civil war, the economic crisis intensified as Lebanese average incomes declined dramatically. Armenian families who were unable to send their children to private Armenian schools started sending their children to Lebanese state schools (Migliorino, 2008; Attarian, 2014). This, as discussed, negatively affected the situation of Armenian schools in Lebanon (Sanjian, 2001). Until today, the economic crisis continues to affect not only the Armenian community in Lebanon but also the broader Lebanese society. However, the impact of the crisis is believed to be heavier on Armenian education and the WAL as “the teaching of Armenian language and culture is virtually only available in private Armenian schools” (Migliorino 2008, 203).

In a report on Armenian schools in Lebanon, expert in identity studies in education Attarian (2014) points out that Armenian schools are believed to be essential in preserving Armenian identity in the diaspora and are regarded as the anchor of Armenian existence. The perceived importance of schools in language maintenance is not unique to Armenians. Fishman (1991) discusses how some ethnic groups believe schools are the only way to safeguard language survival. He also comments that reliance on schools to preserve HLs has become more widespread within modern communities because most institutions, such as the family, church, and youth associations, which traditionally played a role in enculturating the young, have nowadays become less influential (ibid). Accordingly, schools have become the major societal institution that reaches children and youth on a daily basis (ibid).

Although the war affected most Armenian institutions, LAs managed to maintain a solid and structured educational system that continues to be supported by Armenian organizations. Many schools shut their doors and others merged into one and were capable of continuing to provide a decent level of education (Migliorino, 2008). As for the post-war curricula, the role of Arabic improved in them in order to help younger LA generations
integrate into Lebanese society. Nevertheless, Armenian schools kept on openly encouraging the Armenian community to remain tied to its roots and to Armenian education (ibid).

*Armenian schools today*

According to Attarian (2014), the impact of the Lebanese civil war on Armenian schools is still visible today, which increases the chances of WAL decline. The new generation is not trained enough to teach WA, and the current teaching generation is aging without passing any language transfer plans onto the new generation (ibid). Tanielian (2002) identifies several factors such as post-civil war emigration, socioeconomic downturn, social attitudes and parental preference of non-Armenian schools, which intensify the crisis in Armenian schools and the decreased demand for Armenian education. As for Attarian (2014), she reports that in the last decade, enrolment in Armenian schools has further declined, reaching a drop of around 20% in the academic year 2011-2012 with an enrolment of 6618 students. However, in the past two years, the influx of Syrian Armenians to Lebanon contributed to a modest increase of about 3-6% in enrolment figures (ibid).

According to Attarian (2014), the situation of Armenian schools in Lebanon is not hopeless, but requires a good strategic vision as well as leadership. Several organizations such as Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, which have been supporting Lebanese Armenian schools throughout the years, are now providing greater sums of money and implementing new structural and pedagogical plans to improve the situation of Armenian schools in Lebanon and therefore the status of the WAL (ibid). In addition, as Attarian (2014) reports, in recent years, community members have been calling for another merger of small
neighbourhood schools into one larger school in order to redress the situation of Armenian education. Accordingly, the Armenian National Schools have now embarked on a mission to merging their neighbourhood schools in a new school that is currently under construction in BH (ibid) (see lists of Armenian schools by affiliation and their geographical locations in Appendix 4, 7-9).

Recently the Lebanese state supported Armenian education by recognizing the WAL as one of the optional languages in Lebanese official examinations; nonetheless, many Armenian schools still struggle to provide a high standard of education to LA students (Migliorino, 2008). Some Armenian schools manage to record a certain level of success; however today, as Attarian (2014) reports, the future of Armenian schools in Lebanon remains uncertain.

The social, demographic and socioeconomic situation in Bourj Hammoud today

In order to describe the current demographic and socioeconomic situation in BH, I draw in this section on several newspaper articles as well as a research project prepared by Hediger and Lukic (2009), which provides a thorough description of the urban fabric of BH and discusses sociodemographic issues faced by its residents. I also draw on a survey conducted by the Jinishian Memorial Program (2004), which gives insight into the current living conditions of LAs and the problems they face.

Although BH continues to be a symbol of Armenian existence and the heart of Armenian economic, political, religious and communal activities (Papkova, 2014), there are no recent academic studies that provide a vivid picture of the real situation in BH with
regards to living conditions, problems and everyday needs, hence the reference in this section
to non-academic sources. Jinishian Memorial Program’s (2004) survey of living conditions
does address some of the sociodemographic issues experienced by the Armenian community
in Lebanon, nonetheless, it does not focus on BH solely.

The streets of Bourj Hammoud, a platform to express Armenian ideologies

In an article written in the Arabic Weekly newspaper, Roch (2015) reports that even
one hundred years on, the memories and images of killings and deportations that took place
during the Armenian genocide are still vivid in the neighbourhood of BH as stories of the
genocide are told in its streets, shops and homes. While LAs in BH acknowledge loyalty to
Lebanon, they are commonly perceived to be emotionally committed to their ancient culture
and work on safeguarding their unique Armenian heritage. This emotional attachment to
Armenian identity is evident in the streets of BH where LAs continue to honour their
linguistic origins and speak WA. As Worth (2009) writes in the New York Times, when in
BH, one finds Armenian homes, restaurants, shop signs written in Armenian script, as well as
different banners and flags of Armenian parties, such as the banner of the ARF party bearing
“a pen, a shovel and a dagger, representing ideology, work and struggle”. Hediger and Lukic
(2009) also report that the street space is often used to propagate views, ideas and religious
beliefs, which are clearly marked by flags, crosses hanging in the streets, small shrines in
street corners, and billboards that promote the remembrance of the Armenian genocide. For
example, the most common phrase one can read on those banners is “1915-2015, I remind, I
remember and I demand” (Roch, 2015).
Hartrick (2016) writes in Refugees Deeply, a media platform that deals with refugee issues, that on April 24th, the day that marks the remembrance of the Armenian genocide, an exceptionally high number of shops and stores in BH remain shut and are usually draped in banners and slogans that condemn the horrors of the genocide, which until today resonate in the collective memory of the Armenian community in Lebanon.

*The living conditions in Bourj Hammoud*

Although almost half of its population is still LA, BH is no more regarded as a ghetto (Voss, 2007). The business centre along with its shopping malls, shops and banks make BH comparable to other prominent commercial quarters in Lebanon (Voss, 2007). BH, as Hediger and Lukick (2009) describe it, is an important part of Beirut’s economic network and remains a particularly densely populated urban quarter with industrial streets, commercial marketplaces, strong residential communities and dynamic public spaces that look very much like an old city centre rather than a refugee shelter.

In the past few years, the social and economic fabric of BH has undergone drastic changes as its streets have become condensed with a diversity of immigrants from various parts of the world, fleeing into BH from war and economic deprivation and making it the most diverse and dynamic neighbourhood in Lebanon (Hediger and Lukic, 2009). For instance, BH today is home to a mix of Shiite Lebanese and Palestinian refugees who benefit from BH’s cheap housing and growing industrial sector (Hartrick, 2016). In addition, as Hartrick (2016) reports, waves of migrants from distant countries such as the Philippines, Sri Lanka, India and Ethiopia, who mainly work as domestic helpers, sanitary workers or
labourers, are also attracted to a combination of rewarding industries and cheap housing in BH.

In recent years, as Roch (2015) comments, another major influx of immigrants into BH was caused by the outbreak of the war in Syria, which caused exceptional Syrian population growth in Lebanon as refugees crossed the borders seeking shelter. It is not possible to give an accurate number of BH’s inhabitants today, but as Hediger and Lukic (2009) report, estimations vary from around 75,000 to 100,000 people, mainly belonging to lower income groups.

This dynamism in BH has in recent years caused some “puzzling paradoxes and difficulties” (Hartrick 2016). BH is now both prosperous and poor by being home to large industries but also enduring handicrafts (ibid). As Hediger and Lukic (2009) comment, it is known for its successful businesses, yet has the image and reputation of low-level housing with particularly low living standards. Despite being a model for successful political and economic refugee integration and although it continues to be regarded as the cultural cradle of LAs, recently BH’s LA population has been declining slowly for several reasons. For instance, the dense arrangements of the buildings in BH and the fact that larger groups and lower income families live in smaller flats have made the residential density in BH unbearable to some LAs. Jinishian Memorial Program’s (2004, 163) survey reveals that “the highest concentration of Armenian households”, 39.8%, is in BH. Yet, when it comes to the degree of satisfaction with housing, it is in the BH area where LAs are “least satisfied with their homes” (ibid, 78). The dissatisfaction is triggered by several reasons such as: lack of sanitary conveniences, lack of adequate sewage systems, dampness inside the houses, cramped living spaces in the home, and complaints about noise and smoke pollution (see reasons for dissatisfaction in appendix 5, 10).
The poor house conditions and the absence of public squares and parks has made the streets and pavements of BH the main point of social meetings in the neighbourhood where people meet to spend time or even work (Hediger and Lukic, 2009). While such street interactions have to date been regarded as pleasant activities that reinforce the sense of neighbourhood community, today, the demographic change in BH makes them less pleasant to LAs. Those with improved economic conditions have been relocating outside of BH due to the environmental issues caused by neighbouring facilities and by emissions from the various crafts. According to Hediger and Lukic (2009), no serious attempts have been made to address the environmental situation in BH, particularly concerning the possible hazards caused by the huge waste dump near the coast of BH and the unbearable smells released from it. Hediger and Lukic (2009) and Hartrick (2016) comment that if this situation goes on, it is estimated that BH will lose its residential fabric and transform into merely a commercial area.

Many LAs fear that BH will lose its Armenian identity and instead become a quarter for immigrants and refugees. As Hartrick (2016) discusses, there are fears resulting from the new influence in BH, nonetheless, LAs retain hopes that it will continue to remain “little Armenia” and will continue to be the heart of the Armenian community in Lebanon. In the words of a retired LA Army General and a member of the ARF, “the Armenian connection to Bourj Hammoud runs deep. Even if people are moving away because of the conditions, they have their trade there, they have their heart there, they have their soul there” (cited in Hartrick, 2016).

Regardless of the changes happening in BH, it can still be classified as a linguistic enclave based on the definitions provided by Bauer et al. (2005) and Leuener (2008), who discuss that a linguistic enclave is a distinct geographical area or territory, typically a neighbourhood, concentrated by groups of people with similar ethnicity, culture and language. People in a linguistic enclave share the same folklore, customs and worldviews.
and usually use their HL as the main language of communication in daily conversations, which creates in them a sense of togetherness as a community (Bauer et al., 2005). As Leuener (2008, 124) discusses, “the more numerous the population of a linguistic community settled in one area, the greater is the chance of retention of the first language”, as linguistic enclaves not only generate communal interactions but also assist in the creation of institutions and schools that contribute to the preservation of a HL. In line with Leuner’s (2008) comment, it is possible to suggest that BH is a linguistic enclave with its network of Armenian institutions and schools that continue to support the preservation of Armenian heritage and the WAL.

**Conclusion**

The experiences of the Armenian diaspora discussed in this chapter, starting from its early history and centuries of cultural blending, to its life within the Ottoman Empire, the experienced atrocities of the 20th century, the post genocide dispersal, the reconstruction of its institutions and organizations and the development of its social, political and communal life in Lebanon, are all somehow intertwined and perceived as essential elements that have shaped and continue to shape the Armenian identity today. These aspects combined, provide a strong basis for this study as they form a common discourse on the question of Armenian identity in relation to the WAL. Such discourse was reflected in the various reported perceptions of my participants and the findings of this study, which I elaborate on in the following chapters.
Chapter 3

Literature Review

Introduction

In this chapter, I present a discussion of terminological concepts in relation to LMLS in order to provide a theoretical basis for this study, which looks into the possible influence of geographical space, particularly residential location, on shaping the Armenian identity, culture and language. I also provide an insight into different extra-linguistic factors, such as historical, cultural, sociological and geographical factors that contribute to shaping the status of the WAL in Lebanon.

Selection of terminological concepts

In an attempt to better understand the impact of the recent geographical dispersal of LAAs on the status of the WAL in Lebanon, I justify in this section the selection of a few terminological concepts, which I use in this study.
Western Armenian: a minority and heritage language

In this section, I justify the selection of the terms “minority language” and “heritage language (HL)” to refer to WA. Typically, language shift involves two languages in contact with each another, with one usually replacing the other (Grenoble and Whaley, 2006). Researchers have so far made significantly different choices to refer to the language being replaced. Some but not all of the terms conventionally used are: heritage language, minority language, mother tongue, first language, primary language, dominated language, native language, threatened language, home language, language of origin and endangered language (Lee and Suarez, 2009; Grenoble and Whaley, 2006).

Scholars such as Bourdieu (1998b), Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson (1999) and Bonfiglio (2010) suggest that the selection of most of the terms above go beyond language. Choosing such locutions is not linguistic in nature but rather a result of ethnic prejudices often based on ideologies of homeland and nation. Bourdieu (1991) sees such invocations as resulting from political, social and cultural anxieties reflected in language. As for Bonfiglio (2010), he comments that the terms “mother tongue” or “native language” reveal genetic ownership of a language that is typically perceived as threatened by the presence of another more powerful language.

The terms “mother tongue”, “first language” and “native language” are potentially confusing to attach to WA because as Lee and Suarez (2009) comment, these terms are usually meant to refer to the first acquired language by an individual or by certain community members or in some cases they might refer to a language in which speakers develop a native-like proficiency. For a number of LAs, WA is not necessarily the language in which they develop proficiency as they may use Arabic in a number of domains and with greater
proficiency. Bloomfield (2005) reports that a “mother tongue” is conventionally defined as a language that one learns on their mother’s knees or in their homes, which again is not necessarily the case with LAAs and their experience with WA. As Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) discusses, when younger generations receive education in another more dominant language, they might develop higher levels of proficiency in that language. “The language of the country of origin may not be the dominant or even the first language spoken and speakers may never develop proficiency in the language of their origin country” (Lee and Suarez 2009, 137).

In line with the observations above, for this study I opted to use the terms “heritage language (HL)” and “minority language” for a variety of reasons. To begin with, “minority language”, as Grenoble and Whaley (2006, 14) comment, is frequently used to refer to an immigrant language whose users usually have a “speaker base” outside of their territory. It also “implies the language is spoken by a minority within a larger population” (ibid, 14). Grenoble and Whaley’s (2006) definition of “minority language” reflects the situation of WA in Lebanon, as it is a language spoken by a smaller number of people living within a larger society (Migliorino, 2008). As for the term “heritage language (HL)”, it is another widely used term in the literature although Garcia (2005) criticizes its use and sees it as one that relegates language to a less powerful position. Lee and Suarez (2009, 138), on the other hand, suggest that the term “heritage language (HL)” represents “a wider spectrum of the diverse and unique relationships linguistic minorities can have with a language irrespective of their level of proficiency”. They also comment that referring to a language as a HL indicates that it is not merely a means of communication but rather a tool that symbolically and linguistically emphasizes ones bond with their country of origin (ibid). Since in this study I look into the LPs of LAAs in relation to their identity perceptions, social interactions and
cultural practises, I believe that the selection of the term “heritage language (HL)” would better reflect the symbolic tie between WA and the ethnic origins of LAs.

In contrast to the language being replaced, the replacing language is usually referred to as the *majority language, dominant language, killer language, matrix language, and language of wider communication* (Grenoble and Whaley, 2006). My preferred terms to refer to Arabic in this study is “dominant language” or “language of wider communication”. I also refer to other languages spoken in Lebanon such as French and English as “languages of wider communication” or “dominant languages”. I justify my choice by adopting Grenoble and Whaley’s (2006, 15) definition which states that in almost all endangerment situations, the replacing language is more widely used “both in terms of numbers of speakers and in terms of a broader range of domains”, which is the case with Arabic in Lebanon as Jebejian (2007) and Al-Bataineh (2014) comment. I also use the term “dominant language” because as Grenoble and Whaley (2006, 15) suggest, it is useful to “draw out an asymmetry in power, use, or prestige” between a minority language and a language of wider communication, in this case between WA on the one hand and Arabic, French and English on the other hand. Bringing attention to such asymmetries by using the term “dominant language” may contribute to understanding the status of WA in Lebanon as these asymmetries may be intensified with the recent geographical dispersal of LAAs. The terms “dominant language” and “language of wider communication” are fairly neutral compared to terms such as “matrix language” or “killer language” which as Grenoble and Whaley (2006, 15) comment, “give too much a sense of agency to the language of wider communication”.


Although the term “Arabs” is recurrent in this study, or more particularly Arap in Armenian, it is not a term I selected, but rather one that several participants used during the interview discussions to refer to non-Armenian citizens of Lebanon. Being a member of the Armenian community in Lebanon, I allow myself to report that I often encounter people who refer to non-Armenians as Arabs, Arap, rather than Lebanese, Lipanantsi. The term “Lebanese”, Lipanantsi, is rarely a choice.

Although LAs often refer to them as Arabs, the citizens of Lebanon do not necessarily identify themselves as Arabs. Using the term “Arabs” to refer to citizens of Lebanon is a controversial matter that is a result of political, religious and cultural disagreement among citizens of Lebanon. As Abdul Latif and Sheehan (2007) discuss, citizens of Lebanon are a mixture of peoples who were occupied at different times by Phoenicians, Greeks, Romans, and Arabs. Therefore, ever since the existence of Lebanon as an independent state, there has often been disagreements between Arab nationalists and Lebanese nationalists around the way they identify themselves and the country. While, as Hanf (2015) reports, initially Arab nationalism was highly influenced by secularism and liberal ideals the struggle against western powers led to a change in secular attitudes and Arab nationalists saw an opportunity in equating Islam to Arabism. Non-Muslims in Lebanon, particularly Maronite Christians, saw this change in secular attitudes as an imposition of Islamic rule and hence started advocating purely Lebanese nationalism (ibid).

Today, particularly following the civil war in Lebanon between Muslims and Christians, it is not surprising that people in Lebanon experience conflicts about the way they identify themselves (Abdul Latif and Sheehan, 2007). As Abdul Latif and Sheehan (2007)
discuss, a large number of Christians and non-Christians alike reject being defined as Arabs because the term “Arab” is often related to Islam. Many in Lebanon opt for the term “Lebanese” to identify themselves. Some even use the term “Phoenician” as a way to avoid being identified as an Arab. On the other hand, Muslims in Lebanon have a greater tendency to identify themselves with Arab nationalism. Having said that, relating to Arab nationalism is not necessarily linked to Islam, as a number of Christians in Lebanon also consider themselves Lebanese Arabs.

Due to this controversy, I avoid using the term “Arab” unless when it is used by one of my participants. Instead, I use the terms “non-Armenians” and “Lebanese” to refer to non-Armenians who hold the Lebanese citizenship. I believe the term “Lebanese” is one that most citizens of Lebanon identify with, whether they identify themselves as Arabs or not. It is important to note here that using the term Lebanese to refer to the people who hold a Lebanese nationality does not mean that I do not regard Armenians in Lebanon as Lebanese. I use the term Lebanese simply to distinguish between the population of my study and other citizens of Lebanon.

*Lebanese Armenians: a transnational diaspora community*

I now move to discuss the selection of the term “Lebanese Armenians (LAs)” to refer to the population of this study. I selected the term “Lebanese Armenians” not only because Armenians were granted Lebanese citizenship upon arrival to Lebanon in the 1920s, nor because almost all Armenians in Lebanon hold a Lebanese citizenship today, but also because
after more than one hundred years of presence, Lebanon has become another homeland many LAs identify with (Migliorino, 2008; Sahakyan, 2015).

While I mainly use the term “Armenians” to refer to early settlers who were not yet given Lebanese citizenship, I would like to point out that I also use the term “Armenians” in some instances where I refer to the population of my study as a distinguished group. I do that not because I do not consider them “Lebanese” but because in Lebanon particularly, referring to the population of my study as “Armenians” is very common, as LAs commonly refer to themselves as “Hay” and mainstream society refers to them as “Arman”. The words “Hay” and “Arman” both mean “Armenian” respectively in the Armenian and Arabic languages.

I also use the terms “Armenian diaspora” and “Armenian community” to refer to Armenians as a group. As Cohen (2008) discusses, diasporas are a result of the dispersal of people from their original homeland to other regions. The dispersal may be voluntary or a result of a traumatic experience, nonetheless, more often than not, diasporas share a collective memory of an idealized homeland and commit themselves to preserving their culture and language (Block, 2006; Cohen, 2008). This description is a reflection of the characteristics of the Armenian diaspora in Lebanon, which maintains the collective memory of the genocide (Azarian-Ceccato, 2010), idealizes its homeland (Sahakyan, 2015) and maintains its culture and language through well-established organizations and institutions (Ter-Matevosyan, 2017).

Delanty (2013) discusses that a community often shares beliefs, practices and sometimes a collective national identity and a common religious affiliation. Block (2006) makes a distinction between a demographic community and a community of feeling whose members feel a sense of belonging to a collective, which does not necessarily share a physical space but rather a metaphorical space through which its members relate to one another and share broader concerns and a sense of group membership. Particularly, in a globalized world,
communities and diasporas often create transnational spaces where they share a sense of ethnic identity and maintain connection with fellow members of the community or diaspora around the world (Block, 2006; Cohen, 2008). In line with this, it is possible to suggest that LAs are a transnational community and a diaspora that consciously attempts to maintain a unique identity separate from that of the broader Lebanese society particularly through its network of schools, institutions, churches, political parties and organizations that propagate the Armenian cause and promote national feelings (Sahakyan, 2015). Hence the selection of the terms “Armenian diaspora” and “Armenian community”.

Armenianness

_Armenianness_ is a recurrent term in this study, which I use interchangeably with the term “Armenian identity”. _Armenianness_ or the state of “being an Armenian” is a concept that manifests itself differently amongst LAAs as it involves a set of complex forces such as social, political, cultural, linguistic and psychological, that play a role in shaping how different members of the Armenian community in Lebanon experience and display their Armenian identity. By “Armenian identity”, I do not necessarily mean holding the Armenian nationality, but rather identifying oneself as “an Armenian” and/or experiencing _Armenianness_, because many LAs do not hold an Armenian nationality yet define themselves as “Armenians”.

Identities are situational and contextual rather than rigid. They are a result of the period and circumstances in which they are constructed. In line with this, I believe, as Greenwood (2009) comments, it is not possible to provide a concrete definition of _Armenianness_ as the Armenian identity is characterized by plurality as well as fluidity. I
adopt Greenwood’s (2009) suggestion about the importance of highlighting Armenian diversity and incongruity rather than holding on to the fiction of a singular Armenian identity. As Herzig and Kurkchiyan (2004) comment, Armenians have endlessly been a channel assimilating, adapting and transmitting within a diversity of cultures and peoples they encountered and this process of synthesis gave rise to the distinctive Armenian culture and identity (ibid).

While current day Armenianness is perceived very differently from Armenianness in previous centuries and while I see Armenianness as a fluid and constantly developing practice rather than a bounded and rigid entity, I discuss below salient components of past and present Armenian identity. To understand the various components of Armenianness today, it is important to understand and explore conventional understandings of the Armenian identity, particularly Armenian national identity. As Panossian (2002, 130) comments, to understand Armenian identity, “Armenian national myths, symbols and historical dates should incorporate and highlight pre-Christian elements”. He defines the Armenian identity in terms of three broad periods: 2000 BC or earlier, fourth century AD, and 1915 (ibid). Panossian (2002) also acknowledges more recent events, such as Armenia’s independence in 1991 from the Soviet Union and the victory in Gharabagh war in 1994, as important factors that contributed to formulating current day Armenian identity.

Panossian (2002) mainly discusses Armenian national identity, created not so much by a nation but rather by myths and symbols of an Armenian nation and people’s imagined belonging to a common Armenian community. The notion of belonging to an imagined community is not unique to Armenians. Anderson (1983) explains it in his book Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism and speaks about how through traditions, myths, increased use of standardized vernacular, and printing newspapers
and books, people begin to imagine themselves as one nation or a community bound by a set of common characteristics that are viewed as a collective identity.

One of the many ways through which Armenians reinforce their collective identity is by emphasizing their racial identity. Panossian (2002, 130) comments that Armenia as an old-nation is defined by “two general ideological trends”. One trend regards language as a key marker of Early Armenian identity and the other trend defines the Armenian identity in terms of race or genealogy. He discusses that when in the sixth millennium BC the Indo-European languages were divided, Armenian speakers emerged as a separate and distinct population (ibid). The fact that Armenia is one of the oldest nations and that Armenians are indigenous aborigines who existed for thousands of years tends to inspire nationalist pride. Although according to Panossian (2002) such genetic or biological views are not often expressed, there are some organizations and parties that regard the perennial Armenian race as the basis of Armenian nationalism and strongly encourage the ideology of worshipping the Armenian race. This ideology, which literally means “race-religion”, tseghagron, was founded in the 1930s by the ARF’s leader Garegin Nzhdeh who believed in the importance of acknowledging race as a supreme force and encouraged the maintenance of loyalty to that force until death (Panossian, 2002).

Today, although its extremism has reduced to a large degree, this racial ideology remains important in many Armenian societies and symbolizes nationalism and national salvation (Panossian, 2002). It also emphasizes the importance of reoccupying the historic lands that should be returned to “true Armenians” from the diaspora without the current Turkish and Kurdish occupants (ibid). As Panossian (2002, 135) reports, racialist or even racist ideas are still “ingrained in the nationalist discourse of many Armenians” and “Nzhdehian ideals are the most articulated and visible dimension of this view”.

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According to these ideals, the characteristics of every nation represented in language, culture, territory and family values, should be maintained and perpetuated and they should not be altered or influenced by other races or values (Panossian, 2002, Sahakyan, 2015). Due to such ideals, cultural hybridity and mixed marriages are often rejected, as “the national blood must stay pure” (Panossian 2002, 35).

Apart from racial identification, Armenia’s conversion to Christianity and the invention of the Armenian alphabet are also perceived as one of the main dimensions of Armenian identity (Herzig and Kurkchiyan, 2004). According to the tradition of the Armenian Church, in 301 Armenia became the first nation in the world to adopt Christianity (Herzig and Kurkchiyan, 2004). The fact that Christianity became the formal religion of Armenia shaped the cultural, religious and collective identity of Armenians who resisted assimilation and the political control of the Persian Empire (Panossian, 2002; Herzig and Kurkchiyan, 2004; Greenwood, 2012). In addition, the invention of the Armenian alphabet in the fifth century gave the Armenian identity another level of cultural uniqueness and brought about the golden age where religious, secular and historical texts were produced (Panossian 2002, Herzig and Kurkchiyan, 2004).

Panossian (2002) discusses that Armenia’s conversion to Christianity has become one of the main pillars of Armenian identity and up until the age of secular nationalism in the nineteenth century and the Armenian genocide in 1915, being a Christian and a member of St Gregory’s church was regarded as the cornerstone of what it meant to be Armenian. The idea of being the first Christian nation was propagated by the Armenian Church and Armenian historians and the notion of Christianity was intertwined with Armenian national identity and has become “firmly ingrained in Armenian popular consciousness” even until the nineteenth century when nationalist Armenians were against the conservatism of the clergy (Panossian 2002, 127). As Panossian (2002, 128) reports, “the church-nation knot” remains and
nationalists do not neglect the importance of the link between Armenian identity and the church because the reinforcement of the religious identity is not just about religion but it is as much about politics and nationalism. Even when the religious beliefs of Armenians reduce and even when many are abandoning the church in practical terms, Armenians remain “proud” to be the first Christian nation (Panossian, 2002). They still regard the Armenian Church as a contributor to preserving the classical Armenian language, Krapar (Herzig and Kurkchiyan, 2004). Today the words “Christian”, “first” and “unique” continue to be rooted in the core of Armenian identity and mentality (Herzig and Kurkchiyan, 2004).

Another dimension of Armenianness is linked, as discussed in Chapter 2, to the 1915 Genocide, which became one of the most significant elements that define the Armenian identity (Herzig and Kurkchiyan, 2004). It is almost impossible to understand contemporary Armenian identity, particularly in the diaspora, without “situating the genocide at its very centre” (Panossian 2002, 136). The denial of the genocide by Turkish authorities has become, as Panossian (2002, 136) comments, the “founding symbol of contemporary Armenian identity”. Being an Armenian often means being a member of a community of survivors and sufferers, which gives rise to a mentality of victimhood that continues to be the central element of Armenian collective consciousness (ibid). That universally shared consciousness of the 1915 genocide and the feeling of victimhood holds together the Armenian group identity and has become the essence of Armenianness that is inevitably transmitted from one Armenian generation to the next even when Armenians across the diaspora owe and feel loyalty to the countries they live in (Pattie, 2004).

The political and institutional basis of Armenian communities have succeeded in preserving and invigorating concepts and symbols that empower the Armenian community to live as a collective and to hold on to its national identity. As such, Armenian community structures are much like mini-states that have maintained or even developed Armenian
national identity through political mobilization, teaching Armenian language and history, articulating national ideologies of intellectuals and commemorating key national holidays and memorial days. This “identity politics”, as Panossian (200, 137) refers to it, is manifested through lobbying for the recognition of the Armenian genocide.

Despite the strong national feelings, after almost four generations in the diaspora, Armenians, particularly the younger generations, have developed hybrid and/or cosmopolitan identities highly influenced by their host societies (Herzig and Kurkchiyan, 2004). Nevertheless, communal institutions and political parties often resist cultural hybridity. As Pattie (2004, 143) comments, “through political rhetoric, poetry novels, sermons, newspaper editorials and other means, the intellectual elite of the diaspora of all political shades has tried to counter the problems of dispersion and mobility by shaping a new identity that is not based on local or kin”. The “real Armenian in this version”, as Pattie (2004, 143) discusses, “is someone who speaks the language, knows the history, is a member or supporter of the Apostolic Church and shows active commitment to these being perpetuated in the wider community”.

According to Panossian (2002, 138) the Armenian diaspora’s identity today is gradually basing itself on symbolic and subjective notions of Armenianness and sense of belonging “rather than traditional objective markers such as language and membership in the Armenian Apostolic Church”. Bakalian (1993) and Payaslian (2010) also discuss a shift in Armenianness, from traditional to symbolic, particularly in the United States. According to them, the conventional meaning of being an Armenian is being assigned a nationality at birth due to being a descendant of an Armenian bloodline (ibid). It is more of a compulsory identity that an individual holds by mere accident of birth, and maintaining that identity is only possible through holding on to Armenian language and culture and creating an environment that isolates itself from or limits participation in the host society (ibid). A
symbolic Armenian identity on the other hand, is a rational and voluntary choice to maintain and develop one’s inherited identity, which is usually a choice that stems from an emotional or personalized attitude towards Armenian heritage.

According to Payaslian (2010), the continued existence of the symbolic Armenian identity means having a balanced and functional participation within the host society while at the same time maintaining identification with the Armenian community. Symbolic identity is not necessarily based on the maintenance of the Armenian language and cultural practices but rather on participating in Armenian community affairs and affirming one’s Armenianness. This means that the essentiality of the Armenian language for Armenian cultural maintenance is replaced by a conscious belongingness to one’s Armenian identity as well as the identity of the host country (ibid).

**Discussions of terminology and concepts**

In this section, I explore concepts and terminology in the field of LMLS and discuss previous empirical studies that have looked into the impact of residential concentration and geographical dispersal on HL maintenance and shift. I also discuss conventional and more recent notions of identity in relation to HL maintenance and look into how refined understandings of physical space can influence the status of WA in Lebanon.
Factors that lead to language endangerment

Researchers such as Fishman (1991) and Tsunoda (2006) suggest that language endangerment happens either suddenly or gradually. The sudden way to language endangerment, known as sudden glottocide, happens through the death of an entire population or speech community (Tsunoda, 2006). According to Fishman (1991), this type of language loss is usually followed by natural disasters, wars, mass migrations or genocides. As for the gradual endangerment process, as Dorian (1981), Campbell and Muntzel (1989) and Campbell (1994) comment, it takes place when language users gradually shift to another language in language contact situations, until the more dominant language replaces their HL in an increasing number of milieus and domains.

Bradley and Bradley (2013) describe language endangerment as the gradual transformation in language use and linguistic properties due to the disappearance of the original culture of its users and the influential status of another typically dominant language. This as Bradley and Bradley (2013, 13) comment, might lead to simplifications in the grammar of a language and “the semantic composition of its vocabulary”, which often reflect the influence of the dominant language. The new linguistic properties naturally resemble those of the dominant language in terms of lexical items and structural features (ibid).

Holme’s (2013, 59) also comments that language endangerment is a cultural phenomenon where speakers of the endangered language lose their proficiency “as the functions of the language are taken over in one domain after another by another language”.

Tsunoda (2006) and Ethnologue (2014) describe language endangerment as a phenomenon with a continuum that ranges from the healthy language phase at one end to the extinct language phase at the other end. They characterize language endangerment based on
two dimensions: the number of users who identify a specific language as their own language and the functions for which that language is used (Tsunoda 2006; Ethnologue, 2014). As Ethnologue (2014) explains, in its healthy phase, a language is vigorous and it probably expands in terms of number of speakers or functional domains of use. On the other hand, a language would be on the verge of extinction when its speakers who classify it as part of their identity reduce in number and stop using it or passing it to their children (ibid). This leads to language use in fewer daily activities and to the loss of specific social or communicative functions of a language.

Drawing on these observations on language endangerment, one can deduce that the WAL has been subject to both sudden language shift, glottocide, and gradual language shift. The sudden shift can be traced back to the time directly following the Armenian genocide when, as mentioned, due to mass murders and deportations, Armenian towns in the Ottoman Empire were left empty (Migliorino, 2008), leading to the sudden disappearance of the WAL from the region. As for gradual language shift, it is presumed to be presently taking place in Lebanon as reported by Jebejian (2007).

I explore the gradual shift of the WAL rather than its sudden shift, not only because gradual language shift is the most commonly experienced among ethnic populations as Tsunoda (2006, 47) comments, but also because my aim is to explore the current status of the WAL in Lebanon rather than its past status within the Ottoman Empire. Accordingly, I use the term “language shift” to refer to the process through which LAAs might give up WA in favour of Arabic or other more widely spoken languages in Lebanon. As a counterpart to the term “language shift”, I use the term “language maintenance” to refer to the efforts made by Armenian community members, community leaders and linguistic experts to maintain or revitalize the WAL in Lebanon.


Language revitalization projects

Although language endangerment is not a phenomenon unique to our time, until recently, very limited attention was given to the declining linguistic diversity and the rapid disappearance the world’s minority languages (Bradley and Bradley, 2013). Following several predictions of massive language loss, specifically by Krauss (1992) who highlighted the scale of endangerment and estimated that half of the world’s minority languages will be lost by the 21st century, linguists and language activists have become increasingly focused on the issue of language endangerment and have started promoting HL use. According to Grenoble and Whaley (2006) and Lewis and Simons (2010), Krauss’s estimation has contributed to introducing language maintenance and revitalization projects that reduce language extinction by studying the symptoms, causes, and processes of language loss. As Bradley and Bradley (2013) comment, more and more linguists are now working with communities in documentation, maintenance and revival projects.

Regardless of the efforts put forth by researchers such as Fishman (1991), Grenoble and Whaley (1998), Nettle and Romaine (2000) and UNESCO (2003) to slow down the pace of language endangerment, Lewis and Simons (2010) comment that the speed of language loss and shift has been increasing in the past few years. With regards to the WAL in Lebanon, its shifting degree and speed are still unclear, despite it being labelled as “definitely endangered” by UNESCO (Moseley, 2010) and despite Jebejian’s (2007) study which reports a shift from WA to other more widely spoken languages in Lebanon.

Ever since UNESCO’s classification of WA as definitely endangered (Moseley, 2010), Armenian institutions and organizations across the diaspora have been putting a conscious effort in reversing language shift. Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, for instance,
has been providing generous scholarship to support the training of young Armenian intellectuals and teachers who have the ability to teach WA (Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 2017). It has also been introducing innovative approaches to learning WA in the context of diaspora (ibid).

**Language maintenance and language shift (LMLS)**

LMLS originally coined by Fishman (1964) is often interchangeably used with terms such as “language loss, language attrition, language death, language obsolescence, language loyalty, language revival, language revitalization, and language restoration” (Dallas-Kenny 1996, 276). Fishman (1972) describes LMLS as a study involved in examining the stability or alteration in the ordinary language use of different but in constant contact populations with dissimilar HLs. He also describes LMLS as a study that looks into the social, cultural and psychological factors that maintain the stability of a language or lead to its modification (ibid). Sercombe’s (2002) definition of LMLS is parallel to the one provided by Fishman (1972) as he describes LMLS as the degree of alteration or preservation of a language and its features in a community that possesses several communication codes. As for Kaplan (2010, 413), he adds that “it is usually speakers of the minority language in numerical or power terms who shift away from or maintain use of their own language vis-à-vis the majority language”.

Although LMLS is usually discussed as one area of study, language maintenance has also been defined as a separate entity from language shift. For example, Milroy and Milroy (2012) define language maintenance as the explicit institutional practice of maintaining a
specific language variety in a community with a large linguistic multiplicity. Language maintenance has also been defined in relation to power specifically when the speakers of a particular language would be aware that their language is at risk of loss and consciously make an effort to protect it against the more dominant or “powerful” language of the region (Mesthrie, 1994). As Mesthrie (1994) comments, a community has the ability to maintain its language by continuing to use it regardless of the presence of a regionally, socially and/or numerically more powerful language. In line with this, it is possible to suggest that, this has been the case with the maintenance of WA in Lebanon to date, as communal institutions and organizations continue to put explicit efforts in maintaining the Armenian collective identity by preserving its culture and language (Sahakyan, 2015; Ter-Matevosyan et al., 2017).

Apart from linguistic power, prestige and political dominance are also taken into consideration when defining language maintenance. For example, Deumert et al. (2004), define language maintenance as the protection of a language or a language variety under circumstances where there is significant pressure on its speakers to use the more prestigious or politically powerful language. This definition is comparable to Batibo’s (2005) definition that regards language maintenance as a situation in which even under pressure the speakers of a language succeed in maintaining the vitality of their language. The dominance of the more powerful and/or prestigious language and the pressure that comes with it are resisted in order to maintain the vitality of a HL. On the other hand, a language starts the process of gradual shift when individuals or ethnic groups become unable to maintain their language in the presence of a regionally, socially and/or numerically more powerful language (Aspaert et al., 1992). Today, as Sanjian (2001) Jebejian (2007) and Attarian (2014) discuss, an increasing number of LAs are coming to see that acquiring better knowledge of Arabic, French and English is important for them to be part of Lebanon’s political and financial elite, even if that would be at the expense of the WAL. As discussed in Chapter 2, more Armenian families are
in favour of enrolling their children in non-Armenian private schools (Sanjian, 2001), which may contribute to a gradual shift from WA into other languages perceived as “prestigious” in Lebanon.

Winford (2003, 15) defines language shift as “the partial or total abandonment of a group’s native language in favour of another language”. As for Dorian (1982) and Marongiu (2007), they also define language shift as a gradual process that leads to language loss. Marongiu (2007) discusses several phases that lead to gradual language shift with the first phase being the time when the members of a certain monolingual community become bilingual. The bilingual phase, according to Marongiu (2007), is usually a passing stage, which leads to monolingualism again but this time not in the HL but in the dominant language. Marongiu (2007) also explains that, the process of language replacement or language shift is generally believed to take up to three generations in minority communities that migrate from one place to another. Marongiu’s (2007) theory may not directly apply to the case of WA in Lebanon, because until today a large number of LAs, including fourth generation LAAs, continue to use WA, regardless of the decline in its use reported by Jebejian (2007). A large number of LAs consider continued use of their HL very important in maintaining their culture, sense of history as well as identity (Migliorino, 2008; Al-Bataineh, 2014). However, as mentioned, their recent geographical dispersal across Lebanon might lead to a gradual shift in the LPs of LAAs, which this study aims at exploring.

Understanding the concept of identity

Before discussing the relationship of language to identity, it is important to understand the concept of identity and how various researchers define it. Understanding
Identity is not a straightforward task due to the many variables that play a role in shaping individual and group identities.

Identity is conventionally defined as a stable core of self or state of self that one can achieve. Erikson (1968) sees identity as a fundamental task of adolescence to be achieved. Phinney (1992) discusses that adolescents must resolve several issues about the self in a number of interpersonal and ideological areas in order to achieve, what Erikson (1968) calls, a stable identity or sense of self. While Erikson (1968) sees identity as something stable, today, the meaning of identity has evolved and from a poststructuralist point of view identity is dynamic, multidimensional and even contradictory (Pavlenko, 2002; Block, 2006). Norton (2000) and Wu (2011) define identity as the way a person views themselves and understands their relationship to the world and vice versa. This understanding of the self and the relationship to the world, which is constructed across space and time, arise from and are tied to social contexts.

Over the past few years, the social connections taking place across borders have contributed to shifting views of the concept of identity. Block (2013) discusses that migrants are no more conceptualized as individuals who move to a certain location, live isolated from their culture of origin and HL and assimilate to local norms. Instead, transnationalism and new understandings of the concept of diaspora reveal how communities around the world develop new hybrid identities constructed around their economic, social and familial contacts with their new environments and their environment of origin (Block, 2013). Even when their countries of origin and settlement are geographically distant, diasporas today are capable of forming hybrid identities by living their lives across borders and maintaining their ties to home, or the imagined home, and their fellow diasporans in various parts of the world through their active networks, organizations and groups (Baubock & Faist, 2010).
Preece (2016, 5) also sees identity as a complex phenomenon rather than a fixed set of learned and fixed characteristics. She comments that the shifting views of identity are a result of “the mobility and diversity that has arisen in the social worlds of the physical and digital due to the processes of globalisation in late modernity”. According to Preece (2016), identities are fluid negotiations through which people define who they are within their social settings. She relates identity negotiations to discourse and comments that identities are not pre-existent or imposed entities but are constructed through discourse and communication with others (ibid).

In line with the discussions above, my view of identity is somewhere between conventionalism and poststructuralism. Like Pavlenko (2002), Block (2006) and Preece (2016), I see identity as a constantly evolving, complex, fluid and dynamic phenomenon, nonetheless, I also take on Erikson’s (1968) view on identity as a stable core of self, because I believe that some aspects of human identity are fixed yet other aspects undergo continuous transformations. As May (2001) discusses, it is important not to neglect all notions of structures that condition the lives of individuals, nonetheless, it is also important to accept some degree of hybridity and instability. May (2001) also comments that social constructs, such as ethnic affiliation, provide grounding for an individual’s day-to-day activities, even if such constructs are not fixed for life.

As I discuss further below, in a globalized world where social relationships go beyond physical borders and identities are shaped across borders, I also believe that identities are still relatively influenced and negotiated within borders of physical space and face-to-face interactions. While adolescents, particularly those of immigrant backgrounds, experience communication beyond borders, the main complex issues involving negotiations between mainstream culture and their culture of origin happen locally. This experience of developing
an identity while being a member of a group with an immigrant background and a larger society at the same time is what Phinney et al. (2001) refer to as ethnic identity.

Ethnic identity, according to Phinney (1992, 156), “is an important component of the self-concept and, like other aspects of identity, can be particularly salient during adolescence”. It is, as Tajfel (1981) and Phinney (1992) discuss, an individual’s self-concept derived from their knowledge of membership in a particular group and the emotional significance they attach to it. Since as mentioned identity formation is an essential component of being an adolescent, ethnic identity formation likewise is of particular importance to adolescence as it involves a complex negotiation of several aspects of identity such as “self-identification, language, social networks, religious affiliation, endogamy, positive attitudes, and many varied cultural traditions and practices” (Phinney 1992, 157).

When adolescents are exposed to different cultures, they are presented with choices of cultural practices, friendships and language use. The values and ideologies they inherit from their parents combined with those they encounter among peers contribute to forming their ethnic identity (Phinney et al., 2001).

**Language in relation to ethnic identity**

Despite the contemporary shift in understandings of identity, Phinney et al., (2001, 137) comment that language is “perhaps the most frequently cited contributor to ethnic identity”. In discussions of LMLS, HL use is often presumed to be an essential component that contributes to maintaining ethnic identity. Several researchers such as Phinney et al. (2001), Joseph (2004), Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004), Harris (2006), Shin (2013) and
Block (2006, 2013) have studied the complex relationship between language and identity and how one has an impact on the other. Shin (2013), for instance, assumes that a HL is an essential element of a collective ethnic identity, and that the transmission of a language from one generation to another is a crucial factor in the maintenance of such identities. Joseph (2004) also discusses that the construction of identities lies at the heart of language and comments that if language were reduced simply to its verbal representation of meaning, human presence would be erased because to understand language, it is important to understand the social and communicative context in which it is used.

Gerin-Lajoie (2011) suggests that the relationship of an individual with their language influences the way they identify with a certain ethnic group and vice versa. For instance, in Canada young people define themselves in terms of language, depending on the way they make sense of the world around them and the place they would wish to occupy in certain groups. In other words, language and identity choice are socially constructed, and membership in a particular group is closely linked to the LPs of individuals (ibid).

Simpson (2007) comments that studies of nationalism in relation to language maintenance often agree that a shared language is an essential component that holds a population together as a nation. As Giles et al. (1977, 307) point out “in-group speech can serve as a symbol of ethnic identity and cultural solidarity”. Through their LPs, ethnic communities transmit group feelings and cultural heritage as a way to draw boundaries between themselves and neighbouring others (Simpson, 2007). Such LPs, according to Gibson (2004, 5), “serve as an important identity marker” because “outsiders cannot easily share in such linguistic codes”, which to insiders become “a legitimate form of communication with its own unconscious rules and forms”.
Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004) and Preece (2016) are also of the opinion that identity is negotiated through discourse. They comment that identities are performed and constructed through language choice in a bilingual setting. In the process of identity formation, young people may choose to speak a language or not depending on the way they identify themselves with a particular ethnic group (Gerin-Lajoie, 2011). As particular linguistic resources may provide or prohibit access to a certain social network, language choice plays a major role either in setting boundaries or affiliating with a certain group, which means that identities are not simply represented by discourse, but also performed, enacted and embodied through discourse and other non-linguistic means (De Fina et al. 2006; Preece, 2016).

Phinney et al. (2001) comment that since every adolescent is inclined to go through a series of crises while experiencing changes that construct their identity, personal values and beliefs, it is only natural that young people in minority ethnic groups experience cultural conflicts while attempting to choose between the language and culture they inherit from their family on the one hand and the culture they interact with in their host country on the other hand. Such conflicts, I believe, are not only experienced by adolescents but possibly are carried into early or even late adulthood.

When it comes to the Armenian diaspora, more often than not, the definition of being an Armenian, as discussed, is fundamentally intertwined with the maintenance of the Armenian language (Bakalian, 1993; Aprahamian, 1999; Sahakyan, 2015). For example, in her study on American Armenians, Bakalian (1993) reports how many Armenians believe that the only way to maintain their sense of identity is through creating an environment with cultural and linguistic markers that draw a line between Armenians and odars, a word Armenians commonly use to refer to non-Armenians as foreigners or strangers.
Today however, as discussed, the definition of Armenian identity and being an Armenian in relation to HL maintenance is gradually taking a different dimension. Kotchikian (2009) discusses that the notion of Armenian identity as a solid and fixed quality is a problematic one as LAs experience constantly fluctuating moral, social and cultural situations. Moreover, in an informal interview with Civil Net TV, Kouloujian (2014), comments that belonging to an ethnicity is a desire or a choice to pass a particular inherited language onto the next generation rather than an obligation. Kouloujian (2014) discusses the importance of creating an “in-between identity” whereby diasporan Armenians can celebrate being several identities at the same time, rather than restricting themselves to a single identity. Tololyan (2000) also discusses the gradual modification of Armenian identity whereby more Armenians across the diaspora are shifting from traditional or purist notions of identity, which involve learning Armenian at all cost, to more fluid and multicultural notions of identity, which embrace Armenian and non-Armenian experiences.

In line with the discussions above, and from a researcher’s perspective, I see language as one of the elements, but not necessarily an essential element, of ethnic identity formation. Although identities, particularly ethnic identities, are often negotiated through HL use, ethnic identity is a matter of choice and HL transmission is not necessarily a given but rather an independent decision. Having said that, from the perspective of an individual who was raised in an Armenian milieu that sees language maintenance as an essential component of Armenian identity, it is difficult to regard HL use as a choice, but rather it becomes an element that is tightly linked to a meaning system and an emotional preference of transferring WA to the next generation.
**Codeswitching and translanguaging**

Holmes (2013) and Auer (2013) discuss that in multilingual contexts speakers of multiple languages alternate between two or more languages during a single conversation. Such language alternation instances are referred to as codeswitching, where speakers intentionally or unintentionally use multiple varieties belonging to different grammatical systems while maintaining morphological and syntactic consistency (Gumperz, 1982; Holmes, 2013; Auer, 2002).

According to Holmes (2013) and Auer (2013), in particular types of speech communities, codeswitching can define group boundaries or is indicative of group membership. It can be a signal of shared ethnicity as speakers shift from one code of communication to another in order to express solidarity with members of the same ethnic group or even a different group (Auer, 2013). On the other hand, Schecter and Bayley (2003) discuss that in some bilingual communities, codeswitching is less frequent or even absent due to ideologies that regard it as unacceptable. This makes children learn to keep their language separate from an early age, unlike in communities where codeswitching is essential in everyday interactions and where children learn to follow the same speech norms of their elders and mix different languages and codes of communication (ibid).

Garcia and Wei (2014, 2) define such language alternations not as an exchange of two autonomous language systems but rather a language practice that stems from one linguistic repertoire “with features that have been societally constructed as belonging to two separate languages”. They use the term “translanguaging” to refer to the fluid LPs of bilinguals and/or multilinguals and discuss that bilingualism is not simply an exchange of codes or systems of structures but rather a socially constructed practice through which speakers make meaning of
their world and express their deeply cultural and social ideologies (ibid). As Garcia (2009) comments, translanguaging goes beyond the term codeswitching as it is a concept that extends hybrid language use, the systematic and strategic process through which speakers make sense of their multilingual worlds, by accessing linguistic features that are often described as autonomous languages.

While translanguaging is a phenomenon that often happens spontaneously and unintentionally, Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004) comment that, eventually language shift in multilingual contexts might lead to HL endangerment. This as Tsunoda (2006) discusses, is highly dependent on a speaker’s attitude towards their HL as well as the more dominant language. When a HL is negatively evaluated in terms of functionality and prestige, speakers engage more often in codeswitching and shift to the more dominant language, which can contribute to the demise of their HL. Conversely, a HL has better chances of survival when its speakers have a positive attitude towards it and are loyal to it (ibid).

Communal attitudes towards heritage language maintenance

Researchers such as Grosjean (1982), Tsunoda (2006), Garrett (2010) and Pauwels (2016) highlight an association between HL maintenance and positive attitudes of its speakers towards it. A positive language attitude is one of the crucial factors that can determine the future of an endangered language because, as Zhang and Slaughter-Defoe (2009) comment, it often leads to increased motivation and efforts to learn it. According to Grosjean (1982), it is possible to maintain a HL when a community is emotionally attached to, and has pride in, its culture and language. As for Lukmani (1972) and Zhang and Slaughter-Defoe (2009), they
add that an individual’s motivation to learn their HL is not only influenced by their attitude towards it but also by their attitude towards the people in their community who speak the language. A positive attitude towards ones community members is an important factor that generates motivation to learn a HL.

Tsunoda (2006) classifies language attitudes into three categories: positive, negative and neutral. A positive language attitude can lead to language loyalty and gives a HL the opportunity to survive in the presence of a more dominant language (Fishman, 1972; Tsunoda, 2006). Conversely, neutral attitudes or negative attitudes towards a HL reduce the chances of maintaining it (Tsunoda, 2006). As Zhang and Slaughter-Defoe (2009) discuss, due to adverse mainstream attitudes towards minority languages, children and parents from immigrant backgrounds express diverse attitudes towards their HL. Some parents for instance, urge their children to learn the HL and positively seek to maintain it, whereas others express the importance of shifting to the dominant language in order to succeed in the dominant society. Such diverse attitudes often affect language maintenance and play a key role in whether a HL will survive, re-flourish or die out (Garrett, 2010). For instance, in a study on Chinese Canadians, Young and Gardner (1990) report that participants who identify with Canadian culture have little desire to improve their Chinese HL skills although they report being weak in it. On the other hand, Chinese who identify with their heritage, culture and language are more eager to learn and maintain their Chinese.

A number of studies reveal that parental involvement and commitment is critical to maintain a HL or sustain proficiency in it among younger generations (Kondo-Brown 2006). In a study conducted on Korean American college students, Kondo-Brown (2006) reports that when Korean parents made an effort to maintain their children’s HL by talking to them in Korean at home and sending them to schools that taught Korean, their children showed higher proficiency levels in Korean.
In some cases, HL loyalty and the desire to maintain it, is manifested in the pressure older generations exert on younger people as they constantly emphasize HL use and reprimand dominant language use (Tsunoda, 2006; Pauwels, 2016). A positive language attitude may also lead to language purism, the phenomenon through which some HL users, particularly older generations, aim at retaining their language in its “pure” form and criticize or correct other people for speaking in a certain way (Tsunoda, 2006; Garrett, 2010).

Milroy (2007) points out that the phenomenon of language purism is often a result of language standardization, which places emphasis on language correctness and is concerned with language uniformity rather than language variance. As Garrett (2010) discusses, in standard language ideology, speakers often hold strong views about which language forms are correct, which are incorrect, and such views are reinforced by grammar books, dictionaries and educational systems. Milroy (2007, 133) refers to this phenomenon as “the standard language ideology” whereby “language attitudes are dominated by powerful ideological positions that are largely based on the supposed existence of a standard form”.

While people are not always conscious of the influence of such ideological positions and tend to regard them as common sense, the use of standard language forms can also be a result of a conscious choice particularly when it is positively evaluated in terms of prestige or identity preservation (Garrett, 2010). Garrett’s (2010) and Milroy’s (2007) explanations of standard language ideologies are relevant to the standardization of the WAL in the Ottoman Empire which, as discussed in Chapter 1, was based on the adoption of the Armenian dialect of Constantinople, the hub of Armenian intellectuality. Such language ideologies persist in Lebanon as the idea of speaking “clean Armenian”, makour hayeren, is still prevalent within the Armenian community and propagated by various media means such as newspapers and radio stations (Jebejian, 2007).
Mainstream attitudes towards minority languages

HL maintenance may also be influenced by attitudes held by the dominant culture towards a minority language and its speakers. Negative attitudes or even prejudice against minority communities and immigrants hinder HL learning. As Zhang and Slaughter-Defoe (2009) point out, individuals who seek to retain their HL often face negative language attitudes in the dominant culture. For instance, Gerber (1991) discusses how English language acquisition is often assumed to be essential in the United States when on the other hand many debate the importance of maintaining minority languages. This is somehow relevant to the experience of the Armenian diaspora in the United States in the early twentieth century. Sahakyan (2015, 74) discusses that during the 1920s the rise of the nativist movement in the United States which then turned into a “more coercive movement of Americanization” perceived immigration as a problem and performed discriminatory or even violent acts against immigrants, including Armenians. As Sahakyan (2015, 75) point out, “the proponents of the Americanization movement were concerned of the immigrants’ ignorance of the American language, values and culture, and their inability or unwillingness to connect with American culture and to learn the American ways of life”. In this context, immigrants were not only required to learn the English language and adopt American values, but also they had to abandon their own cultural traits, habits and language (Schneider, 2011; Sahakyan, 2015). This possibly explains why the social adjustment of the Armenian diaspora in the United States entailed assimilation and in many cases the Abandonment of the WAL (Bakalian, 1993; Sahakyan, 2015).

Ruiz (1984) classifies minority language attitudes in any given society into three orientations: language as a problem, language as a right, and language as a resource. The orientation of language as a problem aims at language shift and regards minority language
learning as a problem to be overcome in the process of learning the dominant language. Particularly children are expected to give up the language of their parents and their culture in order to assimilate into mainstream society (Ruiz, 1984; Zhang and Slaughter-Defoe, 2009). On the other hand, the orientation of language as a right supports the development and maintenance of children’s culture and HL by recognizing their right to learn it and seeking ways to introduce them to the dominant language without pressuring them to give up their own culture and language (Ruiz, 1984). As for language as a resource orientation, it goes a step further into HL preservation by suggesting that minority languages are not only a resource for children with immigrant backgrounds but also for mainstream society. Language as a resource is a perspective that advocates bilingualism amongst mainstream children and children with immigrant backgrounds so that they can all understand and identify with more than one language and culture (Ruiz, 1984; Zhang and Slaughter-Defoe, 2009).

In line with the discussions above and Ruiz’s (1984) interpretation of language attitudes, WA in Lebanon can be classified as “a language with a right” due to the autonomy of the Armenian community in Lebanon and its freedom to regulate its internal affairs. Nevertheless, as mentioned, the attitudes of LAAs towards the WAL are unclear due to being understudied. Moreover, little research has been directed at understanding the dominant ideology and the mainstream social attitudes in Lebanon towards the Armenian diaspora in Lebanon and towards the WAL.
Changing dimensions of mobility and space

When it comes to explaining dimensions of mobility, Johnstone (2010) discusses how people have started interacting both on a global and local level. The recent increasing mobility of speakers from one geographical space to another and the development of communication technologies have led to space-time compression and given rise to new understandings of geographical place and cultural space (ibid). This has transformed social relations and has given communicative environments a translocal nature where people create multistranded social relationships that go beyond geographic, cultural and political borders (ibid).

The development of technology has made it possible for ethnic communities to strengthen their networks of interpersonal relationships with their fellow diasporans in other countries while at the same time sustaining their involvement in their host country. Pennycook (2007) discusses how the possibility of remaining in electronic contact can contribute to language maintenance by generating new domains of language use and new forms of language innovation. Social and symbolic ties are no longer exclusive to geographical space or face to face relationships, as people with common ideologies, cultures and languages have become involved in distant interactions (Faist, 2000; Jacquemet, 2010).

The transformation in the “sense of place, belonging and social relations” resulting from the globalization of social relationships has also led to the dissolution of identities and cultures in a global environment where people are constantly involved into “deterritorialization” and “reterritorialization” practices through which cultures are changed, replaced or reinserted into another cultural environment (Jacquemet 2010, 51).
According to Jones (2004), the addition of virtual interaction to face-to-face interaction has given rise to the concept of digital space, another dimension of transnational space where communication takes place mainly through new technologies in digitally mediated environments such as social networking, video conferencing, multilingual chatrooms, virtual meetings and digital navigation systems. As Simpson (2007) comments, the use of various mass media helps construct an imagined community of speakers that is geographically widespread and that shares common linguistic practices regardless of their physical separation.

Despite the receding significance of boundaries between states and the heightened interconnectivity between people, some scholars “question the overemphasis on deterritorialization and fluidity of social spaces” (Gesing et al., 2014, 26). Brickell and Datta (2011) bring the uniqueness and materiality of locality into the debate. They discuss that even during mobility there is some degree of situatedness and give a more nuanced view of the role of place and borders (ibid). This means that identities are still negotiated and maintained in everyday urban life because social connections maintain some aspect of locality and continue to be somehow place-based (ibid).

In line with the discussions above, I believe that despite the importance of global interactions in shaping ethnic and transnational identities, LAAs continue to negotiate their identities in relation to language through more immediate, local and face-to-face interactions, hence the importance of exploring the impact of geographical space, particularly residential concentration and geographical dispersal, on the LPs of LAAs.
The impact of residential location on minority languages

Although as discussed space and time compression have transformed the geography of communication and social relations with the recent involvement of communities in distant interaction as a result of technology, the main means of the production and transmission of culture continue to be local ones (Johnstone, 2010). Sociolinguists such as Li (1982) and Finegan and Rickford (2004) discuss that the residential location of minority groups is a factor that can directly or indirectly lead to the loss or maintenance of a minority language. When ethnic groups live together within one geographical area, they would increase the possibility of maintaining their HL. On the other hand, the more geographically dispersed a community is, the greater the chances of a significant shift in their HL (ibid). Fishman (1989, 47) states that “relatively small groups may be able to preserve themselves linguistically if they maintain geographical concentration in addition to substantial physical, economic, and cultural separation from surrounding populations” and discusses that physical and demographic dispersal contribute to a decline in HL use. Fishman (1991, 57) pinpoints different factors such as environmental disasters, famine, wars and genocides, that lead to physical dislocation and directly impact HL transmission by leaving minority populations “demographically, socially and culturally weakened”.

The factors mentioned above cause involuntary migration and expose people to unfamiliar circumstances that render language maintenance problematic as cultural practices are very much dependent on familiarity. However, even voluntary urbanization, as Fishman (1991) comments, might contribute to language endangerment. The effect of urbanization comes mainly with everyday social interactions with the new community. People who relocate are in constant contact with new faces such as neighbours, classmates, colleagues, and shopkeepers and they communicate with them using a new language (ibid).
When minority communities become physically dispersed in different residential areas they may also become subordinate to other cultures and languages. As Fishman (1991) discusses, institutions such as ethnic schools, nurseries, houses of worship, clubhouses, athletic centres, and libraries might not be as easily available to minority communities as they used to be when they were physically concentrated within one geographical area, which reduces opportunities of HL use. When migrating to rural areas, dispersed communities tend to use the dominant language in the workplace and the society they live in, unlike when they live in rural areas where most probably the language they use would be their HL (Appel and Muysken 1987; Baker 2006).

The effects of geographical dispersal and urbanization discussed by Appel and Muysken (1987), Fishman (1991) and Baker (2006) can very much be associated with the case of the Armenian community in Lebanon and the WAL, as the movement of LAs towards the suburbs of Lebanon is a phenomenon that is becoming more common (Arsenian-Ekmekji, 2001). This movement to the suburbs is a common trend among the Lebanese, which LAs are possibly imitating. By doing so, they are “leading the cities to be ruralized and the countryside to become urbanized” (Arsenian-Ekmekji 2001, 4). As a result, the conventional residential concentration of LAs within a particular geographical space is shrinking in size, which can amplify chances of shifting from WA to other more dominant languages spoken in Lebanon.

Viikberg (2002) also discusses the impact of reduced concentration. In a study on the Estonian settlers in Siberia, he provides evidence that geographical dispersal across wider geographical areas increases the importance of Russian in the lives of the Estonians as they become more in contact with the Russian language (ibid). Estonians who used to concentrate in certain areas in the past moved to new areas following the introduction of the concept of nationalization. This led to the disappearance of several Estonian villages and numerically
reduced the concentration of the Estonian community, which restricted the domains of Estonian, leading to an increased shift to the Russian language (ibid).

The impact of geographical dispersal on HL maintenance is also reported by Lieberson (1981) who in a study on the French community in Canada, reports that the French living in areas highly concentrated by French people, such as in Quebec, use French as an essential means of communication in their daily lives. On the other hand, French people who are more dispersed across Canada have a greater tendency to shift to English.

The impact of residential location on LMLS is also revealed in a study on the Islenos of St. Bernard who following their immigration to Louisiana, were distinguished by their “closely-knit” social community that retained its detachment and culture in isolation for almost two hundred years (Lipski and Roca, 1991). This isolation, according to Lipski and Roca (1991), contributed to the vitality of the Isleno Spanish dialect and maintained it over a long period. Nevertheless, as the isolation of the community was affected by the modern industrial age of the 20th century with the introduction of new roads and electricity connecting the marshland to New Orleans, the Isleno dialect was affected and English encroached little by little on the community’s daily life (ibid).

Li (1982) also reports that ethnic groups living in geographically isolated areas contribute to language maintenance. In his study on a group of Chinese Americans, he reports that Chinese Americans belonging to the third generation and living outside the Chinatowns have a greater tendency to shift to the English language than third generation Chinese Americans residing within the Chinatowns (ibid). Just like the Chinese, several ethnic communities in the United States experience a growing shift to English due to the interruption of their ethnic residential concentration (Li, 1982). Nevertheless, Finegan and Rickford (2004) comment that some communities in the United States, such as the Hasidic
Yiddish speaking Jews, the Pennsylvania German Old Order Amish and Mennonites, have been successful in retaining their HL because of their limited interaction with the English speaking Americans and their lack of participation in religious or secular American life. The residential concentration of those communities in specific neighbourhoods has been essential in transmitting their languages across generations and therefore maintaining them (ibid).

Gal (2010) reports another case of linguistic maintenance due to residential concentration. She discusses the case of the Weyewa-speaking villages from Indonesia on the island of Sumba whose community settled in clusters until the 1970s and performed rituals through special speeches delivered by men. The arrival of the Dutch colonies in the nineteenth century led to population increase and dispersed the community away from its central villages. As a result, the ritual speeches of the community fell into disuse and the language itself has become devalued following the administration of the Dutch language (ibid).

Stevens (1992) and Maehlum (2010) also propose that demographic characteristics either prevent or facilitate sharing common spaces among HL speakers, such as friends, colleagues, and neighbours. This means that the numerical size of an ethnic group and its residential concentration increase the probability of HL use on a daily basis in immediate neighbourhoods, streets, schools, religious institutions and social networks (Bayley et al., 2013). For example, children of Cuban heritage in the United States who live in areas highly concentrated by Spanish speakers, such as in Miami, where over 50% of the population speaks Spanish, are 20 times more likely to excel in their Spanish language proficiency than their counterparts who live in an area where only 5% of the population speaks Spanish (ibid).

The discussions above suggest that physical space, more specifically residential concentration and/or dispersal, can influence linguistic vitality. WA could be experiencing
modifications with the increasing relocation of LAs outside of BH. Accordingly, I believe it is important to explore the social practices of LAAs and their daily interactions within their immediate neighbourhoods because such interactions might shape their LPs and therefore bring modifications to the status of the WAL in Lebanon.
Chapter 4

Methodology

Introduction

In this chapter, I present a detailed description of the quantitative and qualitative methods I used in order to collect and analyse data on the LPs of LAAs from BH and from NAAs. I describe the design of the study that helped address the research questions. I also describe and justify the selection of the sample and its reliability and the different instruments and techniques I used to collect data. I discuss the decision behind choosing particular tools of data collection; the survey questionnaires, the nonparticipant observations, the individual interviews and the group interviews, in addition to the ethical considerations in the conduct of the study, the pilot study, the data analysis procedure, and the complications that arose during the course of the study.

The theoretical framework of the research

The study looks at LPs in relation to residential concentration and geographical dispersal. It specifically explores how the identities and LPs of LAAs can be influenced by their geographical dispersal across NAAs of Lebanon and by their continued residential concentration within BH.
The impact of residential location on the maintenance or shift of minority languages and HLs has been previously acknowledged by several researchers such as Lieberson (1981), Li (1982) and Finegan and Rickford (2004) who discuss that geographical space affects the vitality of a language by shaping the LPs as well as the identities of its speakers. For example, the Yiddish speaking Jews in America (Finegan and Rickford, 2004), the Chinese Americans (Li, 1982) and the Weyewa speaking villagers in Indonesia (Gal, 2010) were capable of maintaining their languages as a result of their concentration within particular geographical spaces. Finegan and Rickford (2004), Li (1982) and Gal (2010) point out that the more concentrated a community is within a particular geographical space, the greater the chances of maintaining the vitality of its HL as residential concentration leads to language use in a wider variety of domains. As Fishman (1991) comments, the preservation of an ethnic identity and the survival of a minority language is best ensured by a community’s clustering into close-knit social groups.

While geographical place and face-to-face interactions still play an important role in shaping the situation of a HL, Johnstone (2010) points out that, in recent years, technology and globalization have transformed the conventional understanding of space and influenced social communication by compressing space and time and allowing people to participate in distant communication. Drawing on these observations, I look into the LPs of LAAs from BH and NAAs and explore the way they negotiate their identities and make linguistic choices in order to understand the degree to which geographical space influences or shapes the WAL in Lebanon.
Research design

This study can be described as one with mixed methods as it does not subscribe to only one method of collecting data but rather combines both quantitative and qualitative approaches (Arksey and Knight, 1999; Creswell, 2003). The reason why I opted for mixed methods is because, as Creswell (2003) and Litosseliti (2010) comment, using multiple approaches provides a better understanding of the research problem and the phenomena under investigation and therefore enhances the validity and the credibility of findings. As Mathison (1988) suggests, using mixed methods to collect data helps bridge the gap between experimental results and subjective data, which together improve the evaluation of the findings. Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) also discuss the importance of using pluralistic approaches in collecting data and understanding the research problem. While quantitative research is useful in terms of generalizing research findings, qualitative approaches are particularly valuable in providing in-depth and rich datasets (Litosseliti, 2010).

Based on these observations, I believe that understanding the LPs of LAAs might be difficult by adopting a quantitative or a qualitative approach independently. The combination of individual and group interviews, nonparticipant observations and survey questionnaires helps draw conclusions about the language practices of LAAs by collecting and analysing data both numerically and subjectively. Given the complex nature of the phenomena this study explores, my focus in is on qualitative rather than quantitative data because my primary interest is to study participants’ attitudes, perceptions and experiences with WA and other languages they speak on a deeper level. As for the quantitative data, I use them to numerically complement the qualitative findings with charts and figures. While, as Litosseliti (2010) comments, discourse studies are often seen as qualitative by nature, in this study, I combine both quantitative and qualitative paradigms for a better understanding of the LAAs’
linguistic practices because quantitative data are totally absent from the Armenian community with regards to the subject being studied.

**Pilot study**

In the first phase of this study, I conducted a pilot study. This helped me experience and evaluate the quantitative and qualitative tools that I used for the main study and gave me the opportunity, as Rasinger (2013) comments, to detect flaws and identify potential problems. For the pilot study, I collected data through ten survey questionnaires and two pilot interviews in April 2014. While piloting the questionnaire to obtain quantitative data, the major difficulty I faced was convincing adolescents to act as respondents. It soon became clear to me that the reason behind their lack of enthusiasm was that the questionnaire was demanding and long as some of the adolescents who agreed to take part in the pilot study mentioned that some questions were complicated and required a lot of writing. I accordingly made amendments to the design of the questionnaire by omitting some questions and changing the remaining into simple questions that required very short answers (see the questionnaire in appendix 6, 11-23).

Another difficulty I faced during the pilot study was the establishment of contact with LAAs from NAAs due to their lack of concentration within certain geographical spaces. Therefore, for the main study, I adopted an additional sampling technique, the snowball sampling technique, which as Dornyei and Taguchi (2009) explain, is a technique that might contribute to finding participants with the help of acquaintances and friends within a certain community.
Another important point I noticed during the pilot study is recruitment timing and its effect on the number of respondents. The adolescent participants completing the survey were students who were on Easter holiday from their studies. Getting them to complete the questionnaire in their own time proved to be challenging, especially with a topic such as this, which does not have mass appeal to this age group. I therefore paid attention in selecting the right time and place for the completion of the questionnaires for the main study where participants were less distracted by holidays or special occasions.

The preparation period was also useful to improve the quality of the interviews to be conducted. Several factors such as interview duration, types of questions and interview timing and location were taken into consideration in order to maximize the chances of obtaining appropriate data for this study.

Data collection

Data collection tools

Data for this study were collected through ten individual interviews, two focus group interviews, one hundred survey questionnaires and two short nonparticipant observations. I selected these four methods to target two equal groups of adolescents; a group living within BH and another living in NAAs.

Although the interviews were the major tool to collect data, I also chose to add survey questionnaires as a data collection tool because, as discussed at length in Chapter 2, recent
statistical data about the Armenian community in Lebanon are almost non-existent due to the poor reliability of Lebanese national censuses (LIC, 2013). This makes finding statistical data concerning the WAL in Lebanon even more challenging. Accordingly, along with qualitative data, I found it important to also collect basic statistical data that provide numerical information on the LPs of LAAs, their cultural and social practices, their daily interactions, their ideologies as well as their language attitudes, in order to understand how the recent geographical dispersal of LAs in Lebanon can influence the status of the WAL. As Arksey and Knight (1999) suggest, establishing statistical data is important as they provide baseline information about a study and help identify the degree of the prevalence of a research problem. Therefore, I selected survey questionnaires to help draw statistical comparisons between LAAs living in BH and those living in NAAs, and interviews to gain deep insight into their LPs.

Questionnaires

Before describing the reasons behind selecting survey questionnaires as a tool to collect data for this study, I would like to note that the study was designed to provide a balanced amount of quantitative findings that are analytically manageable for a PhD study and might pave the way for future studies. This means that the number of participants selected to fill in the survey questionnaires is limited and may not be representative of the wider population. In addition, as Dornyei and Taguchi (2009) suggest, questionnaires are usually highly structured data collection instruments that ask about very specific pieces of information or give respondents various options to choose from. Therefore, as mentioned,
data that I collected through the questionnaires are mainly numeric data that provide figures, charts and comparisons rather than in-depth qualitative data. The major bulk of qualitative data were gathered, as mentioned, by means of individual and group interviews.

The experience I gained from the pilot study conducted in April 2014 gave me an understanding of how to design the questionnaire for this study. After distributing the first version of the questionnaire, I realized that in order to encourage participants to take part in the study, I had to design a new version that is shorter, that does not use complicated language, that has a clear and easy to follow format, that does not contain open ended questions, that contains clear instructions, and that requires brief responses or provides respondents with possible answers to select from.

Since the first questionnaire I designed was twenty pages long, it included too many questions and required around one hour to be completed. For instance, it included a few open ended questions that required extended answers, which discouraged participants from answering them, and in many cases those questions remained unanswered. For example, two of the questions that remained unanswered were; “what does being an Armenian mean to you?” and “how do you describe your feelings about Turkey’s denial of the Armenian genocide”.

Dornyei and Taguchi (2009) suggest that requests for extended answers often lead to refusals to answer the question or even the entire questionnaire. Moreover, even if participants provide long written answers, many might be inappropriate for analytical purposes as they would be difficult to break down into codes. Accordingly, to construct the new version of the questionnaire for this study, I followed Dornyei and Taguchi’s (2009, 11) guideline as it highlights important details that render a questionnaire “an instrument that motivates people to give relatively truthful and thoughtful answers which can then be
processed in a scientifically sound manner”. For example, in order to understand how participants feel about their Armenian identity, the recent version of the questionnaire included questions like “how do you feel about being an Armenian”, and gave participants the option to circle an answer from a Likert scale of five levels, ranging from “1- not proud at all or ashamed, 2- not proud, 3- neutral (neither proud nor ashamed), 4- proud, 5- extremely proud”.

The pilot study not only served to improve the design of the questionnaire but also helped me decide on its content. After administering the first set of survey questionnaires, I had to omit several questions, as they were either irrelevant or unnecessary to achieve the objectives of the study. For instance, I removed from the initial questionnaire questions addressing adolescents’ perceptions of their basic grammatical skills. I believe such questions are irrelevant to this study, as my aim is not to assess language proficiency, hence I removed them. As Brace (2008) suggests, for a questionnaire to answer the objectives of a study and minimize the likelihood of error occurring at the stages of data collection and analysis, every question included in it must serve a purpose. In line with this, I redesigned the questionnaire with the following in mind: “what is the objective of my study?”, “what type of data am I looking for?” and “how will each item in the questionnaire reveal data I am looking for?”

Since in this study I aim to look into the LPs of LAAs, the final version of the questionnaire included questions that yielded three types of data discussed by Dornyei (2014): factual data, behavioural data, and attitudinal data. The factual data are background information I collected about participants, such as their age, gender, residential location, the school(s) they have been to, and other background information that may contribute to understanding data collected for this study. The behavioural questions helped build a profile of participants’ lifestyles, habits and personal history and how they behave in specific
situations. As for the attitudinal questions, they provided information about participants’ attitudes towards the WAL and other languages they speak in addition to information related to their sense of belonging and national feelings. Since such data, as Dornyei (2014) comments, usually concern attitudes, opinions, beliefs, interests and values, the answers provided by participants might not reflect their real attitude, behaviour and linguistic practices. Therefore, I addressed behavioural and attitudinal questions on a deeper level mainly during the individual interviews and focus group interviews where I was capable of observing participants’ natural reactions and opinions within a group setting.

The three types of data discussed above were collected through four major sections. Part I, entitled Background information, included a set of eight questions that collected background and demographic information about participants and their parents. Part II, Domains of language use, provided information about the language(s) participants use in different situations and while involved in activities with different people. As UNESCO (2003) suggests in its language vitality framework, particularly in the section discussing trends in existing language domains, it is important to determine where a language is used and with who, as this reveals its vitality and whether or not it will be passed on from one generation to another. Accordingly, this section of the questionnaire provided information about how and where participants acquired the languages they speak, how and when they use them, which languages they feel most comfortable using when engaged in certain activities and what activities they are capable of engaging in using only the WAL. The questions in Part II were presented in two ways; some in a table format and some as short questions. A few examples of the questions in this section are; “do/did you take Armenian language classes?” and “when speaking Armenian do you use words or sentences from another language?”.
Part III, *Residential, companionship and cultural information*, covered twelve brief questions. Since the main variables of this study are residential concentration and geographical dispersal, I included this section separately in order to gather as much information as possible about how the location of my participants shapes their daily interactions, routines and habits, which in turn can influence their LPs. This section covered questions about participants’ interactions, the people they come across, their neighbours, friends and classmates, as well as their social activities and their cultural and traditional practices.

Questions in Part III that targeted participants’ daily interactions also helped determine to what extent the Armenian community is residentially dispersed and/or concentrated. As UNESCO (2003) suggests in its language vitality framework, particularly in the section addressing *response to new domains and media*, when the living conditions of communities change, new domains of language use may emerge. Accordingly, the analysis in this section helped understand changes in the domains of language use within the Armenian community, identified possible new domains and explored how LAAs respond to these. Examples of questions in this section are; “your neighbours are mostly: 1-Lebanese, 2-Armenian, 3-both”, and “the people you come across in your daily life are mostly 1-Lebanese, 2-Armenian, 3-both”.

Part IV, *Identity and language attitude*, explored participants’ identity negotiations, cultural belongings, ideologies, language attitudes and future desires. When UNESCO (2003) addresses *community members’ attitudes towards their own language*, it points out that language vitality is primarily dependent on the attitudes of its speakers towards it. Accordingly, comparing and interpreting the attitudes of the two groups of adolescents living in BH and in NAAs helped better understand the status of the WAL in Lebanon.
Part IV included twenty-two questions that provided information about participants’ identity perceptions and language attitudes. Participants were asked to select answers that best described their opinions, feelings, perceptions and attitudes with respect to the languages they speak, their cultural practices and daily activities. As Schmid (2002) discusses, studying the role of a community’s attitude towards its identity and HL is important in determining the situation of a given language as a negative attitude towards a HL might speed up the process of language shift by influencing everyday behaviour. Giles et al., (1977) also suggest that addressing subjective perceptions of ethnic group members about their own vitality is as important as gathering objective information, because subjective attitudes reveal facts about or even shape the LPs of certain ethnic groups. An example from Part IV is; “in your opinion, how important do you think it is to preserve the Armenian language? Please tick one answer: 1-extremely unimportant, 2-not important, 3-neither important/nor unimportant, 4-important, 5-extremely important”.

Several items of the questionnaire such as, “would you take a Lebanese person as a boyfriend or a girlfriend?” and “do you think it is important for you to have an Armenian boyfriend or girlfriend” were inspired by Jebejian’s (2007) list of interview questions. Although Jebejian’s (2007) list of questions was designed to collect qualitative data, I noticed that some of its items can be quantifiable, hence I chose to include them not only in the interview questions but also in the questionnaire. The questions inspired by Jebejian (2007) are questions 3 4, 5 and 8 in Part II, questions 6, 10, 11, and 12 in Part III, and questions 1, 3, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 14 in Part IV.

The questionnaire was also inspired by Bakalian’s (1993) work, which targets Armenians-Americans and analyses the assimilation conflicts they experience as they try to perpetuate their culture and heritage while at the same time being active members of the American society. Having read Bakalian’s questionnaire, I found it useful to borrow some of
its items even if they were initially designed to target a different population. As Cohen
(2008) comments, different diasporic communities might share similar cultural and linguistic
experiences. Accordingly, questions that contributed to a successful research study in the
United States may similarly be convenient for this study. The questions inspired by
Bakalian’s (1993) questionnaire are questions 3 and 5 in Part II, questions 3, 6, 8 and 9 in
Part III and questions 1, 10, 12 and 20 in Part IV. It is important to note that the questions I
adopted from both researchers mentioned above were adjusted and given different formats.
For example, some questions were included in a table format, and others were changed into
short yes/no questions or multiple choice questions.

The questionnaire was available in four different languages; Armenian, Arabic,
English and French, for participants to select from. The purpose behind providing
questionnaires available in four languages was to maximize chances of collecting a bigger
number of completed questionnaires by giving participants the option of selecting the
language they feel most comfortable using.

**Individual interviews**

Given the relatively simple and straightforward nature of the questions included in the
recent version of the survey questionnaire to encourage participation, data resulting from the
questionnaires is superficial in nature. As Dornyei and Taguchi (2009) suggest,
questionnaires might limit depth of data, as they do not probe deeply into a problem.
Accordingly, the questionnaire items did not produce a rich description of participants’ LPs
because they required a rather superficial and brief involvement with the subject on their part.
Since this study seeks to look into personal accounts, opinions and attitudes of LAAs, I opted to combine, as Dornyei and Taguchi (2009) suggest, other methods of collecting data. I chose to conduct individual interviews as well as focus group interviews in order to obtain a deeper insight into the sociolinguistic experiences of the LAAs and understand what meaning they make out of their personal and linguistic experiences. As, Arksey and Knight (1999) comment, perceptions, attitudes and identities as well as personal and private understandings are human concepts rather than objective things, and in order to understand them, a qualitative approach, such as an interview is required. Interviews are usually more exploratory and qualitative by nature as they concentrate on “the distinctive features of situations and events, and on the beliefs of individuals or sub-cultures” (ibid, 3). Lodico et al. (2010) are also of the opinion that interviews can provide much more profound and rich data when more complex beliefs or experiences are to be examined. In line with this, I used interviews that helped gain a deeper insight into participants’ LPs of my participants as well as their perceptions of identity and attitudes.

In terms of structure, the interviews were semi-structured interviews. They were carefully planned in advance in order to collect data in a systematic manner. During the interviews, I deviated from the initial questions when necessary. I chose semi-structured interviews because as Lodico et al. (2010) comment, the flexibility of such interviews offers the researcher plenty of opportunity to explain questions if they happen to be unclear, to ask for clarifications and to ask additional questions on unexpected issues that arise. Although the interview questions were similar to those in the questionnaire, I used them as a baseline for the interview rather than fixed questions. I attached open-ended questions to the initial questions in order to delve into participants’ opinions and attitudes and avoid limiting their responses. As Arksey and Knight (1999) recommend, using open-ended questions in an interview is very important as they invite answers that explore meaning, feelings and actions.
rather than short and precise answers. Lodico et al. (2010) suggest the use of questions beginning with phrases like “what type of” or “tell me more about” because such question formats stimulate free thinking and lead to answering in a natural manner without making the interviewee feel that particular answers are required. I tried this approach in the pilot interviews, which I conducted in April 2014, and it seemed to be relatively helpful. Therefore, I followed the same procedure during the main interviews of this study.

The interview protocols discussed by Lodico et al. (2010) and Anderson and Arsenault’s (1998) Guide to a Successful Interview also proved to be useful during the pilot interviews and served as a pointer for the main interviews. For example, I conducted one of the pilot interviews in the house of one of my relatives where we were gathered for lunch. The house was relatively noisy even when we tried to find a quiet corner for the interview to take place. This led to lack of concentration on the part of the interviewee and extended the duration of the interview. Accordingly, as Anderson and Arsenault (1998) suggest, I made sure the main interviews took place in an appropriate setting. I also ensured their duration did not surpass the one-hour limit. Other points suggested by Lodico et al. (2009) and Anderson and Arsenault (1998) such as importance of self-introduction to interviewees, clarification of the topic of discussion, maintaining neutrality and avoiding interviewee bias were also taken into consideration during the interviews.

Concerning language choice, all interviews were conducted in Armenian. My initial intention was not to impose a particular language on participants but rather conduct the interviews in their language of choice. As all participants spontaneously used Armenian during the pre-interview discussions, I opted to ask interview questions in Armenian.

Apart from semi-structured interviews, I also conducted key-informant interviews. Due to the gap in the literature on the WAL in Lebanon, and as discussed, the relative
absence of empirical data on the sociolinguistic situation of the Armenian community, specifically adolescents, I decided to back this study up with interviews with leading and influential figures in the Armenian community. Those interviews were essential as they provided specialist knowledge due to the experience or position of the interviewees.

I did not use key-informant interviews to collect empirical data for the study but to gain a more global perspective of the current sociolinguistic situation of the Armenian community. As Anderson and Arsenault (1998) point out, key-informant interviews are regarded as a teaching situation where the researcher learns about essential events and personal viewpoints. Usually, respondents in key-informant interviews would be elite individuals who have specific experience or knowledge about the subject being studied (ibid). For the key-informant interviews of this study, I chose the school principal of an Armenian school, the head of a famous Armenian youth club, the head of the Armenian Prelacy, the director of a prominent Armenian newspaper in Lebanon and the director of an Armenian radio station. I believe that such people can offer detailed information about LPs in Armenian schools, youth associations and clubs as well as in the Armenian community as a whole.

**Focus group interviews**

Apart from individual interviews, I also conducted two focus group interviews that allowed me gather more information on the LPs of LAAs. Focus group interviews were also conducted in Armenian because prior to the beginning of the interviews participants spontaneously engaged with each other in Armenian. Since this study looks into the LPs of
LAAs by studying “what” they think about the languages they speak and “why” they think the way they do, I believe focus group interviews were a good addition to the study because they helped collect and understand different points of views. Participants were observed interacting and discussing linguistic and attitudinal issues, and their diverse and/or similar opinions and attitudes were revealed. The group interviews provided a clearer picture of how similar or different the views of BH and NAAs participants are and how the two groups perceive each other and their HL.

Although individual interviews provide profound and in-depth data, they might not reveal elements such as lived experiences that individuals share within a group setting (Liamputtong, 2011). Bloor et al. (2001, 7) comment that focus group interviews provide more detailed information on “the group meanings associated with a given issue”. Accordingly, I chose to conduct two focus group interviews with different participants from BH and NAAs in order to explore how they share their experiences and express their thoughts in a relatively natural conversational setting. As Kitzinger (2005) comments, focus group interviews are dynamic social discussions that allow the researcher explore and study collective experiences, beliefs and needs of different individuals. They also allow the researcher “uncover aspects of understanding that often remain hidden in the more conventional in-depth interviewing method” (Liamputtong 2011, 7).

Another reason why I chose focus group interviews is because, as Gomes and Jones (2010) comment, they generate a debate between respondents, which give the researcher the opportunity to witness how certain experiences or issues are talked about and debated. Indeed, when during the group interviews participants merged into a relatively natural conversational setting, I was able to observe how they supported or challenged each other’s opinions, how they disputed and uncovered meanings of events or experiences, and how they put forth their ideas. As Gilham (2000) comments, in a group interview, participants are
given the opportunity to comment on issues that might emerge during their conversations. They can also express “what they think, how they think and why they think the way they do about issues of importance to them” which in a way gives the researcher access to their “own world” (Liampittong 2011, 7). Such attitudes and perceptions usually present themselves in forms of discussions and debates that may include comments, jokes, arguments and other forms of communication that might be valuable in providing empirical data (Kitzinger, 2005).

Group interviews also offer the researcher the opportunity to explore “the gap between what people say and what they do” (Conradson 2005, 131). In fact, I noticed during the individual interviews that some participants were more reserved in expressing their opinions and feelings, whereas participants in the group interviews were more open about certain topics due to the relatively natural discussions they were involved in without my direct participation. Bloor et al. (2001) discuss the importance of the researcher’s role in this regard. They suggest that, in order to gain access to group terms and indigenous language, the researcher should play the role of the facilitator of the discussion and allow participants to address each other (ibid). Accordingly, during the group interviews, my role was to facilitate and maintain the discussions and contribute to data emergence. I limited my control over the discussions but ensured that important issues were discussed at length.

Concerning the number of group interviews, several theorists such as Morgan (1997) suggest that more accurate findings emerge from conducting more than one focus group interview because diverse experiences of different groups are tackled. Morgan (1997) proposes the application of the saturation method, which is a method that suggests conducting several interviews until no new results emerge. Due to time restrictions, it was not possible to conduct more than two group interviews for this study. However, the combination of two focus group interviews with other data collection tools enhanced the quality of the overall data generated.
In terms of duration, each group interview lasted around one hour to seventy-five minutes. As Morgan (1997) comments, a well-designed group interview usually lasts between one to two hours. Morgan (1997) and Jayanthi and Nelson (2002) recommend that no group interview should last more than two hours as longer interviews might become less productive because participants as well as the moderator might become tired or uninterested. Accordingly, given the young age of participants and their possible lack of interest in the subject area, I opted for a one hour to seventy-five-minute interview in order to maintain their interest without making the interviews an imposition on their time.

Nonparticipant observations

When I began collecting data for this study, my intention was not to collect naturally occurring data through nonparticipant observations. The idea emerged after conducting the interviews, particularly the group interviews, because I observed some interesting linguistic practices performed by my participants and thus I was interested in finding out more about their reported thoughts in relation to how they actually would behave in a given setting without my interference. For instance, I noticed some participants spontaneously codeswitching between Armenian and Arabic and/or English when they actually spoke about the importance of speaking Armenian and reported speaking Armenian at home and with their Armenian friends.

Follow up observations can contribute to understanding important factors that are usually unknown at the start of a study (McAvoy, 2014). Since contradicting oneself is a human inconsistency and often people’s behaviours contradict what they say they do or
believe, observations, in the case of this study nonparticipant observations, are an important tool to gather naturally occurring data. As Williams (2008) discusses, nonparticipant observations are a less obtrusive tool of data collection as researchers do not interact directly with participants and would not be present in the setting. Since nonparticipant observations are less controlled without any attempt to manipulate variables, participants behave more naturally in a natural context unlike in an artificial environment (ibid).

When according to Williams (2008) participant observations are often used to collect qualitative data, it is also possible to use observations to quantify something and produce numerical data, which was the aim of the observations I carried out. To be more specific, I conducted two short nonparticipant observations not with the purpose of collecting qualitative data but rather to report on the percentage of non-Armenian words participants use in a random short conversation as a way to understand their codeswitching patterns.

To give more details about how I used this method; following the two group interviews, and after hearing participants’ opinions and their accounts about their LPs, I asked one BH participant and another NAA participant if they were interested in participating in a follow up observation. As they both agreed, I asked them to send me a short five-minute conversation they record at home with their siblings. There was no specified topic and they were given the freedom to choose to speak about anything they wanted.

I received two voice conversations from each participant by email: the first one was a nine-minute conversation between the NAA participant and his sister and the other was a six-minute conversation between the BH participant and his brother. The short conversations were transcribed, the total words in each conversation were counted, and the percentage of non-Armenian words used were reported in order to better understand the LPs of both
participants and explore their fluidity in terms of using Armenian, English and/or Arabic and other languages spoken by LAs.

In addition to nonparticipant observations, I used the same word count method with the group interviews. Before translating the group interviews, I manually counted the non-Armenian words used by BH and NAAs participants in order to learn more about their LPs in the social domain. I report the information gathered from nonparticipant observations as well as the non-Armenian word count from the group interviews in Chapter 10 following the qualitative discussions on the LPs of LAAs.

Selecting participants

Apart from the selection of the right instruments to use in this study, the pilot study gave me the opportunity to figure out how to select a number of participants who represent the larger population of LAAs. Taking into consideration time restrictions, I carefully selected participants in order to make the study more reliable and generalizable to the population. I also took into consideration, as Rasinger (2013) suggests, three main concepts in order to increase the reliability and validity of the study: the population, the sample and the sample selection technique.

The population of the study
In this section, I define the population I selected for this study and I explain my selection. I first distinguish between the target population and the available population. As Kraska-Miller (2013) comments, the target population is the actual population to which the researcher would like to generalize the results of the study. As for the available population, which is also known as the accessible population, it is the population from which the researcher can select subjects realistically as it would be the one they have access to (ibid). In line with this, I define the target population of this study as all LAAs between the ages of 16 and 21, who are born and raised in Lebanon, whose parents are both LA, and who live anywhere across Lebanese territories. The target population of this study can further be divided into two subgroups: LAAs who live in BH and LAAs who live in NAAs.

Several criteria such as cognitive abilities, age and social norms are taken into consideration when defining adolescence. As Senderowitz (1995) reports, The World Health Organization initially defined adolescence as the period between the ages of 10 and 19 but later adopted a broader definition of 10 to 24 after factoring in the United Nations’ definition of youth as ages 15 and 24. For this study, I narrowed down the selection of participants to adolescents between the ages of 16 and 21 because I personally believe that participants from mid to late adolescence might be cognitively more developed to answer complex questions related to identity and language attitude than adolescents below that age. I base my assumption on the pilot study I conducted in April 2014, where a few participants who were below 15 were slower at grasping questions related to identity and answering them.
The sample of the study and the sample selection technique

In this section, I explain who took part in the study and how participants were selected. For the selected participants to represent the target population, I used several random and non-random sampling techniques in order to make the representation valid. Similar techniques were applied to recruit participants for both the quantitative and qualitative methods.

The first technique I applied was the cluster random sampling technique which, as Schilling (2013, 13) explains, is a technique that increases chances of a sample to be representative of the population as a whole as it entails “selecting study participants in such a way that each member of the population has an equal chance of being chosen”. I used the cluster sampling as a method to collect data because it is not easy to identify LAAs individually due to the absence of census data in the community. As Blankenship (2009, 85) suggests, it is a good idea to use the cluster random sampling technique when a researcher “cannot easily identify all individuals in a population but can easily identify groups or organizations within the population”. The cluster technique eases the procedure of data collection by focusing on using “pre-existing groups or organizations and randomly selecting entire groups to include in the sample instead of individuals” (ibid, 85).

Specifically for this study, some participants were selected from already defined groups such as Armenian schools and youth associations and clubs. While initially such a sampling technique might come across as straightforward, in reality it might give rise to several issues if the nature of the sample is not carefully considered (Schilling, 2013). For instance, I sought permission from school principals, heads of youth associations and clubs as well as parents to obtain their class lists in order to make sure participants represented the
defined population. Some classes contained adolescents who were not Lebanese Armenian because as discussed in Chapter 2, in the past two years, hundreds of Syrian Armenians have fled Syria and enrolled in Armenian schools in Lebanon due to the war in Syria. Accordingly, it was essential to review the class lists before recruiting.

Another potential confusion I thought of was the suffix -ian commonly attached to Armenian last names as an indication of Armenian roots (Bakalian, 1993; Jebejian, 2007; Coene, 2009). Since, under Lebanese law, a child is given their father’s name, the names on the provided lists did not indicate if both parents were Armenian, therefore it was important to discuss this issue with gatekeepers. Having said that, I do not define an “Armenian” as one who has two parents of Armenian descent. Nevertheless, the distinction was made here for the purpose of representing the defined population.

To reduce bias in the sampling procedure, I also used the snowball sampling technique as a complementary tool to the cluster technique. The snowball technique is a non-random sampling technique that has proved to be very useful in sociolinguistics, particularly after being used by Milroy (1987) in a study on language use and social class. According to Blankenship (2009), with this technique, the sample recruits its own members. By applying it, as a researcher I was able to identify the first few participants of the sample who then provided me with names of other potential participants. My insider status in the Armenian community gave me access to a variety of families and social networks such as youth associations and clubs. I benefited from that status to collect data using the snowball sampling technique, which helped obtain names of LAAs who were not affiliated to Armenian schools or social clubs.

Blankenship (2009, 88) comments that the snowball technique, though useful, might produce invalid data “as a result of the uncontrolled bias introduced by the particular
subject’s perception”. To control such bias, I did not limit the source of recruitment to one participant. I selected different participants who recommended different potential respondents.

In addition to the two sampling techniques discussed above, I also invited participants who filled in the questionnaires to attend a follow up interview if they wished it. I selected participants at that stage based on their responses in the questionnaires, hence why the follow up interviews took place in another time and place to allow enough time to check the questionnaire answers. As follow up interviews can only be conducted if relevant information and details about participants are retained, I ensured participants that any information they provide would be treated with absolute confidentiality and privacy so that they would not be discouraged from filling in their details.

The follow up interviews were conducted with participants who provided unforeseen, interesting or unexpected answers. This increased the chances of collecting richer and more interesting data due to reporting unique perspectives. While this might have added some subjectivity to the selection process, my purpose was to identify participants that in my view make the sample more representative of the group that I am studying. I specifically selected two participants, one from BH and one from a NAA, whose questionnaire answers made me believe that they might not be typical of the areas they reside in. For instance, while ethnic language shift is often attributed to geographical dispersal and HL use to residential concentration (Bayley et al., 2013), the questionnaire answers of the two participants I conducted follow up interviews with provided nonconventional information about their LPs and attitudes in relation to their residential location. This made me think of the importance of interviewing them in order to obtain more representative and versatile data for this study.
Concerning the group interviews, one of the important issues I carefully thought of as part of the recruitment process is whether to draw participants from pre-existing social groups such as a particular Armenian school, social club or neighbourhood or whether they should be a set of strangers. Flowerdew and Martin (2013) refer to such selections respectively as natural or assembled focus groups. They comment that in natural groups, participants are likely to be acquainted not only with the subject explored but also with each other (ibid). Such connections amongst participants might facilitate the flow of the discussions. Nevertheless, familiarity may well be an obstacle to information disclosure as “existing social groupings are likely to come complete with their embedded hierarchies, dynamics of dominance and submission, as well as anxieties regarding the expression of unusual or unpopular views” (ibid, 134). In addition, some research participants might feel intimidated in the presence of their friends and may conform to the general ideas discussed within the group.

By contrast, as Morgan (1997) comments, an assembled group might be more likely to voice participants’ thoughts and opinions. However, their lack of familiarity with each other might inhibit their participation in the discussions (Flowerdew and Martin, 2013). Considering the issues that may arise from each selection type, I applied both selection strategies in order to increase the reliability of the study. One of the focus group interviews was a “natural” focus group with adolescents who knew each other and the other was an assembled focus group with adolescents who were not familiar with one another.

In both cases, as mentioned, in order to facilitate the discussions, as a moderator, I used several strategies such as, creating a comfortable environment, building trust amongst participants, insuring a balanced interaction amongst them and drawing out when necessary. In this respect, I found some of Gomez and Jones’s (2010) suggestions useful. For example, as they recommend, I started the focus group interviews with a warm up period where I
warmly introduced myself and created a comfortable atmosphere where participants were
given the opportunity to briefly talk about themselves. I also entered the interviews with a
guide or a set of possible questions that helped proceed in the most inviting way possible.
The questions were unambiguous and simple, yet, they were designed to foster debate and
interesting discussions. As Gomez and Jones (2010) suggest, as a researcher, I was ready to
diverge from the questions whenever necessary by asking follow up questions when a
discussion around an interesting issue came up.

Sample size

According to Schilling (2013), deciding on the sample size is not often easy or
straightforward as the procedure involves taking into consideration several factors such as the
size of the community as a whole. For this study, it was challenging to estimate the size of
the target population because as mentioned, official census data in Lebanon is very poor.
Neuman (1997) suggests that, to gather data through questionnaires, a sample size of three
hundred should be appropriate for a small population (Cited in schilling, 2013). However,
for this study I recruited 100 LAAs to obtain quantitative findings through survey
questionnaires because as mentioned, my primary interest is in qualitative data and in
participants’ perceptions and experiences that can be mainly collected through qualitative
data collection tools. While 100 questionnaires might not be representative of the whole
population, they provide a balanced amount of analytically manageable quantitative data,
particularly when combined with individual and focus group interviews.
Concerning the sample size of the focus groups, I recruited one group of eight participants and another group of six participants. According to Morgan (1977), the ideal sample size should be between six and twelve participants. Although a bigger group might provide richer data, it might become challenging for the moderator to ensure the involvement of all participants (Barbour and Kitzinger, 1999). On other hand, Morgan (1997) comments that when a group is small in number, i.e. less than four participants, it might affect the validity of the study as it might limit information around the identified problem.

Accordingly, I chose to include eight participants in group interview one (GI1) and six participants in group interview two (GI2), divided into equal numbers of participants from BH and from NAAs. I believe this was a balanced number of participants as it was not too large to manage or too small to restrict data collection.

With ten individual interviews and two focus group interviews, the qualitative findings of this study are based on twenty-four interviews, equally divided between representatives of BH and NAAs. While these interviews provided an ample amount of telling data from this particular group of participants, twenty-four participants may not represent the overall population. As mentioned in Chapter 2, it is estimated that there are around 53,000 (Migliorino, 2008) to 80,000 (Encyclopaedia of Armenian diaspora, 2003) LAs in Lebanon. Therefore, the results of this study are not to be generalized to the wider population but they rather reveal interesting findings and shed light on an understudied issue within the Armenian community, which requires further study. It is also important to point out that data in this study are not factual data but rather a presentation of the perceptions and opinions of my participants, which is another reason why findings are not to be generalized to the wider population.
**Sample description**

While I have no data to support this, socioeconomically speaking, BH participants are more likely to belong to lower class or lower-middle class society given the nature of the area. BH, where most Armenians settled upon arrival to Lebanon, is generally known for its poor living conditions (Architecture Planning & Engineering Consultants (APEC), 2009; Hediger and Lukic, 2009). Contrary to that, participants selected from NAAs are more likely to belong to middle and upper-middle class society as affluent and economically more successful LAs haven been leaving BH and buying homes from the wealthier areas of Lebanon (Voss, 2007; Migliorino, 2008).

It is important to note that my definition of a NAA is not backed up with census data and that the recent geographical dispersal of LAs outside of BH is unclear. Although participants are two groups of LAAs, one from BH and another from NAAs, I cannot make a general claim about the demographic situation in NAAs although these are generally known as areas with less Armenian presence than BH. Although there is no clear distinction between BH and NAAs and no defined boundaries, I am approaching these specific areas as NAAs, or not predominantly Armenian, based on participants’ comments about the number of LAs they encounter in their daily lives and the extent they hear WA spoken, which reveal that Armenian presence in those areas is still relatively lower than Armenian presence in BH.

Concerning the particular towns and neighbourhoods participants were selected from, I randomly selected NAAs participants from a total of eleven neighbourhoods and towns scattered across different areas of Lebanon. As for the questionnaire participants, they were randomly selected from a total of twenty-six neighbourhoods and towns. Although selecting participants from several areas of Lebanon rather than from just a few towns or
neighbourhoods makes the data more representative of the general views of LAAs, I would like to point out that the selected participants are mainly from Mount Lebanon governorate, which is one of the eight governorates of Lebanon with a Christian majority. Mount Lebanon is divided into six districts: Aley, Baabda, Chouf, Jbeil, Keserwan, Metn. The majority of participants are from the Metn district, and some are from Keserwan, Jbeil and Baabda districts. Only 6% of questionnaire participants are from Achrafieh, which is a district in Beirut governorate.

Initially, I had no intention to limit my selection to two main governorates of Lebanon and four districts, but the random selection of participants led to a sample that was mainly representative of the districts mentioned above. This means that data in this study is mainly representative of the Armenian community within these districts of Lebanon. Future studies targeting the wider Lebanese Armenian population spread out in other governorates and districts may complement the findings of this study. Having said that, the fact that a large number of participants were from Mount Lebanon could be telling data about the recent geographical resettlement of LAs across Lebanon and a possible preference to settle particularly in the Metn District. (For the full list of neighbourhoods and towns participants were selected from and for general demographic information about them such as their age, gender, education, parents’ education, and parents’ occupation see appendix 7, 24-32. Although I am not focusing on gender or any possible gender differences, I am providing these details in order to give a detailed profile of each participant).
**Ethical considerations**

Before engaging participants, this study underwent an ethics review process by the Research Ethics Committee of King’s College, London and accordingly followed ethical guidelines specified by the Research Ethics Office. To begin with, I started by approaching gatekeepers such as school principals and heads of social clubs in order to obtain their permission to access some institutions. In a formal letter, I clearly explained to gatekeepers the steps and procedures involved in the study and made sure all participants take part in the study only on a voluntary basis. I prepared an information sheet that clearly stated that all participants should partake in the study out of free will and that they are under no obligation to sit for any interview or complete any questionnaire if they did not wish to do that. I further insisted on this point by orally conveying the message in person to participants just before they sat for the interviews or started filling in the questionnaires.

With the help of gatekeepers, who were more informed about participants’ emotional, psychological and physical situations, I was able to select participants who were ready to take part in the study. For instance, some students were overburdened with school duties and accordingly I made sure not to select them in order to insure that no participant’s schoolwork was hindered because of participating in this study.

As mentioned, my insider status in the Armenian community also gave me the opportunity to select participants informally. In such instances too, despite the informal nature of the approach, I also obtained written consent from participants before they got involved in the study. Participants were also given time to decide on their participation as I sent them the first letter that invited them to participate in the study ten days in advance.
In order to minimize risk of disclosure, I gave the questionnaires out anonymously. No questionnaire included any sections that asked for information about participants’ names or initials. Nevertheless, I attached an additional short statement to the questionnaire asking participants to leave their details only if they wished to take part in a follow up interview. No participant was compelled to give their names or contact details.

The interviews were also conducted in a way that does not reveal the identity of participants, as the recordings do not include their names. I chose pseudonyms that represent each interview participant in order to be able to discuss data I collected during the interviews. Pseudonyms were chosen based on participants’ real names. Participants with Armenian names were given Armenian pseudonyms and those with non-Armenian names were given non-Armenian pseudonyms. Although this does not have any influence on answering the research questions, it in a way gives an additional feel of the norms and practices of the Armenian community. Choosing Armenian or non-Armenian pseudonyms gives an understanding of what names, Armenian or non-Armenian, are generally given to individuals within community.

I conducted the interviews and given away the questionnaires in a variety of places such as homes, public spaces, schools and clubs’ premises. I made sure that the public spaces were comfortable and convenient for participants. The spaces were not necessarily private but they were quiet enough for participants not to be distracted.

Participants were not exposed to any form of psychological discomfort. The topics addressed were not embarrassing, upsetting or sensitive in nature. However, some questions, such as those related to language and identity, might have had some emotional resonance for participants. I dealt with such questions responsibly and sensitively. I also informed all participants through the recruitment letters that once they filled in the questionnaires, they
were no longer able to withdraw their data as the questionnaires were to be submitted anonymously. On the other hand, participants who sat for an interview had the opportunity to withdraw their participation up to thirty days after. In addition, participants were informed of the potential benefits the study brings to the Armenian community and of the possibility of receiving a copy of the final dissertation upon request if they wished to have a better understanding of the results.

Data analysis

Quantitative data analysis

The quantitative data analysis in this study is based on accumulated frequencies obtained through survey questionnaires. After receiving all the questionnaires, and since most were paper copies, I manually transferred the responses from the questionnaires into a spreadsheet. The responses to each question were counted using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences software (SPSS) and recorded in table formats.

I calculated how many people selected each response, in order to be able to display data in the form of charts that present and compare frequencies and percentages of responses provided by two groups of participants; BH participants and NAAs participants. I used very simple and easily understood statistical analysis without using any hypothesis tests as the focus of this study is mainly on qualitative findings. I display the number of answers for each question using bar charts that visually distinguish between the two groups and display potential differences in the selected answers of participants from different areas. I present the
charts following the qualitative discussions within the data analysis chapters in sections where I aim at providing a bigger picture of the qualitative findings.

**Qualitative data analysis**

The individual interviews and the focus group interviews were analysed in a more interpretive manner than the quantitative data. Participants’ opinions and attitudes were presented along with an elaborate discussion and interpretation of the repeated and/or conflicting themes and attitudes. This helped clarify key concepts and provide an interpretation and a clear picture of the status of the WAL and the extent of its influence by residential location. This is a very important step in adding meaning to the study because as Hatch (2010) comments, to make sense of social situations, interpretive data analysis is essential in order to produce explanations for what and how things happen. This helped me as a researcher become an active player in the course of research, make inferences, develop insights, attach significance and draw conclusions.

In order to produce an in-depth analysis of the data obtained, the following practical steps were taken into consideration: following every interview, I wrote down field notes in order to track interesting or unexpected observations. Such notes, as Morgan (1997) suggests, are an essential medium to document data in qualitative interviews as they help understand and analyse why and how respondents give particular answers to questions. Next, I transcribed the interviews. This was an essential part of the research process as listening to the interviews and typing them enabled me, as Hatch (2010) and Murchison (2010) comment,
to track context and nonverbal information and save a precise record of the overall interaction.

I found Auerbach and Silverstein’s (2003) book, *Qualitative data: an introduction to coding and analysis*, very useful in the process of data analysis, as they suggest a strategy, which they refer to as Grounded Theory Coding. This data analysis strategy is based on using small steps to move from the text to answering research questions, each step building on the previous one. It is not essential for a researcher at the early stage of analysis to see the direct connection between the text and the research concerns, but instead they can only see as far as their next step (ibid). This strategy proved to be useful to me as I found myself experiencing difficulties seeing the connection between my research concern and the transcribed interviews.

Apart from following Auerbach and Silverstein’s (2003) strategy, two steps were added to the qualitative analysis procedure. Before translating each interview, I highlighted all the non-Armenian words in the text; in yellow the English and French words, in purple the Arabic words and in blue any other non-Armenian words. This at a later stage helped me quantitatively look into the translanguaging patterns of my participants as well as their fluid LPs. The second step was the translation of all the interviews from Armenian into English, as they conducted in Armenian. Translating data was essential in order to report the thoughts and opinions of my participants in the data analysis chapters by directly quoting them where possible.

Finally, data obtained for this study through the tools discussed in this chapter were analysed in order to uncover the status of the WAL and provide a descriptive and exploratory insight into how the residential location of LAAs plays a role in shaping their LPs.
Chapter 5

The geodemographic situation of Lebanese Armenian adolescents

Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss the geographical dimension that contributes to shaping the status of the WAL in Lebanon. I report on the daily interactions of LAAs with people who surround them, such as their neighbours, their neighbourhood friends, and the people they come across in their area of residence (AOR). I provide data on how participants experience different forms of interactions depending on two main geographical spaces they reside in: the traditionally Armenian quarter of Lebanon, BH, also known as “little Armenia” (Jebejian, 2007; Kasbarian, 2017), and areas with less Armenian presence, NAAs. I also report on the attitudes and opinions of LAAs towards integration, and explore whether they advocate more integration into broader Lebanese society. I then discuss the LPs of LAAs with neighbourhood friends and people they come across in their AOR. Finally, I discuss the possible differences or gaps geographical space can create between LAAs living in BH and in NAAs. Particularly, I report on how participants perceive themselves in relation to their counterparts living in a different area than the one they live in.

Data provided in this chapter were collected through ten individual interviews and two group interviews I conducted between summer 2014 and summer 2015 as well as one hundred survey questionnaires I distributed to fifty BH participants and fifty NAAs participants during the same phase. I present the quantitative findings in the form of charts.
Armenian and non-Armenian neighbourhoods and the social ties of Lebanese Armenian adolescents

The neighbourhood encounters of Lebanese Armenian adolescents

LAAs from BH and from NAAs experience complex and multidimensional social encounters and interactions that involve members of the Armenian community as well as mainstream Lebanese society. As part of this experience, they develop an ethnic identity through which, as Phinney et al. (2001) discuss, individuals belong to an ethnic group within the broader society.

The diverse socializing patterns of LAAs with people from the Armenian community and from broader Lebanese society were reflected in participants’ accounts during the interviews and in the answers provided in the questionnaires. For instance, when I asked about the people participants mainly come across in their neighbourhoods, the responses of BH participants during the individual interviews varied, as some said they see mainly LAs and others said they come across both LAs and non-Armenians. On the other hand, NAAs participants such as Levon (NAA), Sergio (NAA), Angelique (NAA), Hrag (NAA) and Khajag (NAA) widely reported that most people they come across in their neighbourhoods are non-Armenians and that LAs in their area are very few. Hrag (NAA) for instance, said that he does not see LAs in his neighbourhood. Some even reported that they are “all Arabs” in their neighbourhood. Khajag (NAA) for example, gave a description of his neighbourhood saying,
“In my area, they are Arabs. … There are two or three Armenian families in my neighbourhood. In the neighbourhood right above us, there are two or three families too. I mean in the whole region, which is quite a big region, there is a total of about one hundred Armenian families. However, it is more an Arabic milieu”.

Similar accounts were given during GI2 where NAAs participants commented that there are almost no LAs in their neighbourhoods. For instance, Mark (NAA) commented, “In my area, they are all Arabs. There are not many Armenians”. Similarly, Jenny (NAA) said, “They are all Arabs. Most of them! … Armenians are very few”. On the other hand, BH participants commented that in their neighbourhood they come across LAs more than “Arabs”. For example, Simon (BH) commented,

“BH is known for the presence of Armenians. Everyone knows it; it’s obvious. So, I come across mainly Armenians. … Where I live, I communicate mainly with Armenians. I mean wherever I go”.

As for Narine (BH), she commented, “All Armenians! In my area, I see mostly Armenian people”. Aram (BH) made a similar comment and said, “All Armenians. I see mainly Armenian people”.

Although several participants from BH reported during the individual interviews that people they mainly come across in their neighbourhood are LAs, many reported interacting with non-Armenians in public places such as shops and supermarkets, which reflects possible
demographic changes in BH. For example, Rita (BH), Khatchig (BH) and Mike (BH) commented that they come across “Arabic” people or “Arabs” on a regular day in their AOR because many of the people there are “Arabs”. For instance, Khatchig (BH) said,

“On a regular day when I go to places such as the supermarket, bank or restaurant, the people I see most are Arabs. They are all Arabs. … Yes, even here in BH”.

Despite commenting that people in BH are “all Arabs”, later in the interview Khatchig (BH) made several statements about Armenian presence in BH. For example, when I asked him what language(s) he uses mainly on a regular day, he commented that he uses more English because in Lebanon his entourage is predominantly Lebanese and wherever he goes he sees “odor”, foreigners. However, Khatchig (BH) said that this is not the case when he is in BH. “In BH there are more Armenians”, he said.

Mike (BH) and Steve (BH) also commented on both Armenian and “Arabic” presence in BH. For example, Mike said,

“People I see mainly in my daily life are Armenians, such as my friends. However, all the people in my neighbourhood are Arabs. Only our building are Armenians and some people in the neighbourhood. There are Armenians, but they are buildings next to each other. Some floors have Armenians, and the rest are all Arabs. And, if I go to the supermarket for example, I speak
Arabic because they are Arabs. So, the people in my neighbourhood are Arabs. The neighbouring streets are Armenians”.

While it is not possible to generalize this, the few accounts above reveal that BH is no more a “little Armenia” that is home only for the Armenian community, but is rather an area with a population mixture. As Hediger and Lukic (2009) report, there are parts of BH that retain a higher concentration of Armenians, whereas other parts, such as south BH, have a much bigger population mix, and the comments above are possibly a reflection of that.

The neighbourhood encounters of Lebanese Armenian adolescents: quantitative findings

For a general understanding of the neighbourhood encounters of LAAs, I present below Figures 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3 illustrating respectively: the population distribution in the AOR of my participants, their neighbours and the people they come across mostly in their daily life. It is important to note that the figures provided below were reported by participants themselves and therefore might contain a certain level of inaccuracy.

Data in figure 5.1 below were obtained through the questionnaire item “people in your area of residence are mostly… ”. Participants were given the option to select one of the following responses, “Lebanese, Armenian, both”. As the chart reveals, 16.0% of BH participants reported that people in their AOR are mainly Lebanese, a figure that is significantly low in comparison to that provided by NAA participants, 56.0% of whom reported that people in their AOR are mainly Lebanese. On the other hand, 18.0% of BH
Participants said that people in their AOR are mostly Armenian, in comparison to only 2.0% of NAAs participants who reported the same. The remaining 66.0% of BH participants and 42.0% of NAAs participants reported that people in their AOR are both Armenian and Lebanese. What makes these figures interesting is that more participants from BH than from NAAs reported both Armenian and Lebanese presence in their area, which possibly reflects the demographic changes experienced by LAs (see Chapter 2). While main Armenian presence in BH and less Armenian presence in NAAs is revealed, the figures suggest demographic changes in BH and increasing numbers of non-Armenians there. The figures also possibly reveal that the number of LAs in NAAs is increasing, which, as discussed in Chapter 2, could be a result of the poor living conditions in BH, that lead LAs with improved economic conditions to settle outside of it (Jinishian Memorial Program, 2004). Such demographic changes might influence the social interactions of LAAs as well as their language choices, which with time might influence the status of the WAL in Lebanon and contribute to its shift.

**Figure 5.1**

1 BH n=... represents the total number of respondents from BH and NAAs n=... represents the total number of respondents from NAAs. This applies to all the figures in this chapter.
Apart from asking participants about the people they come across in their AOR, I also asked them about their neighbours. Data in figure 5.2 below were obtained through the questionnaire item “your neighbours are mostly…”. Participants were given the option to select one of the following responses, “Lebanese, Armenian, both”. As the chart reveals, 20.0% of BH participants reported that their neighbours are mostly Lebanese, a figure that is significantly lower than that provided by NAAs participants, 65.3% of whom reported that their neighbours are mostly Lebanese. On the other hand, 36.0% of BH participants said that their neighbours are mostly Armenian, in comparison to only 10.2% of NAAs participants who reported the same. The remaining 44.0% of BH participants and 24.5% of NAAs participants reported that their neighbours are both Lebanese and Armenian. What these figures possibly reveal is again an increased exposure of LAAs from both BH and NAAs to non-Armenians and to mainstream Lebanese society. Nevertheless, the degree of exposure continues to be relatively lower with BH participants. What I find interesting about these figures is that 10.2% of NAAs participants reported that their neighbours are mostly Armenian. Although this is a relatively low number, it might be a reflection of a trend I personally observed, through informal discussions as a researcher, amongst LA families who move out of BH and continue to live in close proximity to each other. It is common to find LA families, particularly affluent ones, living in different apartments of the same building in NAAs. This trend is worth looking into in future studies, as it can be an implication that the early trend of clustering together during the days of Armenian settlement in Lebanon translates today into a continued need to connect with each other as a community regardless of the increased integration into mainstream Lebanese society.
The demographic changes discussed above and the neighbourhood encounters of LAAs can have an influence on their social networks and the people they come across on a daily basis. I was particularly interested in finding out about the people they encounter generally on a regular day in their social milieu, not necessarily within their AOR, in order to find out whether residing in BH results in increased social encounters with LAAs. Accordingly data in figure 5.3 were obtained through the questionnaire item “people you come across in your daily life are mostly…” Participants were given the option to select one of the following responses, “Lebanese, Armenian, both”. As the chart reveals, 12.0% of BH participants reported that people they come across in their daily life are mostly Lebanese, a figure that is significantly low in comparison to that provided by NAAs participants, 40.0% of whom reported the same. On the other hand, 30.0% of BH participants said that people they come across in their daily life are mostly Armenian, in comparison to 14.0% of NAAs participants who reported the same. The remaining 58.0% of BH participants and 46.0% of NAAs participants reported that people they come across in their daily life are both Armenian and Lebanese.
What these figures reveal is that residential concentration possibly contributes to higher odds of Armenian encounters on a daily basis as more BH participants than NAAs participants reported coming across LAs on a daily basis. Nevertheless, residential dispersal does not seem to be eliminating Armenian encounters as a substantial number of NAAs participants continue to come across LAs on a daily basis although their number is relatively lower than those from BH who reported the same.

Figure 5.3

*The neighbourhood and general friendships of Lebanese Armenian adolescents*

The demographic changes discussed above can have an influence on the friendships of LAAs and their social networks. In this section, I discuss the role residential location plays in shaping the friendships of LAAs, particularly in their neighbourhoods.

Based on data gathered through the interviews as well as questionnaires, it is possible to report that geographical dispersal appears to play a role in increasing the speed of
integration of LAs into Lebanese society, as many LAAs who live in NAAs reported having more non-Armenian friends than LA friends. For example, when I asked in GI2 whether participants had more Lebanese friends or LA friends, all participants living in BH reported having more LA friends, whereas those living in NAAs reported having more Lebanese friends.

The individual interviews revealed the same. When Hovnan (BH) and Steve (BH) reported having more LA friends than Lebanese, Hrag (NAA) and Levon (NAA) conversely, reported having more Lebanese friends or both. For example, Hovnan (BH) said, “I have more Armenian friends. I started having Lebanese friends after I grew up and when I entered university”. Similarly, Steve (BH), commented, “The friends I hang out with are mainly Armenians. Having an Arab friend definitely happens, but I prefer Armenians of course”. In fact, Steve’s comment shows that being Lebanese or Armenian does play a role in the selection of his friends. When Steve (BH) and I were discussing his neighbourhood friendships, he commented,

“\[quote\]The neighbourhood people, I’m not that much friends with them. They’re more like neighbours and mostly Arabs. The two buildings in front are all Arabs. … I’m not very friends with the neighbourhood people because they’re mostly Lebanese\[quote\].”

Conversely, Hrag (NAA) said that he has more “Arabic” friends and Levon (NAA) commented, “My friends are more Lebanese. Actually, I can say half-half. Yes, half-half”. Some participants reported that regardless of being surrounded by “Arabs”, they mainly have
LA friends. For example, Mike (BH), who said that people in his AOR are mainly “Arabs”, commented,

“My friends are mainly Armenian. … Most of my friends in my street are Arabs, but I don’t communicate with them, because I talk to them once a week or so very little. They are more like acquaintances, we talk normal”.

Although this is only one reported instance, there can be many interpretations behind Mike’s (BH) circle of friends. One possible explanation could be that upon arrival in Lebanon, the Armenian community was a tightly held community that survived the atrocities of the genocide by maintaining strong solidarity and helping each other in all circumstances (Hovannisian, 1997; Sanjian, 2001). Armenians hardly stepped outside the borders of their quarters, fearing outsiders and a land that was alien to them (Sanjian, 2001; Sahakyan, 2015). Today, as is the case with other diasporan communities, the tradition of maintaining solidarity continues to exist within the Armenian community in Lebanon (Migliorino, 2008). Mike’s choice of LA friends, even in a neighbourhood with high “Arabic” presence, could be a result of a deeply ingrained need to maintain a collective identity passed onto him by older generations in his family and/or his parents. As Libardian (2004) comments, the Armenian diaspora, particularly in the Middle East and Lebanon is well known for its ability to resist assimilation by integrating into broader society with a very slow pace resisting any pressure to assimilate.

While the accounts and numbers above do reveal a higher inclination to have more non-Armenian friends when living outside of BH, and more LA friends when living within BH, this cannot be generalized to the wider population as a few participants reported
otherwise. For example, Rita (BH) said, “My friends are mostly Arabic. … My neighbourhood friends are also mostly Arabic”. By contrast, Khajag (NAA) reported that his friends and the people in his social life are mainly LA and that he does not interact a lot with people in his neighbourhood, as there is none from his age group. Khajag added,

“I have more Armenian friends. But I have many Arabic friends too. My circle is very big because I grew up in different types of societies. But my main society is the Armenian society. I would say 75% percent of my friends are Armenians, 15% are Arabs, and the rest are odar [foreigners]”.

Khajag (NAA) also reported spending time in BH, because he works there, and in Mezher, another area with high Armenian presence located in the Metn district of Mount Lebanon, because he goes to the club, agoump, there. He commented that the language he uses on a regular day is always Armenian and said,

"I go to the agoump [club]. I am a son of the agoump. I am an active member of the LEM [Armenian Revolutionary Federation’s Lebanese Youth Association] and there, we always speak Armenian. I speak Armenian there 100% of the time”.

Khajag’s (NAA) comment above reveals that he spends more time with LAs and speaks more Armenian, despite living in a neighbourhood with almost no Armenian presence. Khajag’s (NAA) activism in ARF’s Lebanese Youth Association might have a significant
influence on his frequent interactions with LAs as well as his perceptions of language and identity. As discussed in Chapter 2 ARF is a great advocate of WA and the institutions affiliated to it strive to preserve Armenian national identity, culture and language (Migliorino, 2008; Sahakyan, 2015; Ter-Matevosyan et al. 2017). I discuss the role of Armenian institutions more elaborately in Chapter 8.

The neighbourhood and general friendships of Lebanese Armenian adolescents: quantitative findings

For a general understanding of the social interactions of LAAs, I present below Figures 5.4 and 5.5 illustrating respectively participants’ general friendship patterns and their neighbourhood friendship patterns. Knowing more about the friendships of my participants and whether they have more LA friends or Lebanese friends is important because having more Lebanese friends may lead to using more Arabic and/or other widely spoken languages in Lebanon.

Data in figure 5.4 were obtained through the questionnaire item “your friends are mostly…”. Participants were given the option to select one of the following responses, “Lebanese, Armenian, both”. As the figures reveal, the percentages of participants who have both Armenian and Lebanese friends are relatively close as 52.0% are from BH and 56.0% are from NAAs. Only 8.0% of BH participants reported having more Lebanese friends and 40.0% reported having more Armenian friends. On the other hand, 28.0% of NAAs participants reported having more Lebanese friends and 16.0% reported having more Armenian friends. The figures show that NAAs participants are more in contact with the
Lebanese than BH participants are. This possibly indicates that the recent geographical dispersal of LAs in Lebanon might contribute to faster integration into mainstream Lebanese society, which as a result might lead to a shift from WA to other languages spoken in Lebanon.

Apart from their general friendships, I also report below the neighbourhood friendships of LAAs, because as discussed, direct interactions within one’s neighbourhood influence language choice and therefore HL status. Data in figure 5.5 were obtained through the questionnaire item “your neighbourhood friends are mostly…”. Participants were given the option to select one of the following responses, “Lebanese, Armenian, both”. As the chart reveals, 65.3% of NAAs participants reported that their neighbourhood friends are mainly Lebanese, a figure significantly higher than that provided by BH participants, of whom 14.3% reported the same. On the other hand, 12.2% of NAAs participants reported that their neighbourhood friends are mainly Armenian and 28.6% of BH participants reported the same. The remaining 57.1% from NAAs and 22.4% from BH reported that their
neighbourhood friends are both Armenian and Lebanese. While it is not possible to generalize this to the wider population, there is a possibility that the demographic changes experienced by LAAs might contribute to changing their social interactions. A significant number of NAAs participants, 65.3%, and BH participants, 57.1%, reported having both Armenian and Lebanese neighbourhood friends. Such social interactions would have probably not existed in the past few years based on the information provided by Arsenian-Ekmekji (2001), Migliorino (2008) and Sahakyan (2015) who discuss that social integration into mainstream Lebanese society was minimal in the first years of Armenian presence in Lebanon. These recent interactions, as mentioned, might lead to modifications in the LPs of LAAs.

Figure 5.5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Neighbourhood Friends</th>
<th>BH (n=49)</th>
<th>NAAs (n=49)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lebanese</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armenian</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td>65.3%</td>
<td>57.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Your neighbourhood friends are mostly...

(BH n= 49/ NAAs n=49)
Language(s) Lebanese Armenian adolescents use with neighbourhood friends

When during the individual interviews I asked participants what language(s) they speak with their neighbourhood friends, answers varied. Mainly BH participants reported that Armenian is the language, or one of the languages, they use with neighbourhood friends. By contrast, typically NAAs participants did not mention Armenian as a language spoken with neighbourhood friends. For instance, Hovnan (BH), Mike (BH) and Khatchig (BH) mentioned speaking Armenian with their neighbourhood friends and/or neighbours. Mike (BH) said, “All my neighbours are Armenian, so I speak Armenian to them”. As for Steve, he commented that in BH he speaks Arabic with non-Armenians and Armenian with LAs. Khatchig (BH), made a similar comment,

“With the neighbours, mmm there are Armenians. There are Arabs and Armenians. I speak Armenian with Armenians and Arabic with the Arabs. But mostly they are Armenians”.

When I asked Khatchig (BH) about the language he uses with his friends in general and not only his neighbourhood friends, he commented,

“With friends in general I speak English. … But, if they are Armenians, it would be a mixed conversation”.
By contrast, when I asked Levon (NAA), Angelique (NAA) and Hrag (NAA) about the language(s) they mainly use with their neighbourhood friends as well as their friends in general, they did not report speaking Armenian. Angelique (NAA) for example, reported using French. As for Levon (NAA) he commented,

“In my area, they are all Arabs and I speak Arabic to them. There is only one Armenian. I am not in close touch with them and I don’t have much neighbourhood friends. … Generally speaking I speak Arabic with my friends”.

Similar accounts were given during GI1 and GI2. When I asked about the language(s) they spoke with their neighbourhood friends, all NAAs participants commented that they speak Arabic and none reported speaking Armenian in their neighbourhoods. For example, Mark (NAA) commented during GI2 that he speaks Arabic with his neighbourhood friends “because they are all Arabs”. As for BH participants, they all said that they speak both Arabic and Armenian, regardless of the fact that they reported seeing more LA people in their AOR and having more LA friends. For example, Narine (BH) commented,

“I speak Armenian with Armenians and with Arabs or odar [foreigners] I speak Arabic mixed with English words”.
While most BH participants during the interviews reported using both Arabic and Armenian with friends in the neighbourhood, Rita (BH) is the only one who reported using only Arabic. She commented,

“In my area of residence, for example when I walk in the street or when I walk into a shop or bank, I use Arabic because so many are Arabic”.

As mentioned, using Arabic in BH, along with Armenian would have probably been very uncommon in previous years. Nevertheless, the current demographic fabric of BH, which attracts waves of immigrants, may be one of the reasons why even BH adolescents reported using Arabic as part of their daily interactions.

Language(s) Lebanese Armenian adolescents use with their neighbourhood friends: quantitative findings

For a general understanding of the discussions above, I present below an illustration of the LPs of LAAs with their neighbourhood friends. Data in figure 5.6 were obtained through the questionnaire item “tick the language you use most; with neighbourhood friends”. Participants were given the option to select from the following responses, “Armenian, Arabic, French, English, Turkish, other”.

The figures reveal that 80.0% of BH participants reported speaking mostly Armenian with their neighbourhood friends while the number of NAAs participants who reported the
same is substantially lower, 30.6%. Only 17.8% of BH participants reported speaking Arabic with their neighbourhood friends while 61.2% of NAAs participants reported the same. Although these figures are only perceptual, and they do not reveal participants’ actual LPs, they can be a possible implication that Armenian continues to be the main language of communication in BH. One possible explanation of this may be that the network of Armenian institutions, schools and social clubs might be contributing to an ongoing use of WA, particularly in BH, which due to its network of institutions may still be regarded as a linguistic enclave.

Concerning using French and English, none of the BH participants reported using French with their neighbourhood friends and only 2.2% reported using English. As for NAAs participants, only 2.0% reported using French with their neighbourhood friends and 6.1% reported using English. While Jebejian (2007) reports that LAs show reliance on the main three languages used in multilingual Lebanon; Arabic, French and English, these figures reveal that there is less shift into French and English, at least amongst this particular group of adolescents, and that the increasing reliance is on Arabic.

Figure 5.6

Tick the language you use most with your neighbourhood friends.
(BH n=45/NAAs n=49)
Apart from reporting on the language(s) LAAs use with their neighbourhood friends, I also report below on the language(s) they use with the people they come across in their AOR. Data in figure 5.7 were obtained through the questionnaire item “tick the language you use most; with people you come across in your area of residence, e.g. at the supermarket”. Participants were given the option to select from the following responses, “Armenian, Arabic, French, English, Turkish, other”.

As the percentages reveal, 46.5% of BH participants reported using Armenian with people they come across in their AOR, while the number of NAAs participants who reported the same is significantly lower; 17.4%. On the other hand, BH participants who reported using Arabic in their AOR is 44.2%, a figure that is significantly lower than the one reported by NAAs participants; 73.9%. While using Arabic seems to be more common amongst NAAs participants, the number of BH participants who reported using Arabic with people in their AOR is a substantially high number, 44.2%, given the fact that BH was or somehow continues to be a linguistic enclave. This, as mentioned, might bring changes to the status of WA in Lebanon.

Concerning using French and English, none of the BH participants reported using French with the people they come across in their AOR and only 9.3% reported using English. As for NAAs participants, only 2.2% reported using French with the people they come across in their AOR and 6.5% reported using English. These figures emphasize the point I made earlier in terms of the increasing reliance on Arabic rather than French and English amongst this group of LAAs.
Opinions of Lebanese Armenian adolescents about buying houses from, or away from, Armenian neighbourhoods

I now move to discuss participants’ personal opinions about buying houses away from Armenian neighbourhoods and integrating with the Lebanese. As Fishman and Garcia (2010) comment, attitudes of a certain group towards integration and cultural assimilation might influence its language choice and thus lead to language shift or language maintenance. Accordingly, understanding what LAAs think of integrating into mainstream Lebanese society might give a clearer vision of the status of WA in Lebanon.

Before I begin reporting on the opinions of my participants, I would like to highlight the difference between the two concepts of “assimilation” and “integration” as these are often mistakenly interchanged. According to Caliendo and Mcllwain (2010), assimilation is the
process through which an immigrant culture and ethnic identity disappears entirely by being absorbed into the majority culture and adopting its customs, values and language.

Integration, nonetheless, does not involve loss of identity but rather is a process through which cultural differences between host societies and ethnic communities endure without being affected by social or economic ties. Integration involves “the continued vitality of immigrant identity” with a common commitment of different communities to live together, when, on the other hand, “assimilation leads to the eradication of the immigrant culture in the process of sociocultural homogenization” (Caliendo and Mcllwain 2010, 57). While, as Libardian (2004) comments, LAs in Lebanon have thus far resisted assimilation, what is evident is that they have in the past few years better integrated into Lebanese society, which may with time lead to assimilation. As Caliendo and Mcllwain (2010, 57) comment, assimilation and integration are mutually exclusive processes, nonetheless, assimilation may lead to the end of immigrant identity and spell “the end of integration”.

Going back to the interview discussions, many participants encouraged integration into Lebanese society. However, their thoughts and purpose of integration differed. For some, it was important to integrate while maintaining a strong tie to the Armenian community, whereas for others, it was more about discovering another culture. During GI1, for instance, when I asked if it is important to buy houses in areas highly populated by LAs, Eddy (NAA) said that it is not important to live in an Armenian area and suggested the alternative of joining Armenian institutions and schools to stay in touch with LAs. As for Chahe (BH), his opinion was the same so long as being far from an Armenian area is not “an excuse to stay away from Armenianness”.

During GI2, Simon (BH) also commented that residential location is not important but maintaining connections with LAs and having an Armenian social life is essential. He spoke about the importance of working for the Armenian cause, and saw integration into Lebanese
society as an important contributor to serving the Armenian cause by spreading “knowledge about Armenianness” and by introducing to the Lebanese, “what Armenians really are”. As for Narine (BH), she commented,

“It is not necessary to buy a house in an Armenian area. An Armenian area is preferable but so long as one is working for the Armenian genocide cause, and goes to an Armenian school and is in scouts or organisations, and is serving their nation, that by itself is a big pride. Like that, they wouldn’t take the road of assimilation”.

For Jacqueline (BH) both milieus are important as they serve different purposes. She commented during GI1,

“I feel that in Arabic places we can merge more with people and meet other Arabic people, because we spend every day amongst Armenians and we are seeing Armenians, we are speaking Armenian, but it is very rare that we speak Arabic, us as people of BH. So this helps us see other people and know how they think too”.

Mark (NAA) also commented during GI2 that both milieus are important as being in an Armenian milieu generates a sense of togetherness while at the same time one should “know how to live in Lebanon” and “learn the language [implying Arabic]”. On the other, Marale (NAA) commented during GI1 that LAs should live with the Lebanese because “they
live in Lebanon and wherever they go they will remain Lebanese”. Hagop (NAA) revealed a similar opinion during GI2 and said,

“I think that Armenians should live together with the Lebanese so that they discover each other’s cultures. And of course, the Armenians can benefit from the Lebanese because we are in Lebanon”.

The individual interviews too revealed similar opinions, for example, Hovnan (BH) commented that it is not necessary to live in an Armenian area and said that it is important to merge with the Lebanese because “Armenians are as Lebanese as the Lebanese people”. As for Mike (BH), he said,

“Both are important. Armenians should also spend some time with the Lebanese and with their friends as well. … It is better to buy a flat in a neighbourhood that is half/half [implying mixed]. But if I had the option to choose one, I would choose an Armenian neighbourhood”.

In an individual interview with Sergio (NAA), he commented on the importance of living with the Lebanese while maintaining Armenian connections. Sergio (NAA) commented that it is not nice “that Armenians mech mechi mdnan [literally be inside each other. In this context it means to be closely knit]” because, according to him, it is wrong not to be accepting of others. At the same time, he thought that the “positive thing about being
“Yes they should merge with the Lebanese, because if not, they would be too separate you know? They won’t be included in the larger community. And what’s the point? We all don’t have an Armenian passport. We are Lebanese, so let’s include ourselves in the society, you know? Sometimes when we are in places such as a town or a village, we are not considered as Lebanese. They say how come we are not in BH? As if we don’t belong here”.

Being stereotyped as a community that restricts itself to a certain territorial space and maintains internal ties with little contact with the Lebanese is a phenomenon that LAs still experience (Arsenian-Ekmekji; 2001). Sergio’s (NAA) words, “mech mechi mdnan [closely knit]”, reported above, have a negative connotation and are a reflection of a stereotype, which sometimes LAs are characterized with. While these are only a few reported instances and cannot be generalized to the wider population, such accusations are generally known to have an influence on new LA generations, particularly those who live in NAAs, as their daily contact with the Lebanese makes it necessary for them to “blend into” Lebanese society rather than be regarded as outsiders.

When typically participants encourage the idea of integrating with the Lebanese while maintaining their communal ties, others, such as Steve (BH) Khatig (BH) and Levon (NAA), spoke about the importance of residential concentration as a way to avoid assimilation and maintain the WAL because according to them, living in NAAs contributes to speaking less WA. For example, in an interview with Khatig (BH), he commented,
“Armenian should live amongst Armenians because if they start to merge or be connected with the Lebanese, I mean with odar [foreigners], or people who speak another language, they will start to go far from these areas and as a result they will weaken and assimilate. And if we assimilate, we lose our culture and our language which are the main things that define our Armenianness. … There are many people who are Armenians but their Armenian language is very week as a result of their society and area they live in, because it’s full of Arabs. They have Arabic neighbours and friends, so that’s why”.

Even Levon (NAA), despite living in a NAA, commented,

“No, they [implying Armenians] shouldn’t merge with the Lebanese but at the same time they shouldn’t be hostile towards them. However, I wouldn’t want to live there in BH, because housing is poor. For example, if they would create projects of big buildings, yes I would prefer that they would all be together and next to each other”.

On the other hand, several participants such as Rita (BH), Hrag (NAA) and Jenny (NAA) were either indifferent or not very keen on maintaining Armenian connections. For example, Jenny (NAA) said, “For me both are the same. I mean it doesn’t make a difference to me”. As for Hrag (NAA), he commented,
“Whatever area Armenians live in makes no difference. Whether in an Armenian concentrated area or not, makes no difference. Let them live wherever they want to live. It’s not important”.

While it is not possible to generalize the discussions above to the wider population, it seems that at least amongst this particular group of participants the notion of Armenian solidarity is still ongoing as participants typically support maintaining Armenian communal ties. Very few thought, “it is not important”. What is also apparent, on the other hand, is that there is emphasis on the importance of integrating into Lebanese society, which is a relatively nonconventional Armenian trend. Being open to integrating into Lebanese society and buying houses in NAAs might gradually change the LPs of LAAs and therefore influence the status of WA in Lebanon.

Opinions of Lebanese Armenian adolescents about buying houses from, or away from, Armenian neighbourhoods: quantitative findings

For a general understanding of the opinions of LAAs about the importance of buying houses from Armenian areas, I present below Figure 5.8, which illustrates participants’ opinions concerning this subject matter. Data were obtained through the questionnaire item “how important do you think it is that Armenians live in areas highly populated by Armenians?” Participants were given the option to select one of the following responses, “extremely unimportant, not important, neither important/nor unimportant, important, extremely important”.

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As the percentages reveal, 4.0% of BH participants said that it is extremely unimportant for Armenians to live in areas highly populated by Armenians and 4.0% said it is not important. As for NAAs participants, 6.1% said that it is extremely unimportant to live in areas highly populated by Armenians and 6.1% said that it is not important to live in areas highly populated by Armenians. These figures do not reveal a significant difference in the perceptions of the two groups concerning “the lack of importance” of living in areas highly populated by Armenians. However, what these figures possibly reveal is that a minor portion holds opposing views about LAs clustering together.

In terms of neutral views, 10.0% of BH participants said that it is neither important nor unimportant to live in areas highly populated by Armenians, whereas the number of NAAs participants who reported the same was relatively higher; 32.7%. On the other hand, 60.0% of BH participants said that it is important to live in areas highly populated by Armenians and 22.0% said that it is extremely important, whereas 40.8% of NAAs participants said that it is important to live in areas highly populated by Armenians and 14.3% said it is extremely important.

The percentages above reveal that a substantial number of BH participants are in favour of living in close proximity to each other, which possibly is a natural way of relating to their personal experience. What is telling however is that even a substantial number of participants who live in NAAs have the same opinion, although they are relatively less than those from BH. While the source of such opinions is not clear, one explanation could be that institutions, social clubs, schools and political parties who propagate prevailing nationalistic ideologies that support Armenian solidarity, manage to expand their views to members of the community, even when those are geographically dispersed.
Apart from reporting on the opinion of LAAs about buying houses from Armenian areas, I also report in Figure 5.9 below on their opinions about buying houses in areas mixed with non-Armenians. Data were obtained through the questionnaire item “how important do you think it is that Armenians live in areas mixed with Lebanese people?”. Participants were given the option to select one of the following responses, “extremely unimportant, not important, neither important/nor unimportant, important, extremely important”

As the percentages reveal, none of the BH participants said that it is extremely unimportant for Armenians to live in areas mixed with Lebanese people and 26.5% said it is not important. As for NAAs participants, 2.0% said that it is extremely unimportant to live in areas mixed with Lebanese people and 6.0% said that it is not important. This a relative difference in the perceptions of the two groups of participants with regards to the lack of importance of living in areas mixed with Lebanese people, with BH participants being relatively less in favour of integrating into larger Lebanese society.
In terms of neutral views, 36.7% of BH participants said that it is neither important nor unimportant to live in areas mixed with Lebanese people and the number of NAAs participants who reported the same was relatively close; 32.0%. 34.7% of BH Participants said that it is important to live in areas mixed with Lebanese people and 2.0% said that it is extremely important, whereas 54.0% of NAAs participants said that it is important to live in areas mixed with Lebanese people and 6.0% said it is extremely important. As the figures reveal, the percentage of NAAs participants who are in favour of living in close proximity to “Lebanese people”, i.e. non-Armenians, is substantially higher than the number of BH participants who reported the same.

While it is not possible to generalize this to the wider population, data in this section can be telling about how a substantial number of LAAs from BH, although relatively less than NAAs participants, are in favour of living in close proximity to the Lebanese. This possibly reflects the increased openness towards integration into mainstream Lebanese society, a topic several scholars such as Tchilingirian (1999), Sanjian (2001) and Migliorino (2008) have already touched upon.

Figure 5.9

How important do you think it is that Armenians live in areas mixed with Lebanese people? (BH n=49/ NAAs n=50)

- 36.7% of BH participants and 2.0% of NAAs participants found it not important.
- 54.0% of NAAs thought it is important to live in areas mixed with Lebanese people and 6.0% thought it is extremely important.
- The preferences of BH participants were more varied, with 32.0% saying it is important and 2.0% finding it extremely important.

[Bar chart showing the distribution of responses for BH and NAAs participants]
Conclusion

The discussions in this chapter reveal that the demographic situation of the Armenian community in Lebanon is possibly undergoing a process of modification both in BH and in NAAs. On the one hand, LAs in recent years have been resettling outside of BH in search for better living conditions. On the other hand, although BH continues to be the heart of Armenian identity in Lebanon, the changes in the fabric of BH with the increasing waves of non-Armenian immigration into it are reflected in the accounts of my participants. This possibly means that the social interactions of LAAs with non-Armenians have in the past few years increased in both BH and NAAs.

Although data in this chapter reveal that Armenian ties continue to be relatively stronger in BH, it seems that there is a non-Armenian “invasion” of the social interactions of LAAs, irrespective of their AOR, as participants from both BH and NAAs reported interacting with both LAs and non-Armenians in their neighbourhoods as well as daily lives. Nevertheless, social interactions with non-Armenians seem to be more salient amongst NAAs participants. The reported neighbourhood friendships reveal that NAAs participants are more likely to develop friendships with non-Armenians. BH participants also develop non-Armenian friendships, nonetheless, to a lesser degree than those from NAAs.

LPs seem to be influenced by residential location as the discussions and the quantitative findings in this chapter reveal that among this particular group of LAAs, WA use is more salient in BH than in NAAs. Concerning opinions about geographical and social integration, several participants from both BH and NAAs have revealed a certain degree of openness to the idea of integration with the Lebanese, a concept that in the past was unacceptable within the Armenian community (Hovannisian, 1974).
The following chapters will give a clearer understanding of how the LPs of LAAs may be influenced by the recent demographic situation they have been exposed to.
Chapter 6

The impact of residential location on Lebanese Armenian adolescents’ identity perceptions

Introduction

In this chapter, I look into the possible influence of residential location on identity negotiations among LAAs. I examine the various components of Armenian identity as experienced and reported by participants of this study. I report on how LAAs perceive Armenianness and what being an Armenian means to them. I also discuss their sense of pride or neutrality towards being Armenian and/or Lebanese. I report on their diverse opinions about assimilating into mainstream Lebanese society, their feelings towards the WAL and attitudes towards preserving it. I also explore their perceptions of the general Armenian image and the image they have of the majority Lebanese society. Finally, I discuss their relationships with their non-Armenian peers, their perceptions of group identity as LAs and the way they directly or indirectly set or break boundaries with non-Armenian groups.

I base the analysis in this chapter on data I collected through ten individual interviews and two group interviews conducted between summer 2014 and summer 2015, and I back the discussions up with figures derived from one hundred survey questionnaires I distributed during the same phase to fifty BH participants and fifty NAAs participants. I present the quantitative findings in the form of charts.
Lebanese Armenian adolescents and identity negotiations

What does being an Armenian mean to a Lebanese Armenian adolescent? Is speaking Armenian an essential element of being an Armenian?

“Hay es?”, “Are you an Armenian?”. “Ayo”, “yes”. This is typically how when LAs meet introduce themselves to one another. It is also how American Armenians greet each other for the first time according to Bakalian (1993), as if the answer “ayo”, “yes”, is the green light that allows them to start or continue their conversation in Armenian, or briefly exchange a few words in Armenian and lapse back into speaking English. This possibly is how many Armenians across the diaspora introduce themselves to each other and reveal a sense of connection to one another. However, when an individual gives the answer “ayo”, “yes”, to the question “are you an Armenian?”, it is not exactly clear whether their confirmation is based on a conscious decision to preserve and practice their Armenian heritage, or on the fact that they are born to an Armenian family with Armenian bloodline. In this section I discuss how “being an Armenian” means different things to different LAAs.

As the question “what is an Armenian?” is a controversial one and it has no single answer, the answers provided by participants varied widely. Every participant revealed a different point of view with their response; however, for some, it was a challenging question to answer. For example, during the individual interview with Hovnan (BH), “I don’t know”, he said, after a short pause. Hrag (NAA) also displayed some confusion, “The most important feature of being an Armenian?” he asked himself, “Mmm, maybe speaking Armenian. I don’t know. It’s a bit difficult to answer”.

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While, Hrag (NAA) found difficulty in defining what being an Armenian means, he mentioned language as a possible element that shapes the definition of Armenianness. Several other participants also suggested that the WAL is an essential element that defines Armenian identity. For example, Steve (BH) commented, “the most important aspect of being an Armenian is speaking Armenian”.

During GI1, language was also referred to as an important element of being an Armenian. “It’s the language and being a Christian”, said Marale (NAA). As for Nareg (NAA), he commented,

“For me the most important thing about being Armenian is to speak Armenian and not be ashamed of being an Armenian”.

On first thought, one might categorize the adolescents above as expressing traditional notions of Armenian identity rather than symbolic, as their comments reveal the essentiality of the WAL to being an Armenian. As Bakalian (1993) comments, for traditional Armenians, language is the depository of culture without which it is not possible for Armenians to maintain a separate cultural identity and survive assimilation. While Bakalian (1993) does not specify whether it is the written form of the language, or the spoken form, or both, that are perceived as key to maintaining Armenian identity, data in this study suggest that the written form of WA amongst my participants is more prone to modifications than the spoken form. For instance, many NAA participants such as Jenny (NAA), Hagop (NAA), Marale (NAA), Eddy (NAA) and Nareg (NAA), who commented that the WAL is one of the most important aspects of being an Armenian, reported that they cannot read and write it. They can only speak WA, which they learned from their families and not at school.
Nevertheless, several participants commented that, at least speaking WA without reading and writing is a requirement to “be an Armenian”. For example, Eddy (NAA), who does not read and write WA, commented during GI1,

“If someone is an Armenian because they have an Armenian family name and they don’t speak Armenian, I don’t consider them Armenian. … If they don’t know how to read and write, at least speaking Armenian is better than nothing”.

Some participants revealed a moral obligation to teach the WAL to those who do not speak it. For example, Jack (BH) commented,

“My opinion is that for someone to be a true Armenian they have to speak the language yes. But if they don’t, I think it’s our duty to teach them Armenian”.

Jack (BH) is not the only participant who used the expression “true Armenian” during the interviews. LAs commonly use this expression as a way to express devotion to being an Armenian. Schaghaldian (1979) and Panossian (2002) explain that this is a Tashnag ideology whereby Armenians who are conscious of their culture and history are expected to be well versed in Armenian in order to be considered “true Armenians”. The use of the term “true Armenian” also suggests the existence of “a community of blood” and a “primordial race” which must remain “true” to its roots (Panossian 2002, 135). Such ideologies are often reluctant towards cultural hybridity and refuse to be influenced by “other” races and values.
Nevertheless, the use of the expression “true Armenian” by Jack (BH) and several other participants does not necessarily reflect rejection of the “other”. It might simply be an expression of how strongly one identifies themselves with Armenian culture and heritage.

Going back to the discussions in GII, following Jack’s (BH) comment, Patrick (BH) agreed and continued,

“To be an Armenian, a person should speak Armenian, because if we look at the definition of culture, it includes language, and that has a big influence. But we already know that throughout the years there have been some Islamised Armenians who speak Arabic. But they are Armenians. So should we not consider them Armenians? Only because they don’t speak Armenian? In this case I agree with what has been said that those people never had the opportunity to learn Armenian, and it is our duty to teach them Armenian so long as they think about Armenians and about Armenian matters”.

Patrick’s (BH) comment above somehow reveals a traditional identification with Armenianness as he believes that one should speak Armenian to be an Armenian. Nevertheless, he does not regard Islamised Armenians and those who do not speak Armenian as non-Armenians so long as they “think about Armenian matters”. While Agadjanian (2014, 2) comments that Islamised Armenians are very unlikely to be regarded as “bearers of the Armenian identity” and that it is not common at all to combine being an Armenian to having a non-Christian religion, Patrick’s (BH) accepts Islamised Armenians to “be Armenians” due to Armenian blood connection. Patrick (BH) also reported the importance and the “duty” of
teaching those Armenians the WAL, which in line with Bakalian’s discussions on
Armenianness suggests a rather traditional Armenian identification.

Several other participants such as Hovnan (BH) and Steve (BH) also expressed that
“it’s a must” “bedke” to speak Armenian. Steve (BH) commented during the individual
interview,

“Yes, if you’re an Armenian you must speak Armenian because eventually,
you can say you’re an Armenian but if you don’t know how to speak
Armenian, it is non-sense. … If one doesn’t speak Armenian they are
Armenian, but not as much as someone who can speak it. They would be
Armenian but just by label”.

The essentiality of the WAL as an element of the Armenian identity was also
emphasized during GI2. Almost all participants agreed that to be an Armenian one must
speak Armenian. For example, Jenny (NAA) and Hagop (NAA) said that language is the
most important aspect of being an Armenian, and Hagop (NAA) added that Armenian history
is important too. As for Simon (BH), he commented,

“If someone is an Armenian of course they should know the Armenian
language and Armenian history. If not, they are not Armenian”.

Narine (BH) and Aram (BH) mentioned the same and discussed other elements that
define being an Armenian. For example, Narine (BH) spoke about the importance of being
part of Armenian organizations as a way to maintain Armenian identity. As for Aram (BH), he commented,

“"The most important aspect of being an Armenian is working for and getting involved into Armenian life and preserving the language, history as well as religion. … There are people who say that without guns [implying by force or war] there is no salvation to Armenians. For me, without the Armenian language and culture there is no Armenian salvation. Our language is our identity”.

Aram’s (BH) comment above reflects a Tashnag (ARF) political ideology, which sees Armenian language preservation as an essential element of Armenian “salvation”. Aram (BH) used the sentence “without guns there is no salvation”, which in fact is a well-known ARF slogan constantly repeated in a revolutionary song that is played in public and social events; “Hamozvadzenk vor miayn zenkov ga hayots prgoutioum”, which means, “we are convinced that Armenian salvation lies only in weapon”.

While Mark (NAA) and Jenny (NAA) also expressed that WA should be preserved, they did not seem to be influenced by political ideologies. For example, Mark (NAA) said,

“"When you need to preserve something, you have culture. Language is culture. Without it, culture is nothing”.

As for Hagop (NAA), he had a different input,
“It’s important of course to speak Armenian, but I don’t take it that much to an extreme like them [implying the other participants in the group]”.

Hagop’s (NAA) comment brings us back to the notion of symbolic Armenian discussed by Bakalian (1993) as he acknowledges the importance of Armenian but without taking it “to an extreme”. As Bakalian (1993, 253) comments, there are American Armenians who do not deny the importance of maintaining the Armenian language but regard those who want to maintain it “at all costs” as operating in a bubble and living in oblivion. Armenians with a rather symbolic identification with Armenian believe that under ideal conditions it is desirable to retain Armenian language use, but not at the expense of achieving integration into the host society (Bakalian, 1993). In line with this, Hagop (NAA) seems to reveal a rather symbolic identification with Armenian. Several other participants also acknowledged the importance of Armenian, yet they reported that there are other important aspects of “being an Armenian” which could possibly replace speaking Armenian. For example, during GI1, Chahe (BH) commented,

“I think in this case the mentality is important. For example, if you speak Armenian and the Armenian nation doesn’t mean anything to you; that too is not an Armenian for me. But if you don’t speak Armenian, but you think about your mother country, you think about your people, and you try to learn the language because you probably never had the chance to learn it, or you don’t know it, and you try your best to be beneficial to your motherland, that’s
what being an Armenian means to me. But maintaining our Armenian culture is a plus”.

Chahe’s (BH) comment places emphasis on “mentality” over “language”. This is similar to how Bakalian (1993) and Payaslian (2010) describe symbolic Armenians as individuals who continue to show communal presence within the Armenian community and achieve impressive recognition in their fields without denying their original Armenian identity. Symbolic Armenians according to Bakalian (1993) and Payaslian (2010) serve the Armenian community by founding a multitude of institutions and organization that serve the Armenian diaspora, donate to Armenian causes in the diaspora and most importantly maintain their loyalty and love to their nation.

Discussions in this study reveal that defining my participants as traditional or symbolic Armenians is not a straightforward task, as many are in the process of negotiating identities and reveal different aspects of Armenianness, including the traditional and symbolic. To give an example, Khajag (NAA), mentioned that he regards LAs who do not speak WA as Armenians provided that they “feel Armenian”, participate in Armenian events, have Armenian pride in them, and participate “in all the work against Turkey”. “If they have that, I would regard them as an Armenian”, said Khajag (NAA). While these elements can be interpreted as symbolic Armenianness, many of the thoughts Khajag (NAA) expressed, including working “against Turkey” are rather traditional. For example, in a discussion on the status of the WAL in Lebanon, Khajag (NAA) spoke about the idea of being “Trkanman [Turk-like]” and repeated the words of the widely admired national hero Karekin Njdeh, who was a key military leader of the First Republic of Armenia (Harutyunian, 2009). Khajag (NAA) commented,
“To a certain extent, in Lebanon it [the WAL] is declining because Armenians tend to be *tsoulamol* [*tsoulamol* means having an inclination for assimilation]. I mean throughout centuries Armenians have been *odaramol* and *tsoulamol* [*odaramol* means having extreme passion for foreign culture and people]. The Armenian likes to assimilate and likes to become an *odor* [foreigner]. There are Armenians for example who are shy to call themselves Armenians. Such Armenians exist and they are *Trkanman* [Turk-like]. As Karekin Njdeh says, “our problem is not that in the world there are Turks, but that there are *Trkanman* [Turk-like] Armenians”, because those Armenians live amongst us”.

Khajag’s (NAA) comment above reveals the influence of Tashnag (ARF) ideologies on his views on assimilation. He is an active member of ARF’s Zavarian Student Association (ZOM), which possibly explains the use of the word “*Trkanman*”, Turk-like, which reflects the party’s views towards anyone perceived as non-patriotic.

Going back to the discussion on how LAAs define “being an Armenian”, Hovnan (BH) also emphasized the importance of feeling Armenian over speaking Armenian,

“One can be an Armenian if they don’t speak Armenian. I have seen many people who don’t know Armenian but they are Armenians with their hearts and souls”.

As for Levon (NAA), he said,
“One doesn’t have to speak Armenian, but it is better that they speak it or understand it, so that they feel they are an Armenian. One is Armenian even if they don’t speak the language but they should be closer to the Armenians, I don’t know…”.

Hrag (NAA) commented,

“…Yes, they should speak Armenian. An Armenian is an Armenian, why wouldn’t they speak Armenian?”.

What makes Hrag’s (NAA) comment above interesting is the fact that he reported feeling nothing about being an Armenian when I asked him if he felt proud about being an Armenian, and yet, he thought that LAAs “should speak Armenian”. While this is only one reported instance and cannot be generalized to the wider population, it can be telling data about how complex feelings of identification can be. It can also imply that cultural preservation could still be deeply ingrained in the psyche of LAAs and tied to their identity, even when there is a shift in the way they feel about their Armenianess. Rita (BH) revealed a similar opinion; however, she said it with indifference, which was reflected particularly in her narrow pitched voice and sound as well as her short answer,

“I don’t have a problem. Ok, one should know their language, but there is no need to focus that much on it and say, “I am Armenian, I am Armenian!””
Following Rita’s comment, I probed deeper into her opinion by asking follow up questions, which led to the following comments,

“When I see an Armenian, I would guess from their family name if they are an Armenian or not. But when they don’t speak the language, I’d say no they are not an Armenian of course. … They should at least be able to write their names. That’s all. As for speaking, knowing “Hi, how are you” is enough”

Rita’s comment above is a reflection of how complex feelings of identification and identity negotiations can be particularly throughout adolescence as Phinney et al., (2001) discuss. She revealed multiple opinions as she started by commenting that speaking Armenian is preferable but said that it is not necessary “to focus on it that much”, then she continued saying that if one does not speak Armenian “they are not an Armenian of course” and she finished by commenting that saying “Hi, how are you” is enough.

Is speaking Armenian an essential element of being an Armenian? Quantitative findings

For a general understanding of the discussions above concerning the importance of speaking Armenian to be an Armenian, I present below Figure 6.1 illustrating the opinions of LAAs about the importance of speaking Armenian. Data were obtained through the questionnaire item, “in your opinion, how important is it to speak Armenian?”. Participants
were given the option to select one of the following responses, “extremely unimportant, not important, neither important/nor unimportant, important, extremely important”.

While the shortcoming of this question is that it does not directly ask participants whether or not speaking Armenian is an essential element of “being an Armenian”, it nonetheless gives a general idea about what they think at least in terms of the importance of speaking WA. As the figures reveal, 2.0% of BH participants and 2.0% NAAs participants think that it is extremely unimportant to speak Armenian. 4.0% of BH participants think that it is not important to speak Armenian while none of the NAAs participants thinks that it is not important to speak Armenian. 8.0% of BH participants and 4.0% of NAAs participants said that it is neither important nor unimportant to speak Armenian. On the other hand, 18.0% of BH participants said that it is important to speak Armenian and 68.0% said it is extremely important. As for NAAs participants, 34.0% said that it is important to speak Armenian and 60.0% said it is extremely important to speak Armenian. The figures reveal that the total percentage of participants who think that it is important or extremely important to speak Armenian is notably high irrespective of their AOR, with 86.0% being from NAAs and 94.0% from BH.

Although we cannot generalize these findings to the wider population as they require further evidence, at least among these participants a good portion expressed views that reflect opinions that are in favour of speaking WA. Such opinions might be a reflection of an ongoing resistance against language shift, possibly instilled as ideologies in the minds of LAAs by the network of institutions that continue to put efforts into maintaining WA language and culture (Ter-Matevosyan, et al., 2017).

The findings in this section are commonly observed HL feelings and opinions amongst other ethnic groups. For instance, in a study on British-born second generation
Asians, which explores how language is understood and defined in relation to identity, Jaspal and Coyle (2010) discuss that their Asian participants generally expressed their desire to maintain their self-definition as Asian primarily through maintaining their HL. Joseph (2004) also discusses that language is a fundamentally cognitive structure that reflects identities and ideologies of language users. He argues that “identity is at root a matter of language” (ibid, 12) and suggests that the construction of identities lies at the heart of language.

As the interview discussions and the small numbers in Figure 6.1 reveal, some LAAs do not consider speaking Armenian an essential element of being an Armenian. Such views again reflect Bakalian’s notion of moving from traditional to symbolic Armenianness whereby Armenians have the opportunity to articulate their Armenianness by feeling or practicing cultural and social activities that do not necessarily require knowledge of Armenian.
Who am I? Am I Armenian, Lebanese, or both?

Following the discussions above on how LAAs define Armenianness, I discuss in this section how they identify and represent themselves. Vaux (2004) uses the term *solipsic identity* to define how individuals feel themselves to be and how they represent themselves. In the midst of the cultural diversity experienced by LAAs, during the interviews some participants showed a stronger inclination towards their Armenian identity, whereas others expressed having a sense of belonging towards both their Armenian and Lebanese experiences. For instance, Hovnan (BH) commented that he identifies himself as an

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2 BH n=... represents the total number of respondents from BH and NAAs n=... represents the total number of respondents from NAAs. This applies to all the figures in this chapter.
Armenian first and then Lebanese and said, “My sense of belonging is more towards my Armenian side”.

Similarly, during GI2 discussions all BH participants, Simon (BH), Narine (BH) and Aram (BH), expressed that they feel more Armenian than Lebanese. In fact, Narine (BH) said that she feels “only Armenian”. Simon (BH) commented, “About my sense of belonging, of course it’s Armenian! Armenian!”. As for Aram (BH), he also said, “Armenian! Amote! [it’s shameful]”. Amote is an Armenian expression that is very commonly used in several contexts. In a non-Academic article on the website of HETQ investigative journalists, Garbis (2013) discusses that Amote can be used as an automated response to anything that is regarded as peculiar or even humorous. In this context for example, when Aram (BH) said Amote, it was a way for him to say “of course” or “what kind of a question is that?”, as if his answer was a given. Aram (BH) also said,

“I am Armenian. If an Armenian lives in Turkey are they a Turk there? They can’t be Turkish Armenian! It doesn’t work”.

Aram’s (BH) comment above reveals the assumption that the two identities per se, Armenian and Turkish, can never come together; as if being Turkish is something unacceptable. This reflects the discussions of Tomasyan, founder of Armenian Aras Publishing, who spoke in an interview published in Repair (2015), an Armeno-Turkish platform, about the Armenians of Turkey and the difficulty of accepting the adoption of Turkish culture and the dominant religion in Turkey, Islam. Armenians of Turkey who have survived the massacres and deportations of 1915, as Altinay and Turkyilmaz (2011) and Tchilingirian (2016) report, have a silent identity due to the pressure imposed on them by the
Turkish government. Following the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1923, nationalist silencing of Islamised Armenians, particularly survivor women who married into Muslim families and children adopted at young age, became vital in Turkey as a way to conceal the massacres and the dark pages of history (Altinay & Turkyilmaz, 2011). The Turkish government today does not help protect, develop and make visible the Armenian identity, which leaves the Armenians of Turkey with no support. Since the only two places they have recourse to are the Armenian Church and school, which are under the supervision of the Turkish government, Armenians feel alone and with no option but to become introverted (Repair, 2015). There is not much possibility for the two cultures to merge. Those Islamised Armenians are until today unaccepted by Armenians as the Christian religion plays a major role in defining the national identity of Armenians (ibid).

While the experience of the Armenians of Turkey does not directly relate to the experience of the Armenian community in Lebanon, which receives full support from the Lebanese government to practice its religion and culture, the struggle of Armenians who adopted Islam in being accepted as Armenians, possibly reflects a rejection of new dimensions of Armenianness and a continued identification with traditional Armenianness. Such traditional and restrictive attributes were revealed in the accounts of several participants of this study.

Going back to the discussions on the ethnic sense of belonging of LAAs, as well as the way they identify and represent themselves, GII discussions also revealed that some participants were more inclined to identifying themselves as Armenians rather than Lebanese. For example, Jack (BH) commented,
“I feel Armenian. Generally, whatever I read in books, made me feel like I want to live in Armenia, that’s why I prefer to be an Armenian and live in Armenia more”.

While this is only one reported instance and it cannot be generalized to the wider population, the feeling of Armenianess reported by Jack (BH) reveals the importance of transmitting Armenian feelings not only through storytelling, as Azarian-Ceccato (2010) comments, but also through books. Khajag (NAA) also mentioned the importance of reading history books, particularly revolutionary books, as a way to know one’s history and nation. Khajag (NAA) said,

“When I want to read Heghaphokhagan [revolutionary] books, I don’t buy the English or American books. I buy Armenian books. I am the revolutionary type of person and I choose revolutionary books that are better expressed in Armenian”.

Khajag’s (NAA) comment above again reflects his affiliation to the ARF party as he reported reading revolutionary books. His opinion can be telling data about the importance of books in shaping or destroying the Armenian identity. Novelist Kundera quoted by Azarian-Ceccato (2010) explains the importance of books in shaping the minds of an ethnic community. Kundera explains how a whole race and its culture can be liquidated by destroying their history books, and how a new one can be shaped by writing new books (cited in Azarian-Ceccato, 2010). It would therefore be interesting to look into this subject further in future studies.
During GI1, Jack’s (BH) comment about feeling Armenian was immediately followed with a confirmation from Patrick (BH) and Chahe (BH) who expressed a stronger sense of belonging to their Armenian identity. “Me too” they both said, with Chahe (BH) being more specific by saying “I feel only Armenian”. On the other hand, several participants showed a sense of loyalty to both their Lebanese and Armenian sides and revealed multiple layers of self-identification, which allows them, embrace both cultures rather than just one. Jacqueline (BH) for example, reported having an equal sense of belonging to both Lebanon and Armenia. As for Eddy (NAA) he reported representing himself differently in Lebanon and abroad, and explained that in Lebanon he represents himself as Lebanese Armenian but when he goes abroad he does not say that he is “proudly Lebanese”, because he believes that “Lebanese people are not great”. Nevertheless, Eddy (NAA) acknowledged that he feels “Lebanese Armenian” as he commented,

“I feel Lebanese Armenian. Don’t get me wrong. I love Armenian and everything, but I think we should show some respect to Lebanon, because we are born here and from back then they welcomed us. Now it’s been generations we live here so we should respect the fact that we are Lebanese and Armenian at the same time”

Following Eddy’s (NAA) comment, Marale (NAA) agreed and commented, “I say the same”. Like Eddy (NAA) and Marale (NAA) many LAs as well as scholars in Armenian studies have in recent years become more open to adopting hybrid identities rather than restricting themselves to Armenian culture as a bounded entity (Tololyan, 2000; Kouloujian 2012, 2014). While, as Tololyan (2000) points out, the history of the Armenian diaspora has
so often been a politicized struggle of endurance and persistence against forces of assimilation, in the past few years there has been an emerging notion of a less politicized Armenian identity. More Armenians adopt “double or multiple cultural competences” as well as hybrid identities, which contributes to the emergence of a new wave of scholars and cultural producers who “have gained independence from communal institutions” and traditional leadership, which often resist these new notions of Armenian identity and cling to traditional purist identities (ibid, 28). A considerable number of Armenians still believe that being something else, “other than Armenian”, or adopting new layers of identity threaten Armenian existence, particularly the WAL.

Despite the tension between traditional leadership and the increasing openness to the notion of cultural hybridity, identification as Lebanese and Armenian at the same time and having a sense of belonging to both countries recurred during most of the interviews. This commonly occurring phenomenon is not restricted to LAAs. Hall (1992) and Harris (2006) for instance, discuss the notion of cultural hybridity, which can give rise to new identities and ethnicities amongst young people, particularly in conjunction with language. Harris (2006) suggests in a study on identity and language in young British Asians in London that in a continuous flow of cultural practices that are part of everyday life, both British and Asian elements are present in the construction of identities. Harris (2006) also suggests the use of non-binary expressions such as “Brasian”, instead of British and Asian, as a way to describe hybrid identities and the linguistic interactions of his participants as well as their cultural and social practices.

Several participants during GI2 also showed more than one identity position. For instance, Mark (NAA) commented that he felt Lebanese Armenian. “Because I am in Lebanon and I was born here, Lebanese comes first”, he said. However, later when participants were discussing their sense of belonging towards Lebanon and Armenia, Mark
(NAA) reshaped his initial response and said, “I cannot say it that way. I cannot separate both. They are both the same”. “I was going to say that. I personally can’t. I can’t decide” replied Jenny (NAA). Jenny (NAA) also commented that although it is more appropriate to say that she is Lebanese of Armenian origin, she feels more Armenian.

Similar comments revealing hybrid identification and loyalty were made during the individual interviews when participants from both BH and NAAs were discussing their self-identification and representation. Simon (BH) for instance, mentioned that he represents himself as Armenian Lebanese because he holds the Lebanese passport but he commented that he feels Armenian. Simon (BH) made a distinction between holding a Lebanese nationality or identity, and feeling Armenian, which as Bakalian (1993) comments is a choice. As for Khatchig (BH), he expressed his pride to be an Armenian and discussed that Armenians should stay connected in order to maintain their Armenianess. At the same time, when I asked him whether he identifies himself as a Lebanese or Armenian, his reaction was a smile followed by the comment below,

“This matter is always recurrent amongst us Armenians because here when one is asked, Armenians always say that they are Armenian before being Lebanese. But, I think that we should say we are Lebanese Armenian because we are living here in Lebanon at the end of the day. So, I would say I’m Lebanese Armenian. So my feelings are more Lebanese Armenian”.

Steve (BH) revealed a similar self-identification and expressed feeling Lebanese and Armenian at the same time.
“I feel Lebanese of Armenian origin, because I grew up here. I have lived all my life here in Lebanon. 19 years is a lifetime for me! My roots and my past. … I consider myself of course Lebanese and of course Armenian too”.

Mike (BH), Sergio (NAA) and Angelique (NAA) also revealed hybridity in their sense of identity. For example, Sergio (NAA) commented,

“I feel I am Lebanese of Armenian origin. That’s how I feel most. And my sense of belonging is towards the two: Armenia and Lebanon. Although I have never been to Armenia, I feel it. Between Lebanon and Armenia, I cannot say where my heart belongs more because I still haven’t been to Armenia. … I do have a sense of belonging to there but of course, my sense of belonging to Lebanon is stronger since I have lived here all my life. In terms of my identity maybe I feel Armenian more”.

When Sergio (NAA) showed a sense of loyalty to both countries, he clearly distinguished between his “sense of belonging”, which he mentioned was towards Lebanon, and the way he “feels”, which as he said was maybe more Armenian. Angelique (NAA) also distinguished between her feelings and her nationality and commented,

“When I am here in Lebanon. I feel I am an Armenian. But whenever I go abroad, and because I don’t have an Armenian passport, so the right thing to say is that I’m Lebanese of Armenian origins. But in terms of feelings, I feel
Armenian. In terms of sense of belonging, I would love to say Armenia, but I’ve never been there. So it’s not fair”.

Hybridity in self-representation, as expressed by participants above, is a common phenomenon that occurs as adolescents deal with and move between multiple identities as they negotiate their sense of self. As Val and Vinogradova (2010) discuss, identity is not a static possession but rather a dynamic process of constant negotiations through which individuals associate with and/or oppose to something. Depending on the goals of interaction and the situations in which individuals and groups find themselves, their self-identification and representation may vary.

While participants above displayed hybrid identities, others revealed a purely Lebanese identity and expressed their sense of belonging to Lebanon only. For example, during GI1, when I asked Carine (NAA) about her sense of belonging, she replied twice “here, here!”; implying she has a stronger sense of belonging to Lebanon. Similarly, Eddy (NAA) said, “my feelings belong to Lebanon more”. As for Marale (NAA), she commented that she feels more Lebanese. When I asked her if she would live in Armenia, her response was,

“People think differently. Personally, I say that if I go to Armenia maybe I change my mind and say that I should live in Armenia or something like that. But so far, no. I feel more Lebanese because we are living here, we are growing here, our schools are here, and everything is here; our friends and everything”.

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During GI2, Hagop (NAA), made a similar comment and said, “I feel that I feel more Lebanese. My sense of belonging is to my Lebanese side”. As for Hrag (NAA), he said during the individual interview,

“I feel more Lebanese. My sense of belonging is more to Lebanon than Armenia. … I don’t have a sense of belonging to Armenia. Not at all. But to Lebanon, yes a lot”.

The discussions above show a complex level of variability in the way several participants identify themselves. While some prefer to be identified as Armenians, others adopt hybrid identities, which is a combination of both their heritage Armenian identity as well as their national Lebanese identity. There is also a third category, which adopts an identity that is more Lebanese or purely Lebanese, and most of the people who revealed this type of identity during the interviews were from NAAs, except for Rita (BH), who is the only participant from BH who expressed a stronger sense of belonging to Lebanon.

While these are only a few instances reported by this particular group of LAAs and while it is not possible to generalize this to the wider population, such reports can be telling data about how the adoption of a solely or predominantly Lebanese identity might be a naturally growing phenomenon amongst LAAs. As Schimmele and Wu (2015) discuss, in an ongoing intergenerational process the first generation of immigrants hold on to their identity of origin, while later generations slowly divert away from this identity and probably end up adopting and expressing an identity more closely oriented to their host country.
**Who am I? Am I Armenian, Lebanese, or both? Quantitative findings**

For a general understanding of the subject in discussion, I present below Figure 6.2, which illustrates how LAAs from BH and from NAAs identify themselves. Data were collected through the questionnaire item “how do you describe yourself?”. Participants were given the option to select one of the following responses, “Armenian, Armenian Lebanese, Lebanese Armenian, Lebanese of Armenian origin, Lebanese, other”.

The quantitative findings in this section reflect the qualitative discussions above, as they also reveal differences in the ways LAAs identify themselves irrespective of their AOR. 24.5% of BH participants reported identifying themselves as Armenian, 36.7% as Armenian Lebanese, 12.2% as Lebanese Armenian, 24.4% as Lebanese of Armenian origin, 4.1% as Lebanese and .0% as other. As for NAAs participants, 18.4% reported identifying themselves as Armenian, 28.6% as Armenian Lebanese, 30.6% as Lebanese Armenian, 20.4% as Lebanese of Armenian origin, .0% as Lebanese and 2.0% as other.

What is interesting about these numbers is that the percentage of participants who identified themselves as only Lebanese is significantly low, when on the other hand the percentage of participants who reported feeling only Armenian is comparatively higher. The majority of participants, regardless of their AOR, somehow include “Armenian” and “Lebanese” in the way they identify themselves.

Combining the qualitative discussions above to the figures reported in this section, residential location does not seem to be influencing the identification of LAAs with their Armenian identity, as typically LAAs hold on to their Armenian ethnic identity despite identifying themselves as Lebanese too. This could be an implication that Armenian
institutions play a significant role in instilling Armenian national feelings into LAAs, even when they live outside of the Armenian concentrated quarter of BH.

Figure 6.2

The national and ethnic feelings of Lebanese Armenian adolescents: from pride to neutrality

During the interview discussions, I observed that the way participants feel about their ethnic identity varies as they typically expressed feeling extremely proud about being
Armenian while others, conversely, reported feeling neutral about it. For example, Khajag (NAA) passionately expressed that he identifies with his Armenian heritage and commented,

“I feel Armenian. However, I tell people that I carry the Lebanese nationality. For example, when I am speaking to an odar [foreigner], I tell them that I am Armenian but I live in Lebanon. However, I feel more Armenian and my feeling of pride for being an Armenian is indescribable and unbelievable. As for being a Lebanese, I feel neutral”.

Khajag’s (NAA) comment, although one reported instance, reveals strong feelings of ethnic pride, which several researchers relate to language fluency. As Halsted (2014) comments, cultural and ethnic pride might lead to HL fluency and increase the chances of preserving it. A strong sense of belonging and identification with one’s cultural group often creates a desire to be accepted by it and fit into it, which can lead to stronger motivation to learn one’s HL as an effort to blend in one’s ethnic group (Lee Brown, 2009; Halsted, 2014). Often, individuals with a stronger sense of belonging towards their ethnic background are more competent in their HL than those who show a weaker sense of ethnic identity, although several studies found that HL proficiency is not necessarily related to a heightened sense of ethnic identity (Lee Brown, 2009).

Lee Brown (2009) comments that more than maintaining the HL, embracing the heritage culture plays a more important role in shaping a healthy ethnic identity. Individuals who are appreciative of their ethnic culture are more likely to develop a strong sense of ethnic identity than those who possibly maintain their HL out of obligation and without admiring their own culture (ibid). When it comes to this study’s participants, many showed
appreciation of their ethnic culture and identity. For example, during GI2, Simon (BH) commented,

“For being an Armenian of course I am very proud, and my head is up high that I am an Armenian. As for being a Lebanese, no, not that much. I mean let’s say normal or neutral”.

Simon (BH) was not the only participant who revealed a sense of neutrality towards being Lebanese. Narine (BH) made a similar comment and said, “I have already mentioned earlier that I feel Armenian, and not Armenian Lebanese, and I am very proud of that!”. As for Levon (NAA), he expressed a strong sense of pride towards his Armenian identity during his individual interview. “I show off for being an Armenian”, he expressed proudly, “but I feel normal about being Lebanese. Neutral!”.

Khatchig (BH) and Angelique (NAA) also reported that they feel neutral about being Lebanese yet “very proud” about being Armenian. Khatchig (BH) commented,

“I am not that much proud to be a Lebanese because I am more devoted to Armenian matters. So I cannot say that I am very proud to be Lebanese. I’d say I’m neutral. Being Lebanese makes no difference to me”.

Some participants even thought that being Lebanese was something to be ashamed of and they expressed feeling more proud about being Armenian. For example, during GII,
Nareg (NAA) said that he is “ashamed” to say he is Lebanese. As for Carine (NAA), she commented,

“I say I am Armenian, I don’t say I am Lebanese. Because I am more proud to be an Armenian than Lebanese; because everyone who finds out we are Lebanese thinks we are chaotic people and stuff like that. I say I am Armenian”.

Being ashamed of one’s immigrant roots is not an unusual phenomenon that diasporan communities experience. For example, Bakalian (1993) speaks about how Armenians were embarrassed about their ethnicity when they first settled in the United States, and how with time with increased education, prestigious jobs and higher incomes they started to become more open about expressing their ethnic identity. However, what makes Carine’s (NAA) and Nareg’s (NAA) comments somehow unusual is the fact that they expressed embarrassment identifying not with their ethnic origin but rather with their host society as they reported feeling proud to be Armenian but ashamed to be vocal about being Lebanese. While the source of their expressed embarrassment remains unclear and while we cannot generalize this to the wider population, at least among these participants a number of participants revealed a negative attitude, although not hostile, towards Lebanese people as well as their behaviour. For example, as mentioned, Carine (NAA) said that Lebanese people are “chaotic”, Jenny (NAA) commented during GI2 that “abroad, Lebanese people are nothing”. As for Simon (BH), he spoke about the humiliation people go through in Lebanon and added, “because you go home, there is no electricity or water”. He also mentioned religion to be a source of pride
to him, which as discussed in Chapter 3 is one of the cornerstones of conventional Armenian identity (Panossian, 2002). Simon commented,

“When you speak to an Armenian, at least they would have a common mentality. Whereas Arabs, they say things from nowhere. They piss me off sometimes a bit, [he laughs]. I am also more proud with my religion. We are real Christians. Apart from Armenians, I don’t consider anyone Christians”.

Apart from expressing pride about being Armenian, several participants also discussed the importance of staying strong and connected with Armenians by going to Armenian youth associations. For example, Khatchig (BH) commented,

“I already said that I am proud to be an Armenian, but I think that by being Armenians we have duties, such as shaghvink [literally kneading as in kneading dough, an expression that means to merge, unite and combine into a single entity] and going to the agoump [club]. I already said from the start that we are few in number, so we need to keep strong especially that we are living in Lebanon, and it is only here in BH that Armenianness is emphasized. In other areas I can’t say that Armenianness is emphasized although there are Armenians there”.

Some participants saw a direct link between ethnic pride and WAL maintenance. For example, during GI1, Jacqueline (BH) commented,
“It is very important to protect the Armenian language. I personally feel very
happy and proud that I am an Armenian, and wherever I go, I have an extra
language that I know”.

The comments above show a strong desire in preserving Armenian identity, which is a
phenomenon several scholars in the field have observed. For example, Phinney et al. (2001)
comment that ethnic identity is usually maintained when individuals have a strong desire to
retain it. Nevertheless, as Lee Brown (2009) discusses, some individuals are obligated to
take on their ethnic identity because it is what the public expects them to do. Participants in
this study did not seem to take on an identity imposed on them but rather passionately
expressed their pride and their sense of belonging to their Armenian identity. On the other
hand, some participants expressed confusion in the way they feel, depending on the setting
they find themselves in. For instance, Hagop (NAA) reported during GI2 that he sometimes
feels proud to be an Armenian and some other times he feels neutral about it. He
commented,

“For me, it depends on the people around me. I mean if I am with an Arab or
a big group of Arabs, I sometimes feel that I don’t feel very proud to be an
Armenian, or I feel neutral. When I sit with an Armenian, I feel that no! I am
proud. So, it depends”.

The varying attitudes reported by Hagop (NAA) reveal a possible struggle between
being a “proud Armenian”, yet on the other hand feeling the need to assimilate and feel
accepted by his non-Armenian peers. While this is one reported instance by one participant
and cannot be generalized to LAAs as a whole, such experiences are not uncommon among young people. Gerin-Lajoie (2011) discusses the possibility of the existence of a bilingual identity as a stable phenomenon, through which individuals consciously display their ethnic identity and sense of belonging within their families while displaying a bilingual identity outside their family setting. Lee Brown (2009) also discusses that individuals might display feelings of pride towards their ethnic identity yet at the same time be ashamed or embarrassed by it, which means that even HL speakers with an apparently strong sense of ethnic identity might struggle and experience identity conflicts.

Identity conflicts might with time lead to a gradual abandonment of one’s ethnic roots. For instance, when I asked Rita (BH) how she feels about being an Armenian, she answered with an indifferent tone that it does not mean anything to her and said,

“When it comes to me, I don’t have a problem if I’m Armenian or Arabic, “a’ade” [a’ade is a commonly used Arabic word that means normal or neutral. It can be used to express indifference]. Maybe the family name is the most important feature of being an Armenian. Maybe. Also maybe the language so that they be able to say a couple of words, but it’s not important that I am an Armenian. It doesn’t mean anything to me. … I feel “a’ade” [neutral] about being an Armenian and proud to be a Lebanese. I’m very honest”.

Some participants even revealed a sense of neutrality towards both their Lebanese and Armenian identities. For example, Hrag (NAA) expressed that he feels neutral about being Armenian and feels nothing about it. He also expressed that he feels the same about being Lebanese and that both mean “nothing” to him. A similar sentiment was reflected in Mark’s
(NAA) account during GI2 as he showed indifference about national feelings and commented, “I personally am a proud person, but not because of my origin. I don’t care about the origin. Whatever I am I would be proud”. Following Mark’s (NAA) comment, Simon (BH) was amazed and asked in disbelief, “Isn’t it a plus for you? Being an Armenian?”. “No, it’s the same thing”, replied Mark.

*The national and ethnic feelings of Lebanese Armenian adolescents: from pride to neutrality: quantitative findings*

For a general understanding of the feelings of ethnic pride of LAAs, I present below Figure 6.3, which illustrates the sense of pride of my participants towards being Armenian. Data were obtained through the questionnaire item “how do you feel about being Armenian?”. Participants were given the option to select one of the following responses, “not proud at all or ashamed, not proud, neutral (neither/proud nor ashamed), proud, extremely proud”.

The answers provided by NAAs participants and BH participants were relatively close with no notable difference. 16.3% of BH participants reported feeling neutral about being Armenian and 14.0% from NAAs reported the same. As for those who reported feeling extremely proud, 44.9% were BH participants and 52.0% were NAAs participants. The remaining 38.8% of BH participants and 34.0% of NAAs participants reported feeling proud about being Armenian. This means that the total percentage of participants who feel proud and extremely proud about being Armenian is notably high irrespective of their AOR, with 86.0% being NAAs participants and 83.3% BH participants.
Apart from asking participants how they feel about being Armenian, I also asked them how they feel about being Lebanese. I present below Figure 6.4, which illustrates the sense of pride of LAAs towards being Lebanese. Data for this section were obtained through the questionnaire item, “how do you feel about being Lebanese?”. Participants were given the option to select one of the following responses, “not proud at all or ashamed, moderately proud, neutral (neither/proud nor ashamed), significantly proud, extremely proud”.

The figures reflect the discussions in the interviews as they reveal different feelings about being Lebanese irrespective of participants’ AOR. 2.1% of BH participants said that they feel not proud at all or ashamed for being Lebanese and 4.2% NAAs participants said the same. 8.5% of BH participants said they feel moderately proud and 14.6% of NAAs participants said the same. In terms of neutral feelings, the numbers were substantially high. 51.1% of BH participants said that they feel neutral about being Lebanese and 33.3% of NAAs participants said the same. As for proud feelings, 17.0% of BH participants said they...
feel proud about being Lebanese and 35.4% of NAAs participants said the same. On the other hand, 21.3% of BH participants said that they feel extremely proud about being Lebanese and 12.5% of NAAs participants said the same.

Looking at these numbers, it is not possible to conclude that residential concentration has a direct influence on the feelings of LAAs about being Lebanese. Nevertheless, it seems that BH participants tend to feel more neutral about being Lebanese than NAAs participants. Moreover, the total percentage of NAAs participants who feel significantly proud and extremely proud about Lebanese is relatively higher, 47.9%, than the total percentage of BH participants who reported feeling the same, 38.3%. This can be an implication that NAAs participants possibly take on a more integrative identity whereby they express feelings of pride not only about being Armenian but also about being Lebanese; something worth looking into at more depth in future studies.

Figure 6.4

How do you feel about being Lebanese?
BH n=47 / NAAs n=48
Self-perceptions, community perceptions and broader society perceptions

LAs are a well-respected community in Lebanon, thought to be hardworking, industrious, educated and dedicated (Maalouf, 2006; Voss, 2007). The Armenian community is also famous for being a distinguished community maintaining internal harmony and unity that has developed and preserved its traditions and language despite its integration into Lebanese society (Migliorino, 2008). Often LAs are praised for their ability to have economically, socially and politically integrated within a very short period although Lebanon was an alien soil with a foreign language they could not understand (Voss, 2007; Sanjian, 2001). LAs are also well respected for having actively participated in the development and construction of Lebanon as well as their contribution to the economy.

While this is how Armenians are commonly perceived in Lebanon, in this section, I particularly report on how LAAs perceive themselves as a community and how they believe they are perceived by the broader Lebanese society. I also report on the perceived differences between LAs who live in BH and those who live in NAAs. Vaux (2004) uses the terms *endothetic identity* to describe the way a community views itself as a whole and feels itself to be, and *exothetic identity* to describe how outsiders regard a certain community and what they consider it to be. In line with Vaux’s definitions, I discuss the *endothetic and exothetic identities* of LAAs.

During the interviews, one of the frequently emerging concepts that described the Armenian community was the concept of nationalism. Several participants thought that LAs have a sense of national ideology and an attachment to their national identity. For example, during a discussion in GI2 about the perceptions of the Lebanese of LAs, Simon (BH) commented,
“From what I have heard before, Lebanese people say that Armenians are more attached to Armenia, their motherland, that Armenians have a lot of pride and that they protect their rights, unlike the Lebanese. Lebanese too lived under Turkish rule and were slaughtered, but they forgot about that for the sake of political benefits. But us Armenians, we are still continuing and fighting and for that reason they praise us. As for something bad, I never heard someone say a bad thing about us”.

Similarly, Narine (BH) commented,

“Lebanese people always say to us Armenians “bravo!” [Well done!], because it has almost been one hundred years and we are still defending our rights and we are putting an effort to demand compensation concerning our lands. They [implying the Lebanese] say that unlike us, they forgot their past. Moreover, they always praise our food and other things”.

Apart from seeing LAs as strongly national, several participants described them as having a sense of togetherness and unity in addition to being hardworking and intelligent. Jenny (NAA) commented,

“The Lebanese say that when there are two Armenians together, they create a new Armenia”.
Jenny’s (NAA) comment is most likely influenced by the very famous words of William Saroyan, a renowned American Armenian novelist and playwright (Hamalian, 1987), who is commonly quoted by LAs when they want to express their unity,

“Go ahead, destroy Armenia. See if you can do it. Send them into the desert without bread or water. Burn their homes and churches. Then see if they will not laugh, sing and pray again. For when two of them meet anywhere in the world, see if they will not create a New Armenia”.

Khajag (NAA) made a similar comment during his individual interview and expressed that wherever Armenians go they create a “little Armenia”. He expressed that “Arabs” think of LAs as united “wherever they go” and said, “When two Armenians meet, they forget the whole world and they naturally start speaking Armenian. Khajag (NAA) also mentioned that LAs are perceived as hardworking and intelligent and said,

“So far, having spent all my life in Lebanon, and having been in Arabic milieus, I hear they say Armenians are hardworking, intelligent and always help each other. We are united and we think far. They also have this expression that “we are warm blooded” and that our blood will always protect us”.

Khajag’s comment above is another instance that reflects his affiliation to the Tashnag party. He seems to be inspired by an ideology whereby Armenians are considered a
community of “blood” which as Panossian (2002, 135) explains, is a “Nzhdehian” racial ideology that imagines a community to be “a primordial race that must remain true to its roots” and that envisions race and nation to be as one.

Sergio (NAA) also mentioned that LAs are perceived as united, hardworking and “very intelligent” by the Lebanese and commented, “they [implying the Lebanese] praise Armenians and don’t do any nastiness”. When I asked Sergio (NAA) about any possible negative thoughts Lebanese might have about LAs, he mentioned the concept of unity again, but this time as a negative trait perceived by the Lebanese. He also mentioned the habit of speaking Armenian in the presence of the Lebanese. Sergio (NAA) commented,

“If they say anything negative, it is that we always stay together. My friends say that to me too; but a’ade [a’ade is a commonly used Arabic word that means normal or neutral. In this context, it is used to express indifference]. My best friends and so on are Lebanese; they tell me what is good and bad about Armenians. The bad thing is that we stay together and we speak our language. They say to me that Armenians stay together like a common sect. A sect is a community that stays together, and this is the only thing that angers me”.

While Sergio’s (NAA) comment above is one reported instance, it is something LAs commonly report experiencing when interacting with broader Lebanese society. This for instance, is reported in a non-academic article published in The Daily Star Lebanon newspaper written by Mayissian (2004) who talks about her own experience. Mayissian (2004) comments that LAs are often blamed for living together so close and tightly holding
each other. She denounces the fact that LAs are made fun of because of their language and the supposedly funny accent that they have when they speak Arabic (ibid).

In an interview with Steve (BH), he also mentioned that LAs are perceived as a community that speaks its own language. However, he commented that Lebanese people have no problem with that. Steve (BH) said,

“Many people say that Lebanon prospered due to Armenians because we are intelligent. Even when we go out with Lebanese people and there are Armenians with us, they [implying the Lebanese] say talk Armenian it’s okay even if they don’t understand, because they know when Armenians meet, they would speak Armenian. So they say nothing negative”.

Several other participants during GI1 also commented that LAs are hardworking and united. For example, Marale (NAA) said, “Armenians always stand together. As for Nareg (NAA), he commented,

“We are different from the Lebanese in a good way, Armenians work more, are more united, and don’t fight a lot. If an Armenian sees another Armenian who they don’t know, they would go help them only because they are Armenian. Only that is what matters to them. I think this is the main difference between the Lebanese and Armenians”.
The comments above reveal participants’ positive perceptions of the Armenian community in Lebanon. In some instances, some participants revealed a sense of Armenian superiority over other non-Armenian cultures as well as non-Armenian people, whom they referred to as “Arabs”. While it is not possible to claim that all LAAs have similar perceptions or feel superior to non-Armenians, several in this particular group thought they were better than the Lebanese on several aspects, as many used words like “unique”, “hardworking” and “intelligent”. For example, Khajag (NAA) said,

“We are unique because we are proud people, we don’t keep quiet; and if Lebanon were Armenia, I mean if it were an Armenian government, I am sure that today Lebanon would have competed with European countries. We are also unique because we are always united. Wherever we go, and if any issue arises, or if anyone hurts an Armenian, all Armenians would run and help. Arabs are not like that. Today many Christian Arabs are being slaughtered in the area, for example in Syria and Iraq, and none of the Arabs here are helping them. Arabs are more personal rather than united”.

Aram (BH) also made a similar comment during GI2, saying more than once that Arabs are “jealous” of Armenians. He commented,

“Arabs are jealous of Armenians because we are hard workers and we achieved something. They always say to us that we are intelligent people and that if there were 300,000 Armenians in Lebanon, we would have taken control of the government a long time ago.
Later in the interview, Aram (BH) commented again that Lebanese are jealous from Armenians and Mark (NAA) agreed with him and said, “Because Armenians have good money here”. Although as mentioned this sense of superiority cannot be generalized as it lacks enough evidence, a similar sense of superiority was observed by Bakalian (1993) and (Samkian, 2007) amongst Armenians of the Middle East who settled in the United States. This is likely due to the economic success LAs achieved in Lebanon. As Samkian (2007) comments, the success of Armenians in the Middle East, along with their religious difference as a Christian minority enabled them create an insular community that maintained its unique identity and generated a sense of cultural superiority over their neighbours who were mainly agricultural people (Samkian, 2007). Bakalian (1993, 24-25) also discusses that in the early twentieth century, Armenians who settled in Lebanon competed with “a relatively less modernized sectarian and ethnic group”. This allowed them achieve lucrative positions in several domains and consequently gain a reputation of “smart people” or a “nouveaux riches status”, which “boosted their self-assurance, even arrogance, and translated into a generalized sense of wellbeing” and “a sense of Armenian prestige and power” (Bakalian, 1993, 24-25). This sense of hierarchy is reflected in the words of Eddy (NAA) who apart from mentioning that Armenians “work from all their hearts” and “are always united”, also commented,

“There are Lebanese who respect us and say that we are hard workers, and there are some who in a way get annoyed with us, basically because we are better than them and they see that we are better than them in many things. They also get annoyed because of our language because they consider it disrespectful to talk our language in front of them, and stuff like that.”
Following Eddy’s comment, Chahe (BH) said that LAs preserve their original language in an odar [foreign] nation and added,

“There are lots of sects in Lebanon. Us Armenians, we don’t have many sects. Only Armenian Christians, and the rest are small in number. But when you say Lebanese, they have many sects. They are divided, and for that reason they don’t have as much patriotism as us towards their motherland”.

While, according to Chahe (BH), unity and language preservation distinguishes LAs from the Lebanese, and while he mentioned the existence of many denominations in Lebanon, Levon (NAA) took Armenian uniqueness to another level by classifying Armenians as a superior race and discussing the Aryan race, which according to Hitler’s ideology was a race superior to all humanity (Rash, 2006). Levon (NAA) commented,

“Armenians are unique in an international way. They say that after World war I when Turkey was trying to deny the Armenian genocide, Churchill himself placed the Armenian file that tells what exactly happened during the genocide at the bottom of all files. He said, opening that file means waking up a snake. That means that he knew that although us Armenians are few, we are intelligent and our intellectual mind is strong. In addition, Hitler said that he is the Aryan race. That is not true! We are! And if he found out that the real Aryan race is the superior race in the world, then we are it!”. 
Levon’s (NAA) words reveal a strong sense of Armenian supremacy. While it is not possible to generalize Levon’s comment to the wider population as it is only one reported instance, as a member of the Armenian community in Lebanon, I allow myself to report that hearing similar statements was part of my upbringing. In fact, Levon’s (NAA) words remind me of my Father’s ideology, who not only did everything he can for my siblings and I to grow as “Armenians” but also constantly spoke of Armenians as being “the best” in almost every aspect of human creativity.

Grossman who contemplated this question and discussed it in his memoir in 1962, which was then published as The Armenian Sketchbook in 2013, observed this sense of superiority in Armenians, including intellectual Armenians. Grossman (1962, 2013) wrote about how Armenians regard themselves superior in terms of creativity and in almost every filed, be it science, arts or any other field. He observed that for Armenians, being superior in those fields mattered more than their actual work (ibid). He believed that the events of the genocide and the murder of so many Armenians can be very much linked to the current excessive self-importance of Armenians (ibid). While this phenomenon lacks enough evidence, it is worth being explored further in future studies as I observed it in several participants of this study.

Apart from the wound of the genocide being a possible explanation of a perceived sense of Armenian superiority, another explanation can possibly be the social rejection the early settlers in Lebanon faced by the local people (Bakalian, 1993). This might have led to a development of a sense of superiority as a defence mechanism to compensate possible feelings of inferiority Armenians experienced. It is not clear if my participants experience such feelings of inferiority and/or superiority; however, some reported being regarded as outsiders or feeling unaccepted in mainstream Lebanese society. For example, during GI2, Jenny (NAA) spoke about how sometimes Lebanese people make fun of LAs and say, “If you
like Armenia that much, go back there”. She also mentioned being criticized for eating 
Basterma. Basterma is a spicy preserved meat introduced to the Middle Eastern Cuisine by 
the Armenian diaspora. With time a stereotype that associates Armenians to Basterma 
was created (Arsenian-Ekmekji; 2001) and some expressions concerning the smell of Basterma 
are sometimes used to mock Armenians.

During the same discussions, Mark (NAA) said,

“They [implying the Lebanese] don’t have much racism. But you know 
sometimes there are stupid people. Some say you came to our country, you 
are living here and you are nagging, stuff like that”.

Aram (BH) continued,

“Yes, and they curse and say “el baboor yalle jebkon” [the boat that brought 
you here]. They don’t know that we came walking!”.

Experiencing a certain form of discrimination was also revealed during the individual 
interviews. For example, Hrag (NAA) and Angelique (NAA) reported feeling like 
“outsiders”. Angelique (NAA) commented,
“There is that something Lebanese people do with Armenians. They make small commentaries or slip negative commentaries. They see us as different, as if we are not Lebanese and we don’t belong here. … They say we are not born here and we are not from here, that this is not our land, and that it is their land and we are occupying it. … They say, “Go back to your country”. I’ve heard some tell me in French not in Arabic, “You Armenians have monopolized BH and now us the Lebanese can’t use it because you Armenians are there””.

While as mentioned earlier, mainstream Lebanese society does not generally show signs of discrimination towards LAs (Sahakyan, 2015), the few instances reported above, although not to be generalized to all LAAs, might be telling data about possible negative identity conflicts LAAs may experience due to negative mainstream attitudes towards them; something worth exploring further in future studies.

Are we the same or we are different? Perceived identity differences shaped by residential location

In this section, I report on the perceived differences between LAAs from BH and those from NAAs. I believe the accounts of participants, although based on their perceptions rather than their actual experiences, give a clearer understanding of the impact of residential concentration and geographical dispersal on the current situation of the Armenian community in Lebanon, and therefore on the status of the WAL. As a member of the Armenian
community, I often witnessed a subtle differentiation within the community between LAs who live in relatively more affluent areas and those living in BH, as BH LAs, known as Bourj Hammoudtsi, are often less favourably perceived by other LAs in terms of economic affluence. The word Bourj Hammoudtsi is used to refer to LAs who live in BH, as the suffix –tsi when added to the name of a place or country, refers to a person who resides or comes from that place or country. This differentiation is possibly a reflection of the fact that in recent years, LAs with better economic conditions have been leaving BH and moving to areas with less Armenian presence (Hediger and Lukic, 2009; Voss, 2007). Accordingly, I discuss how participants from BH and NAAs talk about each other, and whether they observe any social, linguistic or economic differences amongst each other.

Typically, participants, whether from BH or from NAAs, thought that LAs from the “other” area are different in some aspects. For example, when I asked Levon (NAA) if he sees any differences between LAs in his AOR and those living in BH, he commented that they are “the same”, but then mentioned that LAs in BH experience more poverty. Levon also pinpointed major perceived differences between LAs from BH and NAAs. He used the word Hayasser, which stems from the words Hay, i.e. Armenian and Ser, i.e. love. Hayasser is a term commonly used to refer to Armenians who are nationalistic and who admire Armenian culture, language, people and history. According to Levon (NAA), LAs who grow up in BH have a greater appreciation of their Armenianness, unlike those who grow up in NAAs who are more indifferent towards this matter. Although Levon (NAA) did not observe any differences in the WAL, he mentioned differences in the Arabic language. Levon (NAA) continued saying,
“Their Armenian languages are the same. The difference is in their identities. People here [implying in NAAs] think of themselves as being Armenian-Lebanese or solely Lebanese. … Their Arabic languages are different. In this area, our Arabic language is stronger. There, [implying in BH] they speak a bit broken Arabic”.

Sergio (NAA) also spoke about socioeconomic and linguistic differences between LAs living in BH and those living in NAAs and said,

“Those who live in BH speak better Armenian than us. Our Arabic [referring to himself as someone from a NAA] would be a bit better than theirs. Socially speaking, you feel that their [people from BH] social class is lower than ours. I’ve had friends from there, when I go down with my father to his store in BH, I see that”.

When I asked Sergio (NAA) what he thinks about the WAL of the people who live in BH, he commented,

“Their Armenian is better than ours. For example, now I’ve been going to BH for the past two weeks, there are many things that I’ve learned [implying in the WAL] that I didn’t know before. Things that my dad doesn’t use at home. I told my dad, “I learned so many words here that I didn’t know. Why don’t you use them at home?””.
Some participants also discussed differences in social connections based on residential location. For instance, Hovnan (BH) said that LAs from NAAs might have “more Arabic friends in their neighbourhoods” and that they might have “an Arabic mentality”. Linguistically speaking, Hovnan (BH) assumed that LAs from NAAs might be “stronger” in Arabic and added,

“If they have been to an Armenian school, I don’t think their Armenian language would be different. If they go to an Arabic school, of course their Armenian would be weak”.

Hrag (NAA) also made a similar comment,

“I don’t think there is a difference between Armenians who live in BH and those who live in NAAs. In terms of their social life, yes there is a difference. I feel that those who live in BH have more Armenian friends, and all their surrounding is Armenian and they grow up amongst Armenians. Whereas Armenians who are here [implying in NAAs] do not have that. Armenians here are considered more like Lebanese”.

Rita (BH) and Hrag (NAA) also commented on the linguistic differences between LAs from BH and LAs from NAAs. Rita (BH) said, LAs from NAAs speak “makour [literally clean] Arabic”. As for Hrag (NAA), he commented,
“There is no difference in the Armenian language of the Armenians who live in BH and those who live in NAAs, but their Arabic is different. I feel that the Arabic of the people who live in BH is weaker than the Arabic of those who live in NAAs”.

Angelique (NAA) also pinpointed several differences and said,

“Yes, there are differences. I think the positive difference, I don’t know if it’s positive, but we [implying Armenians who live in NAAs] are more open to Lebanese culture and to what is around. I think we are more included in everything. Those who live in BH, they only see each other a lot [she laughs], and I don’t know, I think that they live in their own world apparently. I think that it has to be mixed [implying they should be more involved in Lebanese society]. In addition, they [implying people from BH] speak very very good Armenian. I don’t speak good Armenian at all. … There are also social differences but not because they are Armenians living together in BH, but because BH itself is not a developed area”.

During GI1, similar comments were made concerning integrating into Lebanese society and WAL use. For example, Marale (NAAs) and Eddy (NAAs) commented respectively,
“There are so many differences, because Armenians who are living in BH and growing up there, are much more umm… The Armenian language has more meaning to them, and they think in many ways about Armenians. But us who live in NAAs, we take the traditions of Arabs and we live like them, more like the Arabs”.

“As we are sitting here, their language for example [pointing at BH participants], they speak Armenian a little better than us and express themselves. Their Armenian is more *makour* [clean] because they practice more, unlike us. We speak it maximum a little bit at home and a little bit with friends. There would be days that go by where we hardly speak any Armenian”.

The accounts of my participants reveal perceived differences between LAs who live in BH and those who live in NAAs. While these are only perceptions that cannot be generalized to the wider population, at least amongst this particular group of LAAs the main perceived differences seem to be economic, national and linguistic. LAs in NAAs areas are perceived to be economically more successful and more integrated into mainstream Lebanese society and culture, whereas LAs in BH are perceived to have a stronger Armenian national identity. Moreover, LAs from NAAs are perceived to have a stronger command of the Arabic language whereas those from BH are perceived to have a stronger command of the WAL.

During GI2, similar opinions were revealed when I asked participants if they perceived any differences between LAs from BH and those from NAAs. BH Participants
were sitting together facing NAAs participants, and posing a question like that generated a debate. The moment I raised the question, Aram (BH) commented immediately by pointing his hand towards NAAs participants,

“Let them [implying NAAs participants] start talking about the differences. It’s already obvious”.

Mark (NAA) replied,

“When it comes to language and culture, of course they [implying BH participants] are more Armenian than us. They are more Armenian related. I think it’s because of where they live and how they were brought up. We are brought up somehow different in the sense that we don’t really need to speak Armenian to live, while they do, because they live as if they are in an Armenian country. Their Arabic should be better, because not everything is in BH. At the end of the day we are inside Lebanon and you have to speak Arabic very well. Your Arabic should not be broken and so on. You should speak very well”.

Mark’s comment above, while only one reported perception, reflects Grosjean’s (1982) and Li’s (1982) theories about how residential dispersion can lead to HL shift, and how on the other hand, residential concentration often contributes to HL maintenance as members of an ethnic community would have little contact with the broader society and
therefore use the dominant language less often. As Mark (NAA) commented, LAs in BH live in a place that is like another “Armenia” and for that reason they are more likely to use WA than Arabic, which according to him, is not right as LAs should speak better Arabic. Mark’s comment triggered Simon’s (BH) response,

“They [NAAs participants] think different from us, I mean they want to be more open, they want to merge with people for their own benefits, for example to be employed and so on. For me, that’s not important at all. I prefer to stay in my own environment and work for my environment instead of outside of it”.

Despite the perceived differences amongst LAs from BH and NAAs, in the end participants said with a sense of unity, “we are all Armenians” and “we are all the same”. An interesting spontaneous debate of being “the same” or “different” was generated while discussing differences between LAs from BH and those from NAAs. I look at this debate as a summary of many of the points raised in this chapter and I present an extract below.

1. Hagop (NAA): I personally think they [BH participants] are true

2. Armenians, real Armenians. Us, *ya’ane* [*ya’ane* is an Arabic word that means so-so in this context]. I don’t want to say we are not Armenians,

3. but we are a derivative of *Armenianness*.

4. Aram (BH): Neither you are 1.0% more Armenian than me, nor I am 1.0%
6. more Armenian than you.

7. Hagop (NAA): but you are truly Armenians. Really.

8. Aram (BH): no, even a real Armenian doesn’t speak like that. A real

9. Armenian does not exist today.

10. Mark (NAA): I want to say something. We are different and we are the

11. same. Because, it’s not like I belong to Lebanon. I don’t care about

12. Lebanon. I don’t care about it and at the end of the day I am not thinking

13. of staying here because there is no future in this country. At the end of the

14. day, I prefer to be an Armenian than a Lebanese. But for example now, I

15. am forced to speak Arabic to be able to express my thoughts, more than

16. when I speak Armenian. This is where the difference lies.

17. Simon (BH): We are not different. We are all Armenians!

18. Mark (NAA): Yes, we are the same.

19. Jenny (NAA): only speaking is different.

20. Mark (NAA): yes, if anything happens all of us are the same”.
Conclusion

The discussions above reveal the complex and multidimensional construct of LAAs’ identities. Irrespective of their AOR, whether from BH or from NAAs, the Armenian identity was defined by my participants in multiple ways. Particularly the notions of “unity”, “hard work”, “national pride”, and “Armenian language maintenance” were the most salient elements that came up in the discussions of the perceived Armenian identity.

The sense of self, self-representation and sense of belonging of participants varied, with some revealing multiple identities they make use of depending on context. Nevertheless, a strong identification with Armenian national identity seems to be salient amongst participants despite their AOR.

More NAAs participants than BH participants revealed more openness to integrating into mainstream Lebanese society and adopting a hybrid identity or what Kotchikian (2009) and Kouloujian (2014) refer to as an “in-between” identity. Several participants, particularly from NAAs, discussed the economic and social benefits of integrating with the Lebanese and spoke about the importance of being well spoken in Arabic and being familiar with mainstream culture. Conversely, there are participants who seem to remain more insular within BH and several reported that they prefer being less integrative for the sake of maintaining their Armenian identity and the WAL.

When Migliorino (2008) describes the Armenian community in the Middle East, he comments on how LAs successfully found a place within the broader society without being either completely assimilated or excluded. Based on the discussions in this chapter, this seems to be an ongoing trend in Lebanon until today.
Despite the fact that participants, except a few exceptions, typically revealed a strong identification with their Armenian national identity, a good portion thought that LAs in BH and NAAs are “different”. While the differences reported are only opinions and perceptions, they can be telling data about how residential location can influence the way Armenian identities are shaped or evolved. The main perceived differences were observed in terms of national identity, WAL proficiency and economic prosperity. Amongst this particular group, many think that being in BH contributes to a stronger sense of national identity while on the other hand being in NAAs leads to a more “Arab” integrative identity. I would like to add that I observed an almost invisible behaviour amongst participants, revealing possible identity differences. Although I have no tangible data to support this claim, I noticed during the interviews that BH participants were more passionate about their Armenian identity than those from NAAs. This was reflected in their elaborate responses to questions related to the Armenian identity and its preservation. It was also reflected in the spontaneous debates BH participants were involved in when NAAs participants showed less enthusiasm about their Armenian identity. On the other hand, several NAAs participants gave briefer answers with neutral attitudes, almost as if their responses were influenced by the presence of BH participants.

To end this chapter, as discussed, language choice often goes hand in hand with identity negotiations. Accordingly, the future of the WAL in Lebanon is prone to modifications possibly influenced by the complex nature of LAAs’ identity perceptions. Nevertheless, based on the discussions above, it seems that the Armenian community continues to maintain a rather distinctive identity, which may give the WAL in Lebanon a somewhat stable situation, at least in the current phase. I look into how this complex identity manifests itself in the LPs of LAAs in Chapter 10.
Chapter 7

The impact of residential location on the attitudes of Lebanese Armenian adolescents towards Armenian schools

Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss the impact of residential location on Armenian education. I look into how the opinions of LAAs towards Armenian and non-Armenian schools might have an impact on Armenian education, which includes education in the WAL, history, culture and religion. I report on the opinions of my participants on the subject matter during ten individual interviews and two group interviews conducted between summer 2014 and summer 2015. I back up the qualitative data interpretations with numerical data I collected through 100 questionnaires I distributed to fifty BH participants and fifty NAAs participants. I present the quantitative findings in the form of charts.

The impact of the recent geo-demographic situation of Lebanese Armenians on Lebanese Armenian adolescents’ school attendance

The issue of the new geo-demographic reality of LAs and its impact on Armenian schooling was a recurrent topic amongst participants. Many expressed their opinion about
how ones residential location influences choice of schools or associations. During GI1, Patrick (BH) commented,

“I believe that the issue of choosing Armenian or Lebanese associations and schools is related to the area of the person. For example, there are cases where Armenians are scattered in Arabic areas, and there Lebanese schools and clubs would be closer to them, so they would be compelled to go there. … If they think they should go to an Armenian place, they can always find a way to do so”.

While Patrick’s (BH) comment is only one reported perception, it reflects what Attarian (2014) discusses about the recent demographic situation of LAs and how it is influencing the current situation of Armenian schools. LAs have “moved away from neighbourhoods in the centre of the city which used to house once vibrant Armenian micro-communities, to new suburbs in the east” (ibid, 25). This, according to Attarian (2014), has affected the situation of small neighbourhood schools, which today are regarded as insignificant by many. Nevertheless, several of Attarian’s (2014, p. 25) interlocutors continue to appreciate neighbourhood schools because they have “a flow of students in the opposite direction, contrary to the new geo-demographic reality, with students from relatively new and prosperous suburbs coming back to study at these schools”.

While, as Attarian (2014) comments, some Armenian neighbourhood schools cater to LA students from all around Beirut and many LAs from prosperous areas come back to study in them, non-Armenian school attendance is on the increase. This is reflected in the
quantitative findings of this study, which reveal that the majority of NAAs participants go to non-Armenian schools.

Lebanese Armenian adolescents’ school attendance: quantitative findings

For a general understanding of the impact of residential concentration and geographical dispersal on the status of Armenian education, particularly on Armenian school attendance, I present below figures 7.1 and 7.2, which illustrate current and previous Armenian school attendance. Data were obtained through the section in the questionnaire that asked for background information, including “name of current school” and “name of previous school (if any)”. I was capable of finding out from the names of schools whether participants have been to Armenian schools or non-Armenian schools.

As figure 7.1 reveals, the percentage of BH participants who reported attending Armenian schools, 95.2%, is significantly higher than the percentage of NAAs participants who reported the same, 26.5%. Conversely, only 4.8% of BH participants reported attending non-Armenian schools, while 73.5% of NAAs participants reported the same.
Concerning previous school attendance, Figure 7.2 below also reveals higher percentages of non-Armenian school attendance amongst NAAs participants. Only 4.5% of BH participants reported being to a non-Armenian school previously and 95.5% reported being to an Armenian school previously. Conversely, 64.7% of NAAs participants reported being to a non-Armenian school previously and 35.3% reported being to an Armenian school previously.

BH n=42/ NAAs n=34

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3 BH n=... represents the total number of respondents from BH and NAAs n=... represents the total number of respondents from NAAs. This applies to all the figures in this chapter.
Figure 7.1 and 7.2 above might be an indication that the recent geographical dispersal of LAAs increases the chances of non-Armenian school attendance, despite the fact that there are also Armenian schools located in areas with less Armenian presence (see Appendix 4, 7-9). The reported decrease in Armenian school attendance is likely to influence the future of the WAL and bring modifications to its use and formal properties. The findings above also reflect what Sanjjan (2001) reports concerning LA parents enrolling their children in Armenian schools. According to Sanjjan (2001), parents who have non-Armenian ties and are keen on looking outward are more likely to send their children to non-Armenian schools. Whereas on the other hand, parents who have little interest in the outside world, i.e. that which is outside the Armenian community, remain in an almost totally Armenian setting and prefer to send their children to Armenian schools (ibid).
The attitudes of Lebanese Armenian adolescents towards Armenian schools

In this section, I explore the attitudes of LAAs towards Armenian schools. I report on their opinions about attending Armenian schools and/or sending their children to Armenian schools and I explore how that might affect the WAL in Lebanon. The main purpose is to find out whether residential location influences the attitudes of LAAs towards Armenian schools.

According to Migliorino (2008) and Attarian (2014), the ongoing crisis of Armenian schools in Lebanon is not only a result of the economic crisis caused by the Lebanese civil war. Many LA families, particularly higher income families, send their children to non-Armenian schools believing that “elite education” will offer better opportunities to their children and would reflect a higher social status (Migliorino, 2008; Attarian, 2014). During GI2 discussions Aram (BH) and Simon (BH) referred to this particular aspect of LAs. Aram (BH) commented,

“Armenians have always been tsoulamol [having an inclination to assimilation] throughout centuries. If we read history, we see that one hundred years ago, the Armenians who lived in Georgia, the rich or middle class Armenians, have sent their children to non-Armenian schools. Armenians always want to merge with their surroundings”.

The pattern of sending children to non-Armenian schools is not a recent one, as Armenians have a long history of influence by Western cultures (Migliorino, 2008). For instance, elite Armenians in the Ottoman Empire received European education by either
going to Western schools or traveling abroad. As Migliorino (2008, 24) points out, during the first years of the nineteenth century, foreign education “was important in redefining the community’s identity” and Armenian youth travelled to Italy and France for “the opportunity of receiving higher education”. Today the same pattern continues within the Armenian community in Lebanon (Attarian, 2014; Migliorino, 2008).

Another reason why some families possibly opt for non-Armenian schools is because they believe Armenian schools place additional burden on their children by teaching them Armenian subjects along with the national curriculum, which prepares students to sit for official exams. When regular Lebanese schools require thirty-two periods of schooling a week, Armenian schools require forty periods (Attarian, 2014). The additional hours in Armenian schools aim at introducing students to Armenian culture and language. However, according to Attarian (2014), this strategy is not always a successful one, as students do not usually take Armenian subjects seriously and perceive them as unnecessary to pass official exams. What Attarian (2014) reports is common discourse within the Armenian community. For example, while discussing the situation of WA in Lebanon during GI1, Jack (BH) said, “I feel that Armenian is declining. In other languages such as Arabic and English students are scoring higher because they are convinced that they live in Lebanon and Arabic and English are more important”.

Another factor that might be contributing to a decline in the figures of enrolment in Armenian schools is the changing attitude of parents towards the WAL. Parents have been increasingly showing indifference towards teaching their children WA. For example, both Jebejian (2007) and Attarian (2014) report that certain non-Armenian schools in Lebanon
with a high enrolment of LA students offered teaching WAL courses, believing that parents would be happy with the opportunity of passing their HL to their children. To the schools’ surprise, LA parents rejected this offer. For a language to thrive, it is important that its users perceive it as functional. Nevertheless, in the case of WA, as Attarian (2014) reports, some LA parents have nonchalant attitudes towards it as they consider Arabic and other more widely spoken languages in Lebanon more functional.

Apart from nonchalant attitudes towards the WAL, Attarian (2014) also discusses the negative perception of some parents towards Armenian schooling and the standards of Armenian education. Many believe that Armenian schools are not up to the standards of Lebanese schools and are not well equipped to prepare children to integrate into broader Lebanese society. In addition, some parents complain about the poor level of Arabic language instruction in Armenian schools (ibid).

The negative perception of parents is possibly influenced by the relatively low success rates of LA students in Lebanese official exams as reported by Attarian (2014). I observed such negative attitudes towards Armenian schooling amongst my participants, which possibly reflects parents’ attitudes. However, not all adolescents showed a negative attitude towards Armenian schools. BH participants and those who have been to Armenian schools highly praised Armenian schools. Conversely, NAA participants doubted the level of Armenian schools and were quite critical of them. For example, during the individual interview with Angelique (NAA), she reported that she would like to teach her children WA without sending them to an Armenian school because according to her, the English, French and Arabic languages of people who have been to Armenian schools are “not good”.

During GI1, Nareg (NAA), Eddy (NAA) and Marale (NAA) also discussed that students who go to Armenian schools speak poor Arabic and said that they would not send
their children to an Armenian school. Eddy (NAA) commented that Armenian schools make teaching WA a priority and forget that other languages are a priority too, which discourages parents from enrolling their children in them. As for Marale, she said that instead of an Armenian school, she would send her children to an Armenian club, agoump, so that they learn WA and have Armenian friends. Marale also said,

“People I know who went to an Armenian school, such as my cousins and other people I know, only their Armenian is very good. Their Arabic is ges ou gadar [broken]; their English and every other language too. Their French and anything is broken”.

The opinions above about the focus of Armenian schools on teaching WA and their poor preparation standards for official exams are dissimilar to the opinion of many educators within the community. For instance, Attarian’s (2014) interlocutor, an Armenian educator, condemns the fact that Armenian schools are prioritizing official exams at the expense of the WAL in Lebanon and argues that the focus of Armenian schools should remain only on teaching the WAL. Several participants had a similar opinion to Attarian’s (2014) interlocutor and commented on the importance of focusing on WA in Armenian schools. For example, Jack (BH) said during GI1,

“Personally what I feel is that, even in Armenian schools, Armenians are better in other languages than in Armenian. I mean, in my school, Armenian is weaker than other languages. I was doing better in English and Arabic. …”.
Jacqueline (BH) commented that it is important that Armenian parents send their children to Armenian schools. "Families can study the level of the school before sending their children to them”, she suggested, commenting that there are Armenian schools with decent educational standards and parents have the opportunity to select them, presumably if they can afford to. As for Jack (BH) who goes to an Armenian school, he defended the standards of Armenian schools when participants in GI1 were engaged in a debate, “I can say that I can speak Arabic better than the Arabs here”, he said.

While there is tension between supporters of Armenian education on the one hand and individuals who criticize Armenian education and are more in favour of focusing on non-Armenian languages due to their functionality, typically participants reported that learning WA is important too. I report below, their opinions about sending their children to Armenian schools and the ways they believe they can teach their children WA.

Would Lebanese Armenian adolescents send their children to an Armenian school in the future?

When I directly asked participants whether they would send their children to an Armenian school in the future, responses varied. BH participants seemed to be more in favour of sending their children to Armenian schools in comparison to NAAs participants. For example, during the individual interviews Khatchig (BH), Hovnan (BH), Mike (BH) and Steve (BH) commented that they would send their children to an Armenian school. Steve (BH) commented,
“I would send my children to an Armenian school. In order to preserve the Armenian language, Armenians should send their children to Armenian schools. I agree that the level education is getting worse in Armenian schools, but it is not an excuse and we can improve their standards and make them like they were before”.

As discussed, not all participants had a positive attitude towards Armenian schools. During GI2, Mark (NAA) commented that people who go to an Armenian school do not speak good Arabic and said,

“I wouldn’t send my children to an Armenian school. One must have some savoir vivre. You know what savoir vivre is? One must know what is going on in their area. Whatever language is spoken there, one must be perfect in it, as they later on will have to be involved in relationships, be employed and so on. I am not saying that Armenian is not important, but I wouldn’t send my children to an Armenian school. No!”.

Although it is not possible to generalize Mark’s (NAA) comment to the wider population, his thoughts about the importance of integration possibly reflect the negative attitude of many LAAs, who, like their parents, believe that Armenian schools do not prepare younger generations to integrate into Lebanese society. Such negative attitudes might be contributing to the perceived decline of WA in Lebanon.

Following Mark’s (NAA) comment, Jenny (NAA) expressed that she would not send her children to an Armenian school but she would teach them WA with private tutors or
through books because according to her “it is more important to learn English and other languages”. In response, Simon (BH) and Aram (BH) passionately defended the educational standards of Armenian schools and the importance of receiving an Armenian education. For example, Simon (BH) responded to Mark (NAA) saying, “it differs from one school to another”, implying that not all Armenian schools have low academic standards. Aram (BH) also revealed a positive attitude towards Armenian schools. He commented

“Of course I would send my children to an Armenian school. I would like my child to go wherever I went. We are not mentally weaker because we are proud of our Armenianness! If I were not proud, I would have said I would send my children to an Arabic school. However, I have reached a very good place through my Armenian school and that’s why I would send my children to an Armenian school. Why wouldn’t I?”.

During G11 Chahe (BH) also passionately defended Armenian schools and spoke about the importance of coming together to raise their standards. Chahe (BH) commented,

“To begin with, I don’t agree that the level of Armenian schools is low. The schools follow the same curriculum as other schools; but things depend on the students’ work and how much they take from a school. For example, if their Armenian is better, it’s simply because the people in their surroundings are all Armenians, they speak Armenian with everybody, and of course if they go to an Armenian school, all their friends will be Armenian. … If you are
criticizing Armenian schools, I prefer to say, let us fix them. I mean we need everybody’s effort. … All together we can raise the level!”.

Aram’s (BH) and Chahe’s (BH) views manifest a positive attitude towards Armenian schooling, revealing an attitudinal difference between the BH and NAAs adolescents. This suggests that residential concentration and geographical dispersal might, as Attarian (2014) reports, have an impact on the situation of Armenian schools and therefore the WAL. What was interesting during the discussions in the second group interview is that BH participants not only showed a positive attitude towards Armenian schooling but also tried to convince NAAs adolescents that they are still capable of learning to read and write Armenian and that they can send their children to an Armenian school. Simone and Narine (BH), engaged in a debate with Mark (NAA), Jenny (NAA) and Hagop (NAA), which again reveals that the motivation to attend Armenian schools and learn WA is different amongst BH and NAAs participants.

1. Simon (BH): but if you want you can learn it too! [Implying Armenian]”

2. [addressing himself to NAAs participants].

3. Mark (NAA): but no one is bothered to learn it. I am not going to sit down

4. and learn Armenian.

5. Hagop (NAA): They [pointing at BH participants] have learned it ever

6. since they were children. They have had ten sessions of Armenian per

7. week in their school … They know all the stories, the background. We
8. don’t!

9. Simon (BH): If I were you, and I know Arabic but not Armenian, I would

10. put an effort to learn Armenian.

11. Mark (NAA): it’s difficult. [starts reciting the first few

12. letters of the Armenian alphabet humorously and laughs].


14. Simon (BH): Just like you would like to learn Italian or Spanish, you can

15. learn Armenian.

16. Narine (BH): If you send your children to an Armenian school, you can

17. learn the Alphabet from their books. It’s not a matter of having time.

18. Now your next step should be sending your children to an Armenian

19. school.

20. Hagop (NAA): you [referring to BH participants] can learn it. But you

21. have a background! They raised you like that as children. You know the

22. culture. Us [implying NAAs participants] we are unaware.

23. Narine (BH): [insists] Okay! You can learn too. But you said that you

24. don’t want to send your children to an Armenian school. But if you send

25. them, you can learn just like them, from grade one.

26. Mark (NAA): I am not bothered. It’s more than enough [implying the

27. education he has received].
Although this is only one discussion and we cannot generalize this to all LAAs, the comments above can be telling data about how residential concentration in BH possibly continues to shape the identities of LAAs in a more traditional way whereby Armenian should be learned “at all cost”. One explanation could be that such perceptions are influenced by political ideologies that are particularly salient in BH as Migliorino (2008) reports. Narine (BH) for instance, who passionately debated the importance of learning WA (lines 16-19) is an active member of the Zavarian Student Association (ZOM) as well as the Scouts of Homenetmen, which are both affiliated to the Tashnag party that is a major advocator of WAL maintenance in Lebanon and the diaspora.

**Would Lebanese Armenian adolescents send their children to an Armenian school in the future? Quantitative findings**

The difference in the attitudes of BH and NAAs participants towards Armenian education and schooling was not only revealed during the interviews but also through the survey questionnaires. Figure 7.3 below illustrates participants’ willingness to send their children to an Armenian school. Data were obtained through the questionnaire item, “in the future, would you send your children to an Armenian school?”. Participants were given the option to select one of the following responses, “yes, no, maybe”.

As the percentages reveal, 79.6% of BH participants reported that they would send their children to an Armenian school, whereas the percentage of NAAs participants who reported the same is substantially lower, 28.6%. Conversely, the percentage of BH participants who said they would not send their children to an Armenian school is only 4.1%,
whereas the percentage of NAAs participants who said the same is 26.5%. The remaining 16.3% of BH participants and 44.9% of NAAs participants said “maybe” about sending their children to an Armenian school.

In order to understand why some LAAs prefer to send their children to a non-Armenian school in the future, I present below Figure 7.4, which illustrates the reasons given by participants behind not wanting to enrol their children in an Armenian school. Data in this section were obtained through the questionnaire item, “if your answer to question 20 was no or maybe, please tick one of the following answers”. Participants were given the option to select one of the following responses, “too far away, too expensive, low academic standards, inferior social milieu, unimportant, other (specify).

As the numbers reveal, 3.1% of NAAs participants reported that Armenian schools are too far away and none of the BH participants reported the same. 3.1% of NAAs participants thought that Armenian schools have an inferior social milieu, while none of the BH participants thought the same. 18.8% of NAAs participants reported that it is
unimportant to send their children to an Armenian school, while none of the BH participants reported the same. Low academic standards and “other” reasons seem to be the main explanation why participants would possibly opt for a non-Armenian school. 28.6% of BH participants and 46.9% of NAAs participants reported that Armenian schools have low academic standards, and 71.4% of BH participants and 28.1% of NAAs participants ticked the “other” reasons box. Only four NAAs participants specified why they ticked the other box. I quote below the reasons provided:

Reason 1: “Since I was educated in a French school, I want my children to follow my steps”.

Reason 2: “Armenians should be international and not stay in a closed circle”

Reason 3: “No good schools”.

Reason 4: “Education in other languages is important too”.

Figure 7.4

If your answer to question 20 was no or maybe, please tick one of the following answers.

BH n=7 / NAAs n=32

- Too far away: BH 0%, NAAs 0%
- Low academic standards: BH 28.6%, NAAs 46.9%
- Inferior social milieu: BH 18.8%, NAAs 0%
- Unimportant: BH 71.4%, NAAs 28.1%
- Other (specify): BH 0%, NAAs 3.1%

BH: blue, NAAs: orange
While the numbers above reveal the reasons why some participants would possibly not send their children to non-Armenian schools in the future, it is important to note that such findings are not generalizable as the numbers of respondents to the question above were very low; seven from BH and thirty two from NAAs.

Despite the fact that a good portion of participants are not in favour of sending their children to an Armenian school, as Figure 7.5 below reveals, the majority reported that it is either important or extremely important for their children to learn Armenian in the future. When participants were asked, “how important is it for your children to learn Armenian?” and were given the option to select one of the following responses, “extremely unimportant, not important, neither important/nor unimportant, important, extremely important”, only 4% of BH participants said it is extremely unimportant, 2.0% said it is not important, and 2.0% said it is neither important nor unimportant. On the other hand, 22.0% said it is important for their children to learn Armenian and 70.0% said it is extremely important. As for NAAs participants, only 2.0% said it is extremely unimportant for their children to learn Armenian, 2.0% said it is not important and 6.1% said it is neither important nor unimportant. On the other hand, 14.3% said it is important for their children to learn Armenian and 75.5% said that it is extremely important. This means that the total percentage of BH participants who think that it is either important or extremely important for their children to learn Armenian is 92.0% and the total percentage of NAAs participants who think the same is 89.8%. Although these numbers cannot be generalized to the wider population, they can be telling data about the positive attitudes of LAAs towards the WAL and the importance of passing it intergenerationally, irrespective of being in favour of sending their children to an Armenian school or not.

The changing attitudes towards Armenian schools revealed in this chapter might influence the status of WA in Lebanon. As Fishman (1991, 372) comments, apart from
contributing to language acquisition in terms of speaking, reading and writing, schools are an important domain that enrich students’ “attitudinal and overt-implementational commitments to language by providing and stressing the historical, cultural and moral rationales for such commitments”. By involving students in discussions and projects related to language, and by positively implementing cultural activities that display the link of language to identity, culture and history, schools become capable of articulating the beliefs and norms of a community that usually parents alone are unable to express or transmit (ibid). This means that, if the trend of sending children to non-Armenian schools continues in Lebanon, LAAs might have less exposure to Armenian culture and to WA because as Migliorino (2008) discusses Armenian schools have been a catalyst of Armenian culture, history and language maintenance as they reinforce Armenian social ties as students attend school with other LAs.

Figure 7.5

How important is it for your children to learn Armenian?
BH n=50/ NAAs n=49

- Extremely unimportant: BH 2.0%, NAAs 2.0%
- Not important: BH 2.0%, NAAs 2.0%
- Neither important/nor unimportant: BH 6.1%, NAAs 2.0%
- Important: BH 22.0%, NAAs 14.3%
- Extremely important: BH 70.0%, NAAs 75.5%
Western Armenian language classes provided to Lebanese Armenian adolescents

The interview discussions not only revealed differences in the attitudes of BH and NAAs participants towards Armenian schools, but also differences in their Armenian education and the amount of WAL classes they have received. When during GI2 I asked about the number of WAL lessons participants take or have taken per week, NAAs participants reported that they have never learned WA in a formal capacity, although they speak it at home. Conversely, BH participants who have been to Armenian schools reported that they take or have taken at least nine hours of WAL lessons per week. For example, Simon (BH) reported taking nine to fifteen hours of WAL classes and Armenian subject classes per week at school, Narine (BH) reported taking ten hours, and Aram (BH) said, “I have taken Armenian language classes all my life”.

The individual interviews provided similar information about the number of WAL classes received. Typically, participants who reported receiving several hours of WAL classes a week are from BH, except for Khajag (NAA) who went to an Armenian school and is from a NAA. Khajag (NAA) said, “We used to do ten to fifteen hours a week”. As for Steve (BH) and Mike (BH), they spoke about the reduction of WAL lessons in secondary school due to official exam preparations, a matter Attarian (2014) discusses in her report. When I asked Steve (BH) about the number of WAL lessons he received when he was at school, he commented,

“\textit{It depends on which class you are in. As you grow older, the number of classes decreases because the Armenian language is not included in the official exams, so we need more classes for other subjects to be prepared}”.
As for Mike (BH) he commented,

“We used to take six sessions a week when we were kids, and it was the same until grade 7. In grade 9, we stopped the Armenian classes because we had the official exams. They increased the sessions of other subjects, but the next year, they added the classes back. In grade 12, we had two or three sessions a week. I don’t remember exactly”.

There is a general concern among educators about the amount of WAL taught in Armenian schools in Lebanon. For example, one of Attarian’s (2014) interlocutors, an Armenian educator, believes that Armenian schools should not prioritize official exams at the expense of the WAL because their mission should be teaching WA. Many Armenian schools reduce the number of WAL classes, specifically in secondary schools, as they prepare their students to sit for the official exams (ibid). Another one of Attarian’s (2014, 16) interviewees believes that it is important to have qualified teachers of WA as well as Armenian subjects because, according to him, “the only long term solution to save Western Armenian is to invest in teacher education” and “to have qualified teachers in Armenian-related subjects, both locally and transnationally”.

In addition to the decline in the number of qualified WAL teachers, Attarian (2014) discusses that enrolment decline in Armenian schools, whatever its causes, is influencing the WAL in Lebanon and leading to a serious decline in language acquisition among the youth. “Fewer students in Armenian schools translate to fewer language learners in a formal setting, in turn contributing to a general atrophy” (Attarian 2014, 16). Attarian’s (2014) opinion is somehow manifested in this study as participants who go to non-Armenian schools,
particularly those who live in NAAs, reported taking fewer WAL lessons or even none. For example, Sergio (NAA) who went to a non-Armenian school, reported during his individual interview that he never took WAL lessons. As for Levon (NAA), he mentioned learning to write it from his grandmother and added,

“I once went [implying to Armenian language lessons] only for one or two hours. Then I stopped. At school [non-Armenian school], my friend’s mother tried to give lessons, encouraging Armenian heritage, but it didn’t work. It was about ten years ago; maybe eight years”.

Similarly, Hrag (NAA) commented,

“About maybe eight or nine years ago I think I used to do one or two hours of Armenian a week with a private tutor”.

**Western Armenian language classes provided to Lebanese Armenian adolescents:**

*quantitative findings*

For a general understanding of the subject in discussion, I present below Figure 7.6 illustrating the percentage of participants who have attended WAL lessons. Data for this section were obtained by the questionnaire item “do you take/have you taken Armenian language classes?”. Participants were given the option to select one of the following
responses, “yes, no”. As the figures reveal, 95.9% of BH participants reported taking WAL lessons, a number that is significantly higher in comparison to NAAs participants, of whom 44.0% reported the same.

**Figure 7.6**

Figure 7.6 above illustrates the percentages of participants who have had WAL classes without specifying the number of lessons received per week. I report on and compare the number of lessons participants from both BH and NAAs have received in Figure 7.7 below. Data for this section were obtained through the questionnaire item, “if you answered yes to question 6, please say how many hours a week”. Participants were given the option to select one of the following responses, “less than 3 hours a week, 3 to 9 hours a week, 9 to 15 hours a week, more than 15 hours a week”.

It is important to note that the figures below are not consistent but rather approximations provided by this particular group of LAAs. As the interview discussions above reveal, the number of WAL lessons per week in Armenian schools is not the same in
all grades, and this reduces as the preparations for official exams intensify in higher grades, particularly in secondary school. Figure 7.7 does not reveal which phase in their educational life participants were referring to when answering this question. It is also possible that some have never received WAL classes in an Armenian school but instead have received WAL tuitions such as Hrag (NAA) and Levon (NAA) who, as discussed, reported going to a Saturday school or taking private WAL lessons.

As the figures reveal 30.6% of BH participants and 53.8% of NAAs participants reported receiving less than three hours of WAL lessons per week. 59.2% of BH participants and 26.9% of NAAs participants reported receiving three to nine hours of WA per week. 6.1% of BH participants and 19.2% of NAAs participants reported receiving nine to fifteen hours of WA per week, and 4.1% of BH participants and none of the NAAs participants reported receiving more than fifteen hours of WA per week. As mentioned, these are approximate figures and may not suggest consistency.

Figure 7.7

If your answered yes to question 6, please say how many hours a week (number of Armenian language lessons taken per week)

BH n=49 NAAs n=26
To redress any possible inconsistencies in the reported numbers of WAL classes received per week, which are self-reported numbers based on participants’ perceptions, I present below a table prepared by Attarian (2014), which provides a comparative view of Armenian classes per week out of forty periods in some Armenian schools. Attarian (2014) groups different Armenological subjects, including WAL classes, under a single rubric, which she refers to as “Armenian classes”. This means that not all Armenian periods reported in the table below are WAL classes, as some are Armenian history classes, *Hayots Badmoutyoun*, some are Armenian culture classes, and others might be religion classes taught in WA.

The table shows a decline in the number of Armenian classes in Secondary school, i.e. starting Grade 10, in order to give priority to other subjects related to official exams. While the decline is gradual in some schools, it seems to be more drastic in others.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grades</th>
<th>Jemaran</th>
<th>National Schools</th>
<th>AGBU Schools</th>
<th>Evangelical (AEC)</th>
<th>Catholic (Mesrobian)</th>
<th>Tekeyan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade 1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The role of the Armenian schools in reversing Western Armenian language shift

Emphasis on speaking Western Armenian at school, or the lack of it

Several language maintenance movements emphasize that schools are a crucial domain to reverse language shift (Fishman, 1991; Thornton-Wyman, 2012). Schools are essential because not only they provide HL literacy but also because they are another arena where students socialize together by using their HL (Thornton-Wyman, 2012). Indeed, during GI2, NAAs participants who went to non-Armenian schools reported speaking English and Arabic at school, while all BH participants reported speaking WA with their friends at school as are, or were, encouraged to speak it. For example, Simon (BH) and Narine (BH) who have been to Armenian schools reported that speaking WA is emphasized in their school. Simon (BH) reported,
“They always emphasize speaking Armenian at school, and even now they came out with a new regulation that students with low scores in the Armenian language or in Armenian history do not get their diploma.

Similar accounts were also given during the individual interviews, mainly by BH participants as they went to Armenian schools. The only participant from a NAA who commented that speaking WA was emphasized in his school was Khajag (NAA), as he went to an Armenian school. Khajag (NAA) reported,

“Yes, they used to always reprimand us at school when we used odar [foreign] words. For example, say I was speaking with a teacher and I used an Arabic word unintentionally that Armenians always use, the teacher would instantly reprimand us and say, “Doesn’t this word exist in Armenian?” [Implying why don’t you use the Armenian word instead?]”.

Hovnan (BH) and Steve (BH) also reported that speaking WA was emphasized in their schools. For example, Steve (BH) said,

“Of course because it was an Armenian school! First, they gave Armenian classes. Second, if they wanted to post announcements or stuff like that, they always posted them in Armenian, rather than another language. … Also, they used to bring a lot of people to speak; for example a priest or someone from the church etc. to preach about the importance of the Armenian language”.
The contrary was reported by NAAs participants who went to non-Armenian schools. For example, Angelique (NAA) reported that she would speak English and Arabic at school because “there were no Armenians”. As for Hagop (NAA), he reported during GI2 that he speaks very little WA at school. Similarly, Marale (NAA) commented during GI1 that she does not speak WA at school because her friends are “Arabs”. Marale said,

“I don’t speak Armenian at school because all my friends are Arabs. Yete se’abet [an Arabic expression that means if by any chance] there would be an Armenian and I happen to speak Armenian, no one says anything. There are some Armenians at school but almost all my close friends are Arabs”.

While Armenian schools offer LAAs opportunities to speak WA inside their premises, Marale’s (NAA) and Angelique’s (NAA) accounts above are an example of how non-Armenian schools do not provide adolescents with the required social arena that allows them use WA. Some participants, such as Mark (NAA) and Jenny (NAA), who went to non-Armenian schools, even reported that they were prohibited from speaking WA at school. For example, Jenny (NAA) commented,

“It was mamnou’a [Mamnou’a means forbidden in Arabic] to speak Armenian in my school because they thought we were talking behind their backs. There is a school policy that you shouldn’t speak Armenian. The school administration states that we shouldn’t speak it. They do nothing much if you speak Armenian. But the policy exists. We speak [implying Armenian], whatever they do, we speak it”.
In response to what Mark (NAA) and Jenny (NAA) said, Aram (BH) expressed his dissatisfaction with such a policy and thought it was unfair. Hagop (NAA) also expressed his lack of conviction with such a policy, but commented that he could understand where it comes from,

“\(I\) think they shouldn’t forbid speaking Armenian. I understand their point of view, because they think we are speaking about them, but I don’t think it’s a very correct policy”.

Although it is not possible to generalize the accounts above to the wider population, they are somehow reminiscent of the concept of language suppression, a strategy through which states attempt to overpower minority cultures. For example, in the early twentieth century, the colonial government in Canada imposed an assimilationist policy, forcefully removed First Nations children from their families and enrolled them in residential schools where indigenous languages were forbidden and where children who spoke them were physically punished (Fedorak, 2012). While this is definitely not the case in Lebanon, as LAs are given the total freedom by the Lebanese government to preserve their culture and language (Migliorino, 2008), forbidding speaking WA in non-Armenian schools, whatever the reason, is a process that promotes the use of other languages, possibly to the detriment of the WAL.

I would like to point out that the comments above are only a reflection of the perceptions of two participants of this study and it is not clear if there are more adolescents who experience the same. I was unable as a researcher to look into this matter further as I contacted that particular school and three other non-Armenian schools, and none was
compliant or cooperative enough to give information. Having said that, whether this is a policy applied in some non-Armenian schools or not, the fact that this is a perception or experience of some participants of this study means that, at least in their case, these perceptions might have an impact on their language use.

*Emphasis on speaking Western Armenian at school, or the lack of it: Quantitative findings*

For a general understanding of the discussions above, I present below Figure 7.8, which illustrates the emphasis on speaking WA at school or the lack of it. Data for this section were obtained through the questionnaire item, “is speaking Armenian emphasized in your school?” Participants were given the option to select one of the following responses, “yes, no”. As the numbers reveal, 89.8% of BH participants reported that speaking Armenian is or was emphasized in their schools, whereas by contrast 32.0% of NAAs participants reported otherwise. The substantially high percentage of BH participants who reported that speaking WA is emphasized in their school reflects what Al-Bataineh (2014) discusses concerning efforts made by Armenian schools in maintaining Armenian culture and language.
To probe deeper into this subject matter, I also asked participants about the language(s) they use at school. Data for this section were collected through the questionnaire item, “tick the language you use most with the following people; with school friends/classmates”. Participants were given the option to select from the following responses, “Armenian, Arabic, French, English, Turkish, other”. As Figure 7.9 reveals, the majority of BH participants, 93.6%, reported speaking Armenian at school and/or with their classmates. Only 4.3% reported speaking Arabic and 2.1% reported speaking English.

Conversely, the number of NAAs participants who reported speaking Armenian at school and/or with their classmates is substantially lower, 28.6%. 51.0% reported speaking Arabic, 12.2% reported speaking French and 8.2% reported speaking English.

While these findings cannot be generalized to the wider population, the LPs of my participants in their schools can be telling data about how residential dispersal possibly leads to increased use of non-Armenian languages at school, particularly due to attending non-Armenian schools.
The Western Armenian linguistic abilities of Lebanese Armenian adolescents: qualitative and quantitative findings

According to Li (2006), families and ethnic communities are very influential in reversing language shift. However, parents’ efforts to reverse language shift are seriously damaged without school support. Similarly, Chinen and Tucker (2005) report that attending Saturday language schools contributes to improving HL status. Although Fishman (1991, 369) comments that “the school can solve it approach” is a simplistic approach when it comes to language maintenance and that schools alone cannot reverse language shift, he acknowledges that schools contribute to achieving several language acquisition goals, particularly with respect to reading and writing. Fishman (1991) also discusses the importance of ethnic schools in teaching students cultivated speech or vernacular varieties.
that are not usually used in their daily lives and are different from the informal language they use. LAs commonly refer to cultivated speech as *makour hayeren*, an expression that literally means “clean Armenian” (Jebejian, 2007).

Fishman’s (1991) view is attested in this study as all the interview participants who went to non-Armenian schools reported not knowing how to read and write WA, despite reporting that they speak WA with their families. For example, the participants Eddy (NAA) and Nareg (NAA) said during GI1 that they only know how to write their names and family names in WA. As for Jenny (NAA), she commented during GI2,

“They [implying BH adolescents] speak and read better than us. Us [implying NAAs adolescents], we don’t know how to read and write. We only know how to speak, unlike them. Respect!”.

The importance of reading and writing WA and sending children to Armenian schools without relying on intergenerational transmission is a point that was raised several times during the interviews. For example, during GI1, Jacqueline (BH) commented,

“I think that speaking the language only at home is not enough. It is important to go to an Armenian school because not only speaking is important but also reading and writing are more important. This is how we strongly maintain the Armenian language, and protect it; by sending our children to more Armenian places and encouraging them, because at the end of the day, we are Armenians and we should protect the Armenian language”.
For a general understanding of the linguistic abilities of LAAs, I present below Figures 7.10, and 7.11 illustrating participants’ reading and writing abilities. Data were obtained through the questionnaire item “can you do the following using only Armenian; read and understand a short paragraph written in the simple or basic language/write a short paragraph using simple or basic language?”. Participants were given the option to select one of the following responses, “yes, yes but it’s difficult, no”.

As Figures 7.10 and 7.11 reveal, all BH participants reported that they can read and write Armenian, and only 4.0% reported reading with difficulty and 8.2% reported writing with difficulty. On the other hand, 30.6% of NAAs participants reported not being able to read Armenian, and 36.0% reported not being able to write Armenian. The total percentage of NAAs participants who reported being able to read Armenian is 69.4% with 18.4% reporting that they read with difficulty. Concerning writing, the total percentage of NAAs participants who reported writing Armenian is 66.0% with 22.0% reporting that they write with difficulty. While these figures are not generalizable to the wider population, it is possible to suggest that the increasing geographical dispersal of LAAs might contribute to the decline of WAL literacy as more LAAs attend non-Armenian schools as a result of the new geo-demographic situation of LAs.
One of the shortcomings of the questionnaire is that it did not directly ask participants if they speak WA. However, the following questionnaire item, “can you do the following
activities using only Armenian; speak with friends and family without borrowing words from any other language?” gives a general idea about the number of participants who can speak WA, although it is a question that addresses codeswitching patterns rather than the ability to speak WA. Participants were given the option to select one of the following responses, “yes, yes but it’s difficult, no”.

As figure 7.12 below reveals, 66% of BH participants reported that they can speak Armenian without borrowing words from any other language, 30% said that they can, but it is difficult, and 4.0% said that they cannot. We gather from these numbers that the total of BH participants who speak WA is at least 96%. On the other hand, 54.0% of NAAs participants reported that they can speak Armenian without borrowing words from any other language, 30.0% reported that they can, but it is difficult, and 12.0% said that they cannot. We gather from these numbers that the total of NAAs participants who speak WA is at least 84%. This does not mean that the remaining 4.0% from BH and 12.0% from NAAs who answered no to this question do not speak WA. As mentioned, the answer “no” means that these participants cannot speak WA “without borrowing words” from another language, nonetheless they might be fluent speakers of WA.
The discussions above reveal that most, if not all, participants of this study speak WA irrespective of their AOR. This means that to date, residential location does not seem to be influencing the spoken form of WA, although it does seem to be influencing the reading and writing abilities of my participants, and possibly LAAs as a whole. (see additional charts on reported perceptions of linguistic abilities in formal WA and classical Armenian in Appendix 8, 33-35).

**Conclusion**

Findings in this chapter, although non-generalizable to the wider population, reveal a discrepancy in the attitudes of LAAs towards Armenian schools. The common perception among NAAs participants is that Armenian schools have lower educational standards than non-Armenian schools and focus on teaching WA to the detriment of other widely spoken languages in Lebanon. Accordingly, NAAs participants seem to be less in favour of sending their children to Armenian schools. Findings also reveal that residential location seems to be influencing Armenian school attendance, which can in turn influence attitudes towards Armenian schools. The attitudinal differences towards Armenian schools may be influenced directly and indirectly by the AOR of LAAs and by the schools they attend.

Attending a non-Armenian school does not seem to be influencing the cultural identification of participants with the WAL and the use of it. The majority, whether from BH and from NAAs, believe in the importance of speaking WA and teaching it to their children. Nevertheless, participants’ positive attitudes towards maintaining WA does not seem to be a sufficient factor that makes them in favour of sending their children to an Armenian school.
Accordingly, the recent geographical dispersal of LAs in Lebanon, which is leading parents to opt for non-Armenian schools, may gradually influence literacy in WA, although not necessarily the spoken form of WA.

Attarian (2014) discusses that it is still possible to maintain the WAL and that the alarming reality reported by UNESCO that WA is “definitely endangered” is still possible to reverse by improving the situation of Armenian education and schools. In line with Attarian’s suggestion (2014, 27), I believe that Armenian schools need “a serious long-term and targeted investment in teacher education and educational innovation, which would involve the inclusion of creative technologies in curricular and textbook reforms as well as research and development initiatives”. Assessing successful models of language revitalization projects and applying similar measures to the case of the WAL in Lebanon can prove to be successful. As Attarian (2014, 29) comments, despite being a diasporic language with no state support, “there is an important school infrastructure as well as community organizations across the diaspora, which can act as a veritable transnational network and should be used as an asset in any solution-oriented strategizing”. In line with this, I believe it is important to include LAAs in projects that aim to revitalize WA because they are the only inheritors of WA in Lebanon.
Chapter 8

The impact of residential location on the ideologies and cultural practices of Lebanese Armenian adolescents

Introduction

In this chapter, I report on the cultural ideologies and practices of LAAs and explore whether these are influenced by residential concentration and geographical dispersal. By ideologies, I mean shared basic notions that members of a community hold. Often ideologies are seen as “ideas, discourse, or signifying practices in the service of the struggle to acquire or maintain power” (Woolard 1998, 7). I look into the participation of LAAs in major Armenian communal and cultural events, such as the Armenian genocide remembrance day, their involvement in Armenian religious life, their visualisation of their future marital life and their participation in Armenian associations and clubs, known as the Armenian agoump, and often regarded as the core of Armenian youth life in Lebanon.

Fishman and Garcia (2010) discuss that a community’s cultural practices and its HL are linked in a complex manner, and often one influences the other. They also discuss that residential concentration contributes to the maintenance of a community’s culture and cultural practices, which in turn can delay language shift (ibid). Today, the Armenian community in Lebanon continues to emphasize the importance of its organizational structures such as its churches, educational institutions, cultural associations and clubs as a way to face the challenges of assimilation and preserve its national identity and language (Sahakyan,
2015; Papkova, 2014; Ter-Matevosyan et al., 2017). Accordingly, looking into the cultural practices and ideologies of LAAs contributes to better understanding the status of the WAL in Lebanon.

I base the analysis in this chapter on data I collected through ten individual interviews and two group interviews conducted between summer 2014 and summer 2015. I back up the qualitative data interpretations with numerical data I collected through 100 survey questionnaires distributed to fifty BH participants and fifty NAAs participants. I present the quantitative findings in the form of charts.

The participation of Lebanese Armenian adolescents in the remembrance day of the Armenian genocide

As discussed at length in Chapter 2, remembering and commemorating the genocide every year on April 24th has transcended generations and has become a common attribute that continues to shape the collective identity of the Armenian diaspora and emphasizes their sense of togetherness (Azarian-Ceccato, 2010). The activism of LAs in Beirut on the remembrance day can be particularly attributed to Lebanon’s confessional system which allows Armenians to safely express their identities and practice their culture (Migliorino, 2008; Sahakyan, 2015).

The genocide anniversary in Lebanon has transformed over the years from a mourning event into political strength where LAs ask for justice (Marsden, 2015). Several participants discussed the same and expressed that for them April 24th is a day where they
demand their rights rather than mourn. For example, Narine (BH) said during GI2, “of course it is not a day of mourning, it is a resistance day!”.

Participants also discussed the activities they take part in and the things they do in preparation for that day. For example, when during the individual interview with Khatchig (BH) I asked if he takes part in the memorial services of the Armenian genocide, he responded,

“Yes I do. Here in our area, we all go to the kaylarshav [kaylarshav is the silent march that takes place on April 24th] and there we see a sufficiently big number of Armenians. So all around us would be Armenians and you see that everybody is unified for that cause. The same happens on the 28th of May [Independence Day of the First Republic of Armenia in 1918]. During those holidays when Armenians are always gathered like that, you would feel more like a family. There wouldn’t be any odar [foreigners] you know? Which makes it more enjoyable. … When I say odar I mean people from outside; Arabs or something like that. You know?”.

When I asked Mike (BH) during his individual interview if he has ever prepared anything for the Remembrance Day, he reported preparing a power point presentation at school. Hovnan (BH) also reported participating in the memorial services and contributing to organizing the event since he is a Homenetmen scout, the scouting and sports youth club affiliated to ARF. He commented, “Our ancestors survived a genocide and therefore the Armenian cause should be resolved”.
Levon (NAA), also reported contributing “as much as he can” to the event on April 24th and commented,

“Yes, I like to take part. It is very important that we don’t forget old events. I tried to contribute to this several times, but only as much as I can. Once when I was a kid I wrote a book about it [the genocide]. I wrote whatever I heard from my uncles and aunts and whatever they did. I used to ask them and write it”.

“Not forgetting” the genocide, is a common expression one often hears growing up as an Armenian. As Azarian-Ceccato (2010) comments, the older generations of the Armenian community, told and retold the stories of the genocide in order to make sure that the younger generations would not “forget” it. Some participants not only commented on the importance of not forgetting the genocide, but also expressed a sense of guilt if they do not take part in the memorial services. For example, Sergio (NAA) commented,

“We go to the church with the family. We only do that … Of course I think it is important to take part in the memorial services because so many people died, you are going for them because if you do not go, you would feel bad. So it is better to go”.

For Jack (BH) and Chahe (BH), commemorating the genocide should be “everyday of the year”. For example, Chahe (BH) said,
“First of all, we shouldn’t consider April 24th a one-day event. April 24th is every day of the year. If we have to defend April 24th, the genocide, we have to claim it all throughout the 365 days. So, that’s why, April 24th for me is a regular day because I try every day to make an effort to do the things we usually do on April 24th and to live everyday as if it’s April 24th.”

Almost everyone in GI1 mentioned participating in the memorial services of the Armenian genocide, if not every year, whenever they have the opportunity. For example, Nareg (NAA) and Carine (NAA) commented respectively,

“Of course, every year we walk, we pray with our friends and everything”.

“I don’t go every year. Sometimes I don’t have the opportunity. I would want it, but the opportunity doesn’t allow it. But, it is important, to awaken Armenians to what the Turks did …”.

In some instances, the interviews revealed a sense of obligation amongst several participants who spoke about the importance of attending the memorial services of the Armenian genocide and defending the Armenian cause. As Hovannisian (2009, 183) discusses, whether directly or indirectly, an obligation was placed on the new Armenian generations as they are meant to be “the bearers of hopes and aspirations” of an entire people and not only a single family. For example, during his individual interview, Khajag (NAA) commented that “the salvation” of Armenians is the major purpose of his life and said,
“For me that day, and that whole month represents a month of protest. If I have any intention in my life, it would be the salvation of Armenians. I want to see Armenia joined to its occupied lands and free, then I can call it the free and independent Armenia”.

As for Simon (BH), he said during GI2 that regardless of Turkey’s denial of the genocide, Armenians will continue to demand their rights. Simon (BH) commented,

“Let Turkey deny the genocide forever minchev ardou [literally until the morning. In this context, it means for as long as they wish]! However, Armenians exist and Armenians will continue to demand their rights. I mean the duty of every Armenian is to go [implying to participate in the memorial services of the Armenian genocide]”.

Khajag’s (NAA) and Simon’s (BH) accounts above somehow reveal an anti-Turkish Tashnag ideology, more specifically a Hay Tad revolutionist ideology. As the two are affiliated to the Tashnag party, their words possibly reflect its political goals, which call for the “liberation” of Armenian lands, resolving the Armenian cause and gaining recognition of the genocide.

For Steve (BH), participating in the memorial services is a way to pay tribute to his ancestors rather than an opportunity to reclaim Armenian lands. Steve (BH) said,
“Of course I go to the memorial services. I go because our grandparents have been through a lot. It is worth not forgetting it. Okay, we are not going to change anything by going, and they [implying the Turks] are not going to give us our lands back instantly, but it is a way to pay tribute to our ancestors.

While Steve’s (BH) comment reveals little hope to gain back Armenian lands, many Armenians around the world, including those in Turkey continue to fight for the recognition of the genocide. Particularly, Hrant Dink, an intellectual Armenian as well as a journalist, who was assassinated in Turkey in the year 2007, contributed to breaking the silence surrounding the Armenian genocide and became a symbol of change in a Turkish society where the Armenian community was not allowed to express its fears and resentments towards the Armenian genocide (Tchilingirian, 2007). As Hovannisian (2009) comments, since the Justice and Development Party came to power in Turkey, there has been a more open attitude toward the topic of the Armenian genocide, when previously, during the rule of the army, mentioning the genocide led to prosecutions and harassments.

Today, the subject in Turkey is explicitly presented via conferences, exhibitions, books, and newspaper articles (Hovannisian, 2009). Armenians are not the only ones in Turkey who fight for the recognition of the Armenian genocide. According to Von Bieberstein (2017), commemorating the 1915 genocide has also become important for a large number of Turkish activists who understand that demanding the recognition of the genocide is to their advantage if they attempt to build a democratic country that is not based on past crimes and lies. Von Bieberstein (2017) reports that in the year 2008, an “I apologize” campaign launched in Turkey sought reconciliation with Armenia. Thousands of Turkish people signed their names to it. One of the latest voices that is calling Turkey to accept the
Armenian genocide is the journalist Hasan Cemal, the grandson of Ahmet Cemal, one of the leaders involved in the plan to eliminate Armenians from Anatolia during World War I (ibid).

When I asked participants about their opinion on the denial of the Armenian genocide, most answers revealed a passionate devotion for the Armenian cause. For example, Khajag (NAA) commented that Turkey “knows very well” that the Armenian genocide is a reality but is unable to find a solution. Khajag (NAA) also said,

“If Turkey continues to deny its actions … there will come a day where it will fall down on its knees and give us back our lands. They cannot find a good excuse until now. If Turkey was my nation, I would have worked on a plan or a formula that helps find a way to close the issue of the genocide”.

While Khajag (NAAs) believes that Turkey “knows” that the genocide happened, it is important to make a distinction between the Turkish government and public. The vast majority of the public in Turkey knows very little about the facts of the Armenian genocide due to state-imposed public ignorance spread by historiography that supports the denial policy and legitimizes the destructive acts of the Ottoman government as a self-defence mechanism (Akcam, 2012). Just as the memory of the Armenian genocide has shaped the identity of Armenians, its denial has shaped the identity of the Turkish people who find it difficult to fathom how their ancestors committed crimes.

Angelique (NAA), Levon (NAA), Sergio (NAA) also expressed during their individual interviews the importance of accepting the Armenian genocide. For example, Angelique thought the denial is disrespectful to Armenians and Levon (NAA) commented
that despite Turkey’s denial “the entire world has seen the genocide”. As for Sergio (NAA), he said,

“We should not forget the Armenian genocide. I don’t care if others think if the Armenian genocide happened or not. I know that it happened and many people know that it happened. I don’t have to convince other people that it happened. … So if they keep denying it, I know that we Armenians all know that it happened and we don’t need to say it. That’s it”.

Despite these statements, which reveal the importance attached to acknowledging the Armenian genocide, two adolescents, Hrag (NAA) and Rita (BH), revealed an indifferent attitude towards the recognition of the Armenian genocide and the participation in its memorial services. Rita (BH) commented that she does not care about the commemoration day and it is pointless to participate in it. She also said, “Maybe the genocide happened and maybe not. But I am not interested”. As for Hrag (NAA), despite his participation every year, he thought it was not an important event. “It’s just a march” he said, and thought it was time to “move on”. When I asked Hrag (NAA) about his opinion or feelings about the denial of the Armenian genocide, he commented,

“I don’t feel anything. I think that the Turks who slaughtered Armenians were from the Ottoman Empire and now the country has changed; all of Turkey changed and has become independent of Ottomans. I don’t know how to explain that but, I don’t really care much”.

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There are also participants, such as Jenny (NAA), Hagop (NAA) and Angelique (NAA) who reported their very limited participation or their absence from the commemoration day, regardless of the fact that they thought it was an important event to take part in. For example, Angelique (NAA) said,

“I went once with my family about five years ago so that they show us what it is, and so we know what the genocide is. We went to that big church, the one that is here in Antelias [implying the Armenian Catholicosate], but that’s it. I’ve only been once. The Armenian genocide should be remembered because so many lives were lost and so many people were affected. However, I don’t go to the extreme, such as not liking Turkish people or not eating Turkish products. I’m not like that. But I think the genocide should be recognized”.

During GI1, although Hagop (NAA) expressed that he respects LAs who take part in the commemoration day, he commented,

“Armenians are fanatics. I mean they relate everything to the genocide and say we have been slaughtered. I mean enough! We are fed up of that!”

Hagop’s (NAA) comment provoked Simon (BH), who immediately responded,
“We are not fanatics! We are attached to our nation and we are *tseghabashd* but not against the Lebanese. [*Tseghabashd* in Armenian literally means race worshippers. In this context, it means extremely nationalistic]. We are *tseghabashd* for the sake of our Armenia and our *Armenianness* and we are not angry always”.

Simon’s (BH) comment above is a clear reflection of the *Tseghagron*, race religion, ideology discussed in Chapter 3. Simon (BH) made it clear that LAs “are not” fanatics, while at the same time he reported “worshipping” his race. Panossian (2002), who explains this ideology, discusses that while people who believe in it claim that they have nothing against other nations and cultures, they believe that each nation’s uniqueness should be preserved by way of avoiding cultural hybridity and mixed marriage.

Hagop’s (NAA) comment above, as well as comments made by several other participants, reveal a nonchalant attitude towards the Armenian cause and participating in the memorial services of the Armenian genocide. While these are only a few instances that cannot be generalized to the wider population, several scholars have observed changing attitudes towards the genocide. As Hovannisian (2009) discusses, while some cherish and love their Armenian heritage, which includes the memory of the genocide, others choose to deny this aspect of Armenian identification and get rid of the imposed burden of the genocide. They choose to become totally immersed into their adopted land and forget about everything related to the past of Armenians (ibid). Hovannisian (2009, 182) also raises several questions, “does the pendulum swing the other way?”, “do some of the children say forget it all, I don’t want to have anything to do with that background?”.
The discussions above reveal that the answer to these questions is possibly “yes” and “no”, at least for this particular group of LAAs, because while many maintain a strong sense of national identity and passionately believe in the Armenian cause, others have started to adopt a more neutral attitude towards commemorating the Armenian genocide. It is worth mentioning however that although all participants, except Rita (BH) and Hrag (NAA) believe in the importance of maintaining the memory of the Armenian genocide, different adolescents reported varying degrees of participation in the memorial services of the genocide. It is not possible to report that residential location plays a role in influencing the participation of LAAs in the memorial services. However, what some discussions reveal is that BH participants expressed a stronger commitment to the commemoration services, as they take part in the preparations that lead to the event, and they regard it as a major activity of their lives. By contrast, more NAAs participants reported occasional participation, although most do believe that it is important to maintain the memory of the genocide.

Aram (BH) believes that the reduced participation in the memorial services is a sad situation because according to him losing one’s origin as an Armenian and growing up as an “Arab” is a repetition of the genocide. Aram (BH) commented,

“What I see today, the situation for me is very sad. The three people facing me [pointing at NAAs participants] are from Armenian families, and their parents are Armenian too, however, they like Arabic more than Armenian and encourage Arabic more than Armenian. We are living April 24th until today. Every day is April 24th, because without the Armenian language, we don’t exist. … I assume that, or give a probability of 90% that your children will be
lost. They will merge with Arabs and grow up as Arabs [addressing himself to NAA participants]”.

Just as Aram (BH) believes that growing up as “Arabs” is another genocide, Armenians across the diaspora also refer to the process of assimilation as a “white genocide” as opposed to the red genocide of 1915 (Sanjian, 2001; Panossian, 2002). As Thon (2012) comments, unlike the red genocide where blood is spilled, the white genocide denotes the process through which individuals are alienated from their ethnicity in a diasporic situation.

The participation of Lebanese Armenian adolescents in the remembrance day of the Armenian genocide: quantitative findings

For a general understanding of the subject in discussion, I present below Figure 8.1 illustrating the participation of LAAs in the memorial services of the Armenian genocide. Data for this section were obtained through the questionnaire item “do you attend the memorial services for the Armenian genocide on April 24th?” Participants were given the option to select one of the following responses, “yes, no, not every year”.

As the numbers reveal, the percentage of participants who reported attending the memorial services is relatively high, of whom 79.6% are from BH and 88.0% are from NAAs. On the other hand, 18.4% of BH participants and 8.0% of NAAs participants reported that they do not attend the memorial services every year. The remaining 2.0% from BH and 4.0% from NAAs reported that they do not attend the services. The figures do not
reveal that residential concentration contributes to higher numbers of participation in the memorial services. In fact, the figures of participation are close, with more NAAs participants reporting attendance.

**Figure 8.1**

While these figures suggest that location does not influence participation in the memorial services of the Armenian genocide, several participants during the interviews, such as Khajag (NAA), commented elaborately that NAAs adolescents do not consider participation in the memorial services of the genocide a priority. Khajag (NAA) said,

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4 BH n=... represents the total number of respondents from BH and NAAs n=... represents the total number of respondents from NAAs. This applies to all the figures in this chapter.
“The way they think [implying adolescents from NAA] is one hundred and eighty degrees different from ours. The Armenians who go to Lebanese schools and who grow up in Arabic social milieus are very influenced by that. I think they are very different because for example, April 24th, the genocide that we have been through, plays a very big role in the lives of our people. However, for the people who grow up in areas less populated by Armenians, the genocide is something very small [implying unimportant], it does not mean anything to them. … they say that Armenians in Armenian areas are “very Armenian”, as if being very Armenian is being old fashioned. … In addition, they don’t hold on to their roots. They are tsoulvads verchatsads [literally means in Armenian assimilated and finished; already assimilated]. Their Armenian language is gdrouk [broken] and they think Arabic. Whereas the young people who grow up in an Armenian region are “Armenians”! [Implying real Armenians].

What was interesting about Khajag’s (NAA) comment above is that regardless of living in a NAA, he associated himself with LAs who live in BH by using the pronouns “us” and “ours” and disconnecting himself from LAs who live in NAAs, to whom he referred using the pronoun “they”. When I asked him about the reason behind that, he said, “I owe it to my parents”.

Although Khajag’s (NAA) comment is only one reported perception, it may provide some insight into how LAs who integrate more into Lebanese society are perceived by other members in the community.
The attendance of Lebanese Armenian adolescents in Armenian and non-Armenian youth associations and clubs

I now move to discuss the participation of LAAs in Armenian community life, particularly in Armenian youth associations and social clubs known as the *agoump*, often regarded as the core of Armenian youth life in Lebanon. Growing up in an Armenian community, “*agoump gertam!*” “I’m going to the club” is a phrase I constantly heard by young family members or friends who naturally called out this phrase as they were heading to social clubs or youth associations.

As discussed in Chapter 2, Armenian associations in Lebanon have played a role in bringing stability to LAs while building a sense of identity through promoting WAL and Armenian values and culture (Migliorino, 2008; Ter-Matevosyan, 2017). Today, youth and students’ associations, sports clubs and scouts are numerous and successful in Lebanon with the major ones being the *Homenetmen* Sporting Club, the *Homenmen* and the *Antranik* Youth Association, which were founded by different Armenian parties. Armenian associations continue to maintain their appeal to youths and provide physical spaces for LAs to come together and connect not only locally but also internationally with their fellow diasporan Armenians around the world (Migliorino, 2008).

In the original research design finding out about participants’ political affiliations was not part of the focus, hence why I did not ask them about the names of the Armenian clubs they have been to. I only asked whether they have been to an Armenian club as my intention was to gain a better understanding of their social interactions and to find out the degree to which they are surrounded by members of the Armenian community. However, after initial discussions and after further investigation into the nature of the differences within the
Armenian community, it became apparent that identifying political affiliations is relevant to the study and an interesting area of investigation.

In order to identify political affiliations, I had to contact some of the interview participants again and ask about the names of Armenian clubs they have been to and their political affiliations. It was not necessary to contact all interview participants again as I was able to retrieve some of the required information by going through the interviews again. Some participants during the interviews had spoken about their political affiliations without me directly asking them. It is important to note that it was not possible for me to find out about the political affiliations of the questionnaire participants because, as mentioned, this was not part of the original design of the research and there was not an item on the questionnaire that addresses this subject. Since the questionnaires were anonymously filled, it was not possible to contact the questionnaire participants again (for participants’ political affiliations and for the names of the clubs they have been to, see appendix 9, 36-41).

According to Fishman (1991), when an ethnic community becomes geographically dispersed, it might lose access to its clubs, associations, schools and meetinghouses, which might influence their ethno-cultural practices and lead them to use the more dominant language of the country they reside in. While typically participants have been to an Armenian social club at some point of their life (as seen in appendix 9), it is not yet clear if residential location and/or geographical dispersal affects club attendance although more BH participants reported activism in political parties, particularly the Tashnag party.

In an interview I conducted with the head of Homenetmen Club Hagop Keshishian (2014), he discussed the decline in youth participation in the club in comparison to previous years, seeing this a result of the recent geographical dispersal of LAs as well as videogames, social networking and other new technology that is drawing Armenian youth away from
sports. Keshishian (2014) also spoke about the difficulty of commuting to the premises of the club resulted by the recent residential location of young LAs as well as the economic contraction endured by their parents. Keshishian (2014) commented,

“When Armenians used to live next to each other, kids for example used to come from school, finish studying, and go to play either football, basketball or ping pong at the agoump [club]. Today, as they are living far, they are far from their agoump. … Add to that the economic situation; for example, some Armenian kids live in NAAs, such as Kornet Shehwan [NAA], and their fathers are not capable of consuming petrol in order to bring their child on a Sunday morning to the agoump. Moreover, they would have to leave and wait for three hours to come back and pick up their child. Before it was easy as the child used to go and come back on foot. Nowadays, if for example, in that Arabic region there is an Arabic club, parents are sending their children there. This means that first of all they are losing their language, the child is distanced from his Armenian milieu, and for sure they are pushing that child to the path of mixed marriage” (see extract from the interview in Appendix 10, 42-43).

Despite the perceived influence of geographical dispersal on club participation, several participants commented on the importance of attending Armenian clubs. For example, Khajag (NAA) discussed the importance of going to the agoump and related that to the “salvation” of the WAL. Khajag (NAA) said,
“Of course they [implying LAAs] should enter the agoump! First of all the Armenian agoump, but even before that the Armenian school so that they use our language. … The Armenian agoump does not give an Arabic upbringing or reinforce an Arabic character, but rather an Armenian one. So when you are raised in an Armenian agoump, you are raised as an Armenian young person”.

As mentioned, typically participants have at some point attended Armenian clubs irrespective of their residential location. However, I noticed a difference in participants’ enthusiasm concerning attending Armenian clubs, and that enthusiasm may stem from their residential location. For example, Khatchig (BH) commented that it is “a must” to attend Armenian clubs, merge with LAs and not lose “our community”. During GI2 too, BH participants seemed to be more enthusiastic about their activities in Armenian clubs. When I asked Simon (BH), Narine (BH) and Aram (BH) if they have ever been to an Armenian youth club or association, the three said “of course” and explained what they do there. For example, Aram (BH) said,

“Of course I go to an “agoump”. I sleep there in the agoump! [I sleep there is an expression used in Armenian to imply that one spends a lot of time there]. We go there a lot. I am always active in Armenian social life”.

The comments of NAAs participants during GI2 were different. They expressed that there is no difference between attending Lebanese clubs or Armenian clubs and reported attending “Arabic” clubs. For example, Mark (NAA) commented,
“I don’t see what the problem is. Both are the same. No, I don’t go [implying to the Armenian agoump]. For me they are both the same. It doesn’t make a difference I mean. Nevertheless, I like when you go to an Armenian team; you would have more of a sense of belonging there and someone would back you up. No matter what happens they would be with you”.

Following Mark’s (NAA) comment, Jenny (NAA) said,

“Arabic, we go to Arabic places. But I agree with what he said [implying with Mark (NAA)], because at the end of the day wherever Armenians go, they find a way to recreate Armenia”.

The comments reveal that NAAs participants either attend non-Armenian clubs or attend both Armenian and non-Armenian clubs. They typically do not place major importance on attending Armenian clubs. Some reported going to Armenian sports clubs as children and spoke of the support they find when being in an Armenian milieu. On the other hand, BH participants, mainly reported going to Armenian clubs and associations until today.

Similar accounts were given during GI1. Jack (BH) Patrick (BH) and Chahe (BH) commented that they go to Armenian clubs and scouts and that they are Lemagan; being a Lemagan means being a member of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation’s Lebanese Youth Association. For example, Chahe (BH) commented, “I am a Lemagan. … Every young person should find any place with an Armenian milieu”.
On the other hand, Marale (NAA) and Nareg (NAA) reported being to *Homenetmen* club for only a few years to play basketball. Nareg (NAA) commented,

“I played basketball in an Armenian place. It was very nice but I left it because I didn’t have time”.

Some participants spoke about the importance of attending both Armenian and non-Armenian clubs and/or associations. Carine (NAA) commented that she goes both to Armenian and non-Armenian clubs and said,

“I go to both Lebanese clubs and Armenian clubs. I feel both are important. In Armenian ones, we feel close to each other and our Armenian language becomes stronger; and if we go to an Arabic place, at least people who don’t know Arabic can learn it. Every nation has its own good side”.

Hovnan (BH) made a similar comment and said that as long as LAs “know their limits” they can merge with the Lebanese. He said,

“I go to *Homenetmen* Club. It is important for Armenians to go to Armenian clubs, social clubs, etc., but at the same time, they could merge with the Lebanese, but they should know their limits. If you live in an Armenian milieu and you are surrounded by Armenians very well, you could go to an
Arabic club or something, because you wouldn’t forget your Armenianness. However, when you don’t have an Armenian milieu, and everything around you is Arabic, it’s wrong! There should be a limit as well as a balance”.

When I asked Hovnan (BH) whether he has ever attended non-Armenian clubs himself and whether that helped him in anyway, he mentioned that he used to be in a Lebanese football team but not for long. “My Arabic language would have improved, that’s the only thing”, he said. Similarly, Steve (BH) mentioned that going to a Lebanese club makes one’s Arabic “better” and that he has been to an Armenian club as well as a Lebanese summer camp so that his Arabic improves. Steve (BH) explained that since all his classmates at school were LAs and since he grew up in an Armenian neighbourhood, his parents sent him to a Lebanese summer camp so he gets the chance to speak more Arabic. “No matter how Armenian you are, Arabic is also needed”, he added.

In contrast to Steve’s (BH) reported language contact situation, interestingly Sergio (NAA) said going to an Armenian club makes him speak “more Armenian”.

“When I was a kid, I went to a social club in BH to learn Judo and karate. … All the people there were Armenians from BH. When I went there, I spoke Armenian with everyone. … It is important to go to an Armenian social club because I don’t have a lot of contact with Armenian people. So if I go, I would increase my contact with Armenians and speak more Armenian”.
While the discussions above reveal the possible contribution of residential concentration to ongoing Armenian club attendance, Rita (BH) made a comment that was different to what many BH participants said. She commented,

“No, I have never been to an agoump. It is useless because they brainwash people more. Now ok, it is not wrong for someone to love their nation, or to love Armeniananness, but there is no need to brainwash people that much about Armenian, Armenian, Armenian, and at the same time trigger Arabs and turn them against you. It’s not nice. So I don’t care”.

While it is not possible to generalize Rita’s (BH) comment, as it is one reported instance, her comment gives an idea about public discourse around this subject matter. It also reflects Migliorino’s (2008) discussion about how political parties, particularly the Tashnag party in BH, is perceived as a hegemonic force that controls the Armenian community and politicizes it.

The attendance of Lebanese Armenian adolescents in Armenian and non-Armenian youth associations and clubs: quantitative findings

For a general understanding of the subject in discussion, I present below Figure 8.2 illustrating participants’ Armenian club attendance. Data for this section were obtained through the questionnaire item “have you ever joined Armenian clubs/ societies/ scouts/
dance schools/ summer camps?”. Participants were given the option to select one of the following responses, “yes, no”.

As the numbers reveal, the percentage of participants who reported attending Armenian clubs and other institutions is substantially high, of whom 79.6% are from BH and 82.0% are from NAAs. The remaining 20.4% who have not been to Armenian clubs and/or associations are from BH and 18.0% are from NAAs. The figures do not suggest that residential concentration has an impact on Armenian club attendance. In fact, the percentage of NAAs participants who have been to Armenian clubs and/or associations is slightly higher than the percentage of BH participants who have been to Armenian clubs and/or associations.

While it is not possible to understand the degree of involvement in Armenian clubs through Figure 8.2 below and while it is not clear whether the purpose of involvement is social or political, it is possible to suggest that a good portion of BH and NAAs participants still attends Armenian clubs.

![Figure 8.2](image-url)

Have you ever joined Armenian clubs/societies/scouts/dance schools/summer camps?
BH n=49/ NAAs n=50

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<th></th>
<th>%BH</th>
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<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>79.6%</td>
<td>82.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>20.4%</td>
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Apart from asking participants about Armenian clubs they have been to, I also asked if they have been to non-Armenian clubs, which I report in Figure 8.3 below. Data for this section were obtained through the questionnaire item “have you ever joined Lebanese clubs/societies/scouts/dance schools/summer camps?”. Participants were given the option to select one of the following responses, “yes, no”.

As the figures reveal, 40.8% of BH participants reported attending Lebanese clubs and other institutions and 56.0% of NAAs participants reported the same. On the other hand, 59.2% of BH participants reported not attending non-Armenian clubs and other institutions and 44.0% of NAAs participants reported the same. Although the percentage of participants who reported attending non-Armenian clubs is higher amongst NAAs participants, these figures do not suggest that residential location has an impact on Lebanese club attendance as there is a good proportion of participants in both contexts who reported being to Lebanese clubs and/or associations. While it is not possible to generalize this to all LAAs, data in this section can be telling about changes happening within the Armenian community in terms of integrating more into mainstream Lebanese society.

Figure 8.3
The religious practices of Lebanese Armenian adolescents

Throughout history, Armenian Christian tradition has been deeply national and tightly linked to ethnic identity and revival (Panossian, 2002). In Lebanon as well, the Armenian community has been mainly featured as a religious entity that is administered by the Armenian Church, the central administrative body of the Armenian community in Lebanon (Migliorino, 2008; Ter-Matevosyan, 2017). However, today religious indifference and secularism is becoming widespread among LAs (Agadjanian, 2014; Papkova, 2014). As Migliorino (2008) comments, Armenian priests of different Armenian churches in Lebanon complain about poor church attendance, mainly by young people.

Concerning my participants, many during the individual interviews reported going to church very rarely or only on occasions, and some reported not going at all. For example, when I asked Hrag (NAA) if he goes to the Armenian Church, he said, “no, not at all”. As for Angelique (NAA), she said, “No, I don’t go to the church. When it’s my grandfather’s yearly memorial, I go. That’s it”.

Khatchig (BH), Hovnan (BH), Steve (BH), and Mike (BH) reported that they go to church only on “special occasions”. For example, Mike (BH) said, “I go very little to the church. Only when there are certain occasions such as a wedding or a funeral”. Khajag (NAA) and Levon (NAA) also reported not going to the church frequently. Khajag (NAA) said, “I don’t have much time on Sundays. It happens sometimes that I go once every two weeks and sometimes once every two month, because the Armenian churches are far from my house”.

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The comments reveal that the Christian identity of LAAs is possibly being redefined. While the Armenian Church was the first re-established institution in Lebanon following the Armenian genocide, and while it served as an identity marker and an important space for communal interaction (Migliorino, 2008), today the recent geographical dispersal of the community outside BH might be contributing to limited participation in religious activities, since as Khajag (NAA) commented, churches become “far” from where LAs live.

*The religious practices of Lebanese Armenian adolescents: quantitative findings*

For a general understanding of the religious practices of LAAs, I present below Figure 8.4 illustrating how often LAAs attend Armenian mass. Data were obtained through the questionnaire item, “how often do you attend Armenian mass?” Participants were given the option to select one of the following responses, “every week, every month, every three months, every year, on special occasions, never”.

As the numbers reveal, responses varied widely. 37.5% of BH participants reported attending mass every week, 14.6% reported attending every month, 8.3% reported attending every three months, 2.1% reported attending every year, 35.4% reported attending on special occasions, and 2.1% reported that they never attend Armenian mass. On the other hand, 20.4% of NAAs participants reported attending Armenian mass every week, 10.2% reported attending every month, 14.3% reported attending every three months, 8.2% reported attending every year, 38.8% reported attending on special occasions and 8.2% reported that they never attend Armenian mass. These percentages do not reveal a clear influence of residential location on church attendance; however, the slightly higher percentage of BH
participants who attend Armenian mass every week is a possible indication that residential concentration may contribute to higher numbers of church attendance amongst LAAs. On the other hand, the figures 35.4% and 38.8% representing participants who attend Armenian mass on special occasions are relatively high. To report a personal observation, on special occasions such as on Christmas day, Easter, as well as the Armenian genocide commemoration day, Armenian churches would be packed more often than not for cultural and social purposes rather than religious, as is the case with many Christian communities in Lebanon.

![Figure 8.4](image-url)

How often do you attend the Armenian mass?
BH n=48 / NAAs n=49

- Every week: 37.5% BH, 20.4% NAAs
- Every month: 14.6% BH, 14.3% NAAs
- Every three months: 10.2% BH, 8.3% NAAs
- Every year: 8.2% BH, 2.1% NAAs
- On special occasions (e.g. Easter): 35.4% BH, 38.8% NAAs
- Never: 2.1% BH, 8.2% NAAs
In this section, I probe into the core beliefs of LAAs about marriage, interethnic marriage and family formation. I discuss whether LAAs would be in a relationship or marry a non-Armenian. Although more common in the past, typically the attitudes towards mixed marriage in the diaspora are still quite conservative (Der-Karabetian & Proudian-Der-Karabetian, 1984; Dumitrascu, 2016). Since the family as a unit makes up the traditional conception of the Armenian community in Lebanon, the majority of families traditionally used to disapprove of marriage outside of the Armenian circle with an attempt to maintain Armenian culture and the WAL. According to Whooley (2009), it was not difficult for LAs to follow this custom in Lebanon because throughout the Middle East all communities, such as Muslim, Jewish and Christian communities, would have similar expectations.

When in the past marriage with a non-Armenian was viewed as a taboo, today interethnic marriage, particularly with Christian Lebanese, is on the increase (Migliorino, 2008). As Papkova (2013) comments, during the last decade LAs have been actively integrating into broader Lebanese society, which has led to a dramatic increase in the number of LAs who opt for a non-Armenian spouse. The question of mixed marriage is often regarded as a challenge not only for LAs but also for the different denominations in Lebanon as it is believed to lead to social, cultural and canonical struggles (Nassif, 2016). According to Nassif (2016), data gathered from different religious courts in Lebanon reveal that in the past fifty years, mixed marriages have gone from ten percent to sixty percent.

There could be several reasons leading to the increase in the number of mixed marriages amongst LAs. For some, it is an inevitable process resulting from enrolling
children in non-Armenian schools for better education and future employment opportunities (Papkova, 2013). For others, such as Keshishian (2014), the head of the Armenian Homenetmen Club in Lebanon, it is the recent geographical dispersal of LAs and their integration into broader Lebanese society that leads to attending non-Armenian clubs, meeting “Arab” youth and marrying them (see extract from the interview in Appendix 10, 42-43).

Whatever the reason behind the recent trend of mixed marriages amongst LAs, what is probable is that it contributes to changes in the status of WA. As Igboanusi and Wolf (2009) discuss, intermarriage leads to HL shift by changing language practices within the home domain. It is more likely for a minority language to survive when spouses speak the same language than when they speak different languages (ibid). Concerning my participants, almost all of them, including NAAs participants, mentioned during the interviews that they prefer marrying a LA, and many reported that their preference is because of the language. Even when it comes to relationships, some reported that they prefer being with a LA as they think it makes communication easier. When some reported not having a problem being in a relationship with a non-Armenian, for future and more serious relationships participants typically reported that they prefer a LA. For example, during GI2, Narine (BH) commented that she would only “maintain a bond” with an Armenian, otherwise she would “take the road to assimilation”. As for Steve (BH), he commented during the individual interview,

“If it’s only a girlfriend, it doesn’t matter, but of course I prefer an Armenian girlfriend because communication would be easier. No matter how good your Arabic language is, you will make a language mistake at some point. … You need an Armenian girlfriend to speak Armenian with her and to understand
each other. … When it comes to marriage, of course she should be an Armenian! Because you’re going to have a family; if your wife is a bit dominant, and she wants to put the kids in an Arabic school, the Armenian language would be over. Apart from the kids, an Armenian wife is important so that you speak Armenian on a daily basis.

Several other participants, such as Hovnan (BH) Khatchig (BH) and Mike (BH) also expressed that they prefer to be in a relationship with or marry an Armenian because they feel more comfortable. They also took into consideration language barrier. For example, Khatchig (BH) explained that it is easier to have an Armenian girlfriend and talk to her in WA. He commented,

“If I had a Lebanese girlfriend, I don’t think the relationship would continue on the long run and I would prepare myself for that. … When it comes to marriage, no I can’t do that! I prefer an Armenian”.

Levon (NAA) made a similar comment and explained that if it is “a serious relationship going somewhere” he has to be with an Armenian so his children read and write WA and grow up in an Armenian milieu rather than a Lebanese milieu. What makes Levon’s (NAA) comment interesting is that despite being raised in a NAA and despite not knowing how to read and write WA, his intention is to raise his children away from a Lebanese milieu and teach them to speak, read and write WA. Levon’s (NAA) intention gives a probability of breaking the cycle of language shift in his future family. This break in the cycle of language
shift is a process that Fishman (1991) refers to as reversing language shift. It is a process through which a new generation of HL speakers is created, even when parents themselves do not know the language.

Khajag (NAA) also expressed his preference to being with an Armenian. He commented,

“An Armenian is always preferable. As a girlfriend it’s ok, but as a wife, I would like an Armenian. Unless my wife accepts to grow as an Armenian with me; but still; there would be an issue here. Her blood would be Arabic, that’s why I always prefer an Armenian”.

Khajag’s comment above is another instance of affiliating to an ideology of “blood connection” which again is a political ideology salient amongst Tashnag party followers. Ideologies of “blood connection” are not limited to LAAs, as they are traditionally salient amongst other ethnic groups that believe being a member of a nation is a matter of hereditary and people of the same nation should have common blood. An example is reported by Skya (2009), who discusses radical Japanese ideologies throughout 1860 and 1912 whereby being of Japanese blood descent determined who could qualify as a Japanese and who could be a member of the Japanese state. Based on this ideology it was not possible for a non-Japanese to be entitled as a member of the Japanese state by way of cultural assimilation (ibid). While Khajag’s (NAA) comment is only one reported instance and it cannot be generalized to the wider population, it can be telling data about how some LAAs believe that being of Armenian blood descent determines who qualifies as an Armenian.
When the majority of participants stated their preference to being with an Armenian when it comes to relationships and/or marriage, some were neutral about this topic and did not consider nationality a factor that affects their future partner choice. Many of those participants were from NAAs. For example, Mark (NAA) commented that nationality is not important or makes no difference. “When you’re in love with someone, it’s not about who they are, and where they are from. You just love them”, he said. As for Hrag (NAA) and Angelique (NAA) their comments respectively were,

“I don’t have a problem. A human is a human and it makes no difference whether they are Armenian, Lebanese, or Chinese. It makes no difference”.

“He can be an Armenian or he can be a Lebanese. Makes no difference. When it comes to getting married, my dad wants him to be an Armenian [she laughs]. If he’s an Armenian even better, but my decision won’t stand on that, you know? [Implying his nationality won’t affect her decision]”.

While Angelique (NAA) is open to marrying a non-Armenian and while she reported that her father prefers an Armenian spouse, she expressed that her decision will not be based on the nationality of her future husband. While this is only one reported instance which cannot be generalized to the wider population, experiencing parental pressure when it comes to ethnic marriage or mixed marriage is common within the Armenian community in Lebanon. In fact, I allow myself to report that I experienced parental pressure myself, particularly in instances where I was told by family members to “put an effort” to meet an
Armenian man by engaging more in Armenian communal and social activities. Such experiences are not limited to the Armenian community in Lebanon as they are salient amongst other ethnic groups. For instance, Barack-Fishman (2004) explores attitudes towards intermarriage among Jewish Americans and comments that parental pressure to marry a Jew is salient amongst her participants while on the other hand parents sometimes express objections to mixed marriage.

Opinions of Lebanese Armenian adolescents about being in a relationship with or marrying a non-Armenian: quantitative findings

For a general understanding of the subject in discussion, I present below Figures 8.5, 8.6, 8.7 and 8.8 illustrating the possible future choices LAAs would make in terms of relationships and marriage.

I begin by presenting the percentage of LAAs who reported that they would or would not be in a relationship with a non-Armenian. Data for this section were obtained through the questionnaire item, “would you take a Lebanese person as a boyfriend or girlfriend?”. Participants were given the option to select one of the following responses, “yes, no”. As Figure 8.5 reveals, 38.8% of BH participants reported that they would take a Lebanese person as boyfriend or girlfriend and 61.2% reported that they would not. On the other hand 90.0% of NAAs participants said that they would take a Lebanese person as a boyfriend or girlfriend and 10.0% said that they would not. This means that a good portion of BH participants continue to show preference to being in a relationship with a Armenian whereas on the other
hand the majority of NAAs participants are more open to being in a relationship with a non-Armenian.

Figure 8.5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BH</td>
<td>38.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAAs</td>
<td>90.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Apart from asking participants whether they would be in a relationship with a non-Armenian, I also asked if they would marry a non-Armenian. Data for this section were obtained through the questionnaire item, “would you take a Lebanese person as a husband or wife?”. Participants were given the option to select one of the following responses, “yes, no”. As Figure 8.6 reveals, 26.5% of BH participants reported that they would take a Lebanese person as a husband or wife and 73.5% reported that they would not. Conversely, 62.0% of NAAs participant said that they would take a Lebanese person as a husband or wife and 38.0% said that they would not. The majority of BH participants continue to show preference to Armenian marriage whereas on the other hand the majority of NAAs participants are more open to the concept of mixed marriage. What is interesting however is that although NAAs participants are more open to mixed relationships or marriage than BH
participants are, more participants in total were open to being in a relationship with a non-Armenian than marrying a non-Armenian. This partly reflects the discussions above, where several participants reported that they would not mind being in a relationship with a non-Armenian but when it comes to marriage, they prefer to be with an Armenian.

Figure 8.6

In order to probe deeper into this subject matter, I also asked participants about the importance of being in a relationship with an Armenian and/or the importance of marrying an Armenian. I asked the questions, “do you think it is important for you to have an Armenian boyfriend or girlfriend?” and “do you think it is important for you to have an Armenian husband or wife?” Participants were given the option to select one of the following responses, “yes, no”. Interestingly, this time the answers were different to those obtained and presented in the figures above.
As Figures 8.7 and 8.8 below reveal, 70% of BH participants said that it is important to have an Armenian boyfriend and/or girlfriend and 72% said that it is important to have an Armenian husband or wife. On the other hand, BH participants who said it is not important to be in a relationship or marry an Armenian was substantially lower, as 30.0% said it is not important to have an Armenian girlfriend or boyfriend and 28.0% said that it is not important to have an Armenian husband or wife. As for NAAs participants, 64.0% said it is important to have an Armenian boyfriend or girlfriend and 36.0% said that it is not important. 66.0% said that it is important to marry an Armenian and 64.0% said that it is not important.

Figure 8.7

![Bar chart showing percentages of BH and NAAs participants on whether they think it is important to have an Armenian Boyfriend or Girlfriend. BH n=50/ NAAs n=50.](chart.png)
The quantitative findings above reveal a certain degree of inconsistency between what the majority of participants said during the interviews and the answers provided in the questionnaires. While the majority of the interview participants expressed the preference of marrying an Armenian, half of the questionnaire participants said that they would marry a Lebanese. On the other hand, the majority of the questionnaire respondents reported the importance of being in Armenian relationships and marriage.

One possible explanation of this can be that different methodological approaches can reveal different data. Questionnaires and interviews are different tools that elicit different information from people. As discussed in Chapter 4, people often respond in a questionnaire differently from how they respond in a face-to-face or group interview where the researcher can access the respondents’ attitudes and values as well as the way they feel or think (Dornyei and Taguchi, 2009). While it is important to address the subject of interethnic marriage within the Armenian community further in future studies, data in this study reveal that regardless of the different answers obtained in the interviews and questionnaires, a
significant number of participants prefer being in a relationship with and/or marry an Armenian.

**Conclusion**

The discussions in this chapter reveal the complex nature of the ideologies and cultural practices of LAAs. While a considerable portion of participants continue to be actively involved in Armenian community life, take part in major Armenian cultural practices, join Armenian community institutions such as sports clubs and youth associations and have the intention of forming an Armenian family, another important portion, typically from NAAs, reveals signs of detachment from Armenian community life and cultural practices.

When it comes to the Armenian genocide, typically adolescents from both BH and NAAs continue to participate in the memorial services of the genocide and consider it an important day, although a few participants, typically from NAAs, revealed a shift in their attitudes towards commemorating the Armenian genocide. As for the religious practices of my participants and their church attendance, it is not clear if residential concentration directly influences the decreasing participation in Armenian religious life, although the figures obtained from the questionnaires revealed higher percentages of weekly mass attendance by BH participants.

Concerning participation in Armenian clubs and youth associations, it is not clear if residential concentration has a direct influence on club participation, although some accounts
did reveal less participation on the part of NAAs participants. It also seems that, the participation of NAAs participants in Armenian social clubs is limited to social and sports activities, while on the other hand, there seems to be more political involvement on the part of BH participants, as many expressed political ideologies inspired by their affiliation to political parties, particularly the ARF party.

When it comes to marriage, although many during the interviews showed preference to being with and marrying an Armenian, the questionnaire findings revealed otherwise, as a significant number of NAAs participants reported that they would take a Lebanese person as a husband or wife. Nevertheless, the majority of participants from both BH and NAAs believe it is “important” to be in a relationship with or marry an Armenian.

Findings in this chapter reveal possible differences in the cultural practices and ideologies of LAAs from BH and NAAs. Nevertheless, participants from both BH and NAAs typically expressed views that reflect a strong sense of national identity as well as a continued identification with Armenian ideologies and cultural practices. Some nonconventional or non-traditional opinions were revealed, which possibly implies that there are changes happening within the Armenian community. Such changes, although they lack enough evidence, are reflected in the reduced participation in communal activities and the adoption of a more integrative ideology.

Finally, the complex nature of the ideologies and ideological practices revealed in this chapter might have an influence on the vitality of the WAL in Lebanon. The influence might be translated in the LPs of my participants, which I report on in Chapter 10.
Chapter 9

The impact of residential location on the Language attitudes of Lebanese Armenian adolescents

Introduction

In this chapter, I report on the language attitudes of LAAs and how such attitudes may be influenced by residential concentration and geographical dispersal. I explore the feelings and opinions of a group of LAAs about the WAL and the Arabic language, and I discuss how important they think the two languages are. I discuss how positive attitudes towards the WAL can contribute to maintaining it and how negative attitudes might lead to shifting to a more dominant language.

I base the analysis in this chapter on data I collected through ten individual interviews and two group interviews conducted between summer 2014 and summer 2015, and I back the discussions up with figures derived from one hundred survey questionnaires I distributed to fifty BH participants and fifty NAAs participants during the same phase. I present the quantitative findings in the form of charts.
Parental involvement in maintaining Western Armenian in Lebanon

Parental influence can be one of the reasons why LAAs shift from WA into another language, or not. As discussed in Chapter 3, a number of studies reveal that parental commitment and involvement contribute to HL maintenance among younger generations (Kondo-Brown 2006; Tsunoda, 2006; Pauwels, 2016). Conversely, a negative language attitude, as Grosjean (1982) and Tsunoda (2006) discuss, may lead to language demise. Often a negative language attitude is linked to lack of social prestige and an inferior evaluation of a HL (Tsunoda, 2006). There are immigrants, for instance, who for economic reasons would not be ready to struggle for the maintenance of their HL, nor would they explicitly value it (Grosjean, 1982). Such immigrants often do not make an effort to preserve their HL and want their children to quickly assimilate into their new environment (Fishman and Garcia, 2010). In line with this, I believe the motivation of LA parents to maintain WA, or the lack of it, may have an influence on its continued use in Lebanon.

To better understand the involvement of LA parents and their motivation to maintain the WAL, during the interviews, I asked participants if their parents emphasize speaking Armenian at home. Although responses varied, I noticed that, irrespective of their AOR, parents typically encouraged their children to speak WA and emphasised the importance of speaking it, at least at some point. For example, when I asked Levon (NAA) about the importance of WA to his parents and whether they encourage him to speak it, he responded,

“Yes they do. For example when I speak with my siblings, my dad doesn’t like it. He wants us to understand and know what words mean in Armenian,
rather than using another language. For example, when I say something in Arabic he tells me, “why don’t you learn the word in Armenian?”.

Angelique (NAA) also reported the same thing,

“Yes, until today my dad tells us to speak Armenian when I am sitting with my sisters or when I am sitting with my cousin. We speak French all the time, so he says “hayeren khosir! Hayeren khosir!” [Speak Armenian! Speak Armenian!] Cause we forget, because we are so used to speaking French”.

Emphasis on HL transmission can lead to criticism or punishment when one uses the dominant language (Tsunoda, 2006; Pauwels, 2016). Such instances are not far from happening within LA families. For instance, when I asked Sergio (NAA) if his parents emphasize speaking WA at home, he responded,

“Yes. Massalan [Massalan means ‘for example’ in Arabic], if we are sitting with siblings and friends, sometimes we speak French; actually we speak more French. My parents used to reprimand us and tell us to speak more Armenian. We used to laugh and continue in Armenian but French too, “half/half”.”.

Several BH participants such as Mike and Steve also reported that their parents emphasized speaking WA at home. Some even commented that their parents do not have to
remind them to speak WA because they speak it anyways at home. For example, Hovnan (BH) said, “I have never experienced anything like that because we don’t speak Arabic at home”. Khatchig (BH) also said, “they wouldn’t have to remind us to speak Armenian because we already speak it”. As for Hrag (NAA), he commented,

“Yes, they created the habit of me speaking Armenian at home. I never spoke another language at home because that’s what I got used to”.

During GI2, I noticed differences in parental encouragement to speaking WA at home. All BH participants reported that at least at some point, their parents reminded them to speak WA at home. This was not the case with NAAs participants who all commented that their parents do not stress the importance of speaking WA “anymore”. For example, Jenny (NAA) said,

“Before my parents used to tell us that we should speak Armenian. But now, a’aade [a’aade is an Arabic word that means normal. In this context it implies indifference about using Arabic at home]”.

Although it is not possible to generalize the comments above to the wider population, it seems that typically LA parents continue to believe in the importance of speaking WA at home, although the level of emphasis on speaking it seems to vary from one household to another. No negative parental attitudes were revealed towards the WAL in this study, although Jebejian (2007) reports changes in the attitudes of parents towards it.
For a general understanding of the subject in discussion, I present below Figure 9.1 illustrating the percentage of LA parents who emphasize speaking WA at home. Data for this section was collected through the questionnaire item “is speaking Armenian emphasized by your parents and family?”. Participants were given the option to select one of the following responses, “yes, no”.

As the numbers reveal, the percentage of BH participants whose parents emphasize speaking WA at home is 82.0% and the percentage of NAAs participants who reported the same is 76.0%. While both percentages are substantially high and show parental involvement in WAL maintenance, the remaining 18.4% and 24.0% of parents do not emphasize speaking WA at home, which may gradually influence its status in Lebanon.

It is important to note that these figures do not reveal the reason why some parents do not emphasize speaking WA at home. It can be because “they know” their children speak it at home, as in Khajag’s case (NAA), or because they are not committed to transferring it to their children.
Mainstream attitudes towards Lebanese Armenians and the Western Armenian language

Negative mainstream attitudes towards a HL affect its continuation, particularly when it is a language associated with low prestige and poverty (Ruiz, 1984; Slaughter-Defoe, 2009). A HL is also negatively influenced when community members, particularly younger ones, are criticized for speaking in a certain way and are made to believe that their language is “incorrect” (Tsunoda, 2006). This may lead some to refrain from speaking their HL as a way to avoid making mistakes (ibid).

The interview discussions revealed that participants in this study seem to experience twofold social pressure and language criticism, which might influence their language choice.

 BH n=… represents the total number of respondents from BH and NAAs n=… represents the total number of respondents from NAAs. This applies to all the figures in this chapter.
and the way they speak. Some reported being criticised by mainstream Lebanese society for speaking WA and for not speaking “good Arabic”. Some also reported being criticized by LA “purists” for not speaking “good” WA, which might also have a negative influence on the future of the WAL. For example, during GI2, Simon (BH) reported being criticized by the Lebanese for speaking WA. He commented,

“It always happens. But that’s nothing. I am an Armenian of course and that’s why that criticism doesn’t mean anything to me. Sometimes when we are discussing a certain topic, if we say something in Armenian or if we say something they don’t understand, they [implying non-Armenians] criticize us and they think that Armenians don’t know Arabic well. … I have never been criticized for the way I speak Arabic, but I have heard that it happens. But that doesn’t mean anything. They are the ones who are stupid. For example, when it comes to gender difference in the Arabic language, which Armenians confuse; I mean, they are ignorant to create such language rules! [Implying there shouldn’t be male and female differences].

While gender differences are not unique to the Arabic language as many languages mark gender differences on nouns such as French, Spanish, Italian and Latin languages, it is interesting to note that the perception of Simon (BH) of Arabic is quite negative in that respect. This is a fake perception of language that is not unique to LAs but is a wider language issue. It is an expression of language attitude that is quite commonplace amongst non-specialists. Such a negative language attitude might have an influence on Simon (BH) although he expressed that criticism does not affect him. The words he used, such as “stupid”
and “they are ignorant” as well as the tone of his voice were defensive. This can be an indication that criticism does have an influence on Simon (BH) and possibly on other LAAs who are surrounded with more non-Armenian friends. As Kondo-Brown (2006) discusses, a negative influence might with time hinder young people from speaking their HL and lead them to revert to the more dominant language, even when they have a positive attitude towards their own language. In the case of LAAs, some may switch to using Arabic as a result of hearing negative commentaries from their Lebanese peers. For example, when I asked Levon (NAA) whether he has ever been criticized for using WA, he said that “it happens” and that in those instances he continues to speak in Arabic.

Several participants during the interviews reported experiencing some form of language criticism by their Lebanese friends. However, their reactions to criticism varies. While some reported that they take things lightly and even switch to Arabic, others reported being offended or “angered”. Some said that they continue to deliberately speak Armenian. For instance, during GI2, Aram (BH) reported getting involved into an argument as a result of being criticized for speaking WA. “If someone criticizes me, I don’t keep quiet”, he said, “it happened with me once and I got involved into an argument”.

When in an individual interview I asked Angelique (NAA) about this matter, she commented that being criticized for speaking WA was “rude” and “very very stupid”. Angelique (NAA) added,

“When I speak Armenian in front of a Lebanese, they say it’s rude and impolite and it’s lack of respect. It angers me. … We wouldn’t even be talking about them, we would be saying something that wouldn’t interest the
whole group, or something that I want to only tell my friend, so why would they want to know? It’s very very stupid commentaries”.

Angelique (NAA) also said that WA should be spoken despite external pressures,

“It is a language and it should remain. … There is so much history and culture behind every language. … Us Armenians shouldn’t allow that the Lebanese pressure us so that we wouldn’t be able to stand up and speak. We shouldn’t allow them to exclude us so that we would change and become like them [implying the Lebanese]”.

Angelique’s comment (NAA) reveals another instance of experiencing negative attitudes, “stupid commentaries”, towards speaking WA. While this is only one reported instance, experiencing negative peer attitude or pressure is common amongst various ethnic groups. Such experiences, as Hayashi (2007) reports may hinder young members of an ethnic community from using their HL as they feel they do not want to stand out from others. Having said that, negative peer attitudes do not necessarily lead to language shift, particularly when individuals have a strong sense of ethnic group membership.

During the individual interview with Sergio (NAA), he also reported experiencing commentaries by his non-Armenian peers. He mentioned that he continues to speak WA and remains indifferent,
“I continue doing it on purpose so I piss them off, just for a laugh. I don’t get angry. They do, but I don’t. I remain indifferent”.

During GI1, Chahe (BH) commented that continuing to speak WA when criticized is an “accomplishment” and a way to preserve the Armenian identity. Chahe (BH) revealed a strong sense of ethnic identity and said, “I think I wouldn’t consider them [referring to people who criticize him]”. Typically, when ethnic pride is instilled in young people through encouraging HL learning and discussing cultural traditions and ethnic history, it is more likely for a HL to be maintained due to the various elements that reinforce language learning by associating it to ethnic identity (Phinney et al., 2001). Chahe’s (BH) indifference towards language criticism may be linked to the sense of pride instilled in him as he associated Armenian identity to WAL maintenance and mentioned that he is proud to be Armenian.

As mentioned, participants in this study also reported experiencing negative comments not only for speaking WA but also for not speaking “good” Arabic. For example, during GI2, Hagop (NAA) reported being criticized in many ways, which might have led to shaping his own language attitudes and LPs. Hagop (NAA) said,

“Many times when I speak Armenian, the Arabs around me get annoyed and criticize me and tell me not to speak Armenian. At the same time, since I got used to speaking Arabic, many of my Armenian friends get angry that I speak Arabic. Moreover, when I was a child, it has happened that people have criticized me for not speaking good Arabic. It used to make me upset. For that main reason, I feel that the Arabic language of Armenians should become stronger [improve]”.
Hagop’s (NAA) experience as a child and now as an adolescent might be a daunting one as he is bombarded with several comments not only from non-Armenians but also from LAs. Hagop’s (NAA) belief about the importance of improving one’s Arabic possibly stems from the negative experience that upset him as a child as he was not only criticized for his lack of competence in Arabic but also continues to be criticised for particular language choices he makes at times. This is a commonly experienced phenomenon by adolescents from minority groups. For example, Caldas (2006) reports that in the United States adolescents from bilingual cultures experience additional identity pressures, as they have to conform to conflicting societal messages about what it means to belong to a certain community while at the same time belonging to another larger society. Consequently, they develop identities with a bilingual dimension as they are pressured to follow the linguistic norm of the host society and speak its dominant language while being able to maintain their HL. This is believed to cause tremendous pressure or complexity that is not usually experienced by their peers (ibid).

Conformity in adolescents, as Seltzer (2009) discusses, is stimulated by the need to secure a membership within one’s peer group. Adolescents observe the habits, patterns, norms and language(s) of the broader society or their favoured group and model such norms and behaviours to create a proximity to their peer models (ibid). This motive to remain as part of the group is an essential factor that shapes and develops adolescents’ psychological growth and identity formation (ibid).

Apart from Hagop (NAA), several other participants reported experiencing dual criticism. For example, during GI1, Chahe (BH), said,
“I have been criticised for my Arabic. It even happened with my Armenian language; when I was in Armenia, I have been criticized for my Armenian. I think in both cases, this is a little hurtful, but the criticism shouldn’t affect you. It’s true that you can become criticized, but you should try to speak better because it is for your own good. If you learn Arabic it will be for your own benefit. The criticism will end, but things like that are important in order for us to improve”.

Although several participants reported hearing negative comments about the two languages they speak, it is important to report that typically, NAAs participants, except for Sergio (NAA) and Angelique (NAA), reported not having a problem with their Arabic language. On the other hand, having “weak” or “not good” Arabic was reported several times by BH participants. For example, in an individual interview with Mike (BH), he commented that his Arabic language is weak and that he is criticized for it. As for Hovnan (BH), he said,

“I am criticized maybe when I speak Arabic. Because I don’t speak good Arabic. It’s very weak. So it happens. But I don’t get upset. On the contrary, I continue speaking it to learn it. For example, I might make mistakes related to gender differences, and I confuse men with women, so they laugh about that and make comments about it”.

While it is not possible to generalize this to the wider population, the fact that Hovnan (BH) and several other participants, particularly from BH, reported not speaking “good
“I don’t have a problem in Arabic, so no one says anything. I have a bit of a problem in Armenian. Armenians get angry because I don’t know how to speak the language perfectly like them. But sometimes, when they [implying the Lebanese] find out I am an Armenian they criticize the fact that I am an Armenian and not how I am speaking”.

As for Marale (NAA), she commented during GI1,

“When we are sitting with someone who “is very Armenian” and who speaks very good Armenian, they sometimes make fun of me when I speak Armenian, but I don’t feel upset because I always think that I should learn more and my Armenian should be better. This is not the case with my Arabic. No one has
ever told me “your Arabic is not good or you are an Armenian and your
Arabic is not good”.

Such instances of language criticism are not unique to Lebanon as the phenomenon of
criticizing one’s lack of competence in either the HL or the dominant language is quite
widespread. Krashen (1998) discusses how HL speakers are often corrected or even ridiculed
for their language mistakes, which are regarded as “imperfections” by more proficient
speakers of the language. Error correction and criticism might have a negative effect on HL
maintenance as they may lead to less interaction in the HL and possibly less proficiency. As
Krashen (1998, 41) comments, since language is a “clear marker of social group membership,
it could also contribute to alienation from the heritage language group”. Jernadd (1989) also
discusses the negative influence of language criticism and linguistic “purism”. While it is
common for language learners and language users to make mistakes “explicit criticism of
language from a puristic point of view” might derail motivation for speaking a language and
lead to disruption of usage (Jernudd 1989, 9).

While it is not clear why sometimes participants experience negative comments by
their Lebanese friends, one of the points that was repeated several times during the interviews
is that the Lebanese feel annoyed about not understanding the language and think that their
Armenian friends are talking about them or behind their backs in WA. For example, when I
asked Hovnan (BH) if he has ever been criticized by his Lebanese friends for speaking WA,
he said,

“Sure, it happens. When I’m in a group of both Lebanese and Armenian
friends and I speak Armenian to my friends, they [implying the Lebanese] say
I speak fast. They ask if we are talking about them. They think we are talking about them”.

*The experience of Lebanese Armenian adolescents with language criticism: quantitative findings*

For a general understanding of the subject in discussion, I present below Figures 9.2, 9.3, 9.4, and 9.5 illustrating language criticism experienced by LAAs. The figures also reveal in what language(s) criticism is experienced, where it is experienced and how it leaves participants feeling.

I begin by presenting data in Figure 9.2 which were obtained through the questionnaire item, “have you ever been criticized for having poor linguistic abilities in a certain language?”. Participants were given the option to select one of the following responses, “yes, no”. As the chart reveals, 59.2% of BH participants and 56.3% of NAAs participants reported not experiencing language criticism. The remaining 40.8% of BH participants and 43.8% of NAAs participants reported otherwise.
While the percentages of the two groups above are relatively close and do not reveal any residential area influence, Figure 9.3 below reveals that participants, both from BH and from NAAs, are mainly criticized for having poor linguistic abilities in Arabic. Data for this section were obtained through the questionnaire item, “if your answer to question 17 was yes, please indicate the language”. 72.2% of BH participants and 87.0% of NAAs participants reported experiencing language criticism when speaking Arabic. 11.1% of BH participants and 8.7% of NAAs participants reported being criticized when speaking both Arabic and Armenian. The remaining 11.1% from BH and .0% from NAAs reported being criticized for their English, and 5.6% from BH and 4.3% from NAAs reported being criticized for their Arabic and French.
The qualitative discussions combined with Figures 9.2 and 9.3 presented above, although non-generalizable to the wider population, reveal that LAAs experience language criticism, irrespective of their AOR. Criticism when speaking Arabic seems to be more salient amongst both BH and NAAs participants. This may lead to modifications in their LPs and as a result influence the status of the WAL in Lebanon. It is important to mention that the figures above reveal that residential location does not seem to be a direct element that increases or decreases the chances of experiencing language criticism.

To probe deeper into this subject matter, I also asked participants about their feelings when they experience language criticism. Data in Figure 9.4 below were obtained through the questionnaire item, “if your answer to question 17 was yes, how did the criticism left you feeling?”. Participants were given the option to select one of the following responses, “angry/sad/demoralized, alienated, indifferent, other”. 23.5% of BH participants said they feel angry, sad or demoralized for being criticized when speaking a certain language and 34.6% of NAAs participants reported the same. 5.9% of BH participants said that they feel alienated when being criticized and 15.4% of NAAs participants reported feeling the same. On the other hand, a substantial percentage of BH participants, 58.8%, reported feeling
indifferent about being criticized when speaking a language and 34.6% of NAAs participants reported feeling the same. 11.8% of BH participants reported feeling something else, “other”, and 15.4% of NAAs participants said the same without indicating what the “other” feeling is.

These figures cannot be generalized to all LAAs, as the number of respondents to this question from BH was only 17 and the number of respondents from NAAs was 26. While it is not clear criticism in which language provokes such feelings, data in this section can be telling about how language criticism can provoke negative feelings in LAAs; something worth looking into further in future studies.

**Figure 9.4**

Apart from asking participants about how they feel when they are criticized for speaking a certain language, I also asked them specifically whether speaking WA, particularly in their AOR, makes them less socially accepted. This helps reveal mainstream
Lebanese attitudes towards the WAL. Data which I present in Figure 9.5 below were obtained through the questionnaire item “do you think speaking Armenian in your AOR would make you less socially accepted?”. Participants were given the option to select one of the following responses, “yes, no”. As Figure 9.5 reveals, the vast majority of participants, 88.0% from BH and 89.6% from NAAs, reported that speaking Armenian in their AOR does not make them less socially accepted. On the other hand, 12.0% from BH and 10.4 from NAAs reported that speaking Armenian in their AOR makes them less socially accepted. While this cannot be generalized to all LAAs, it can be telling data about how LAs are generally accepted by broader Lebanese society. As Sahakyan (2015) comments, compared to the diaspora in the United States and France, the diaspora in Lebanon has not been subject to discrimination or social exclusion.

Figure 9.5
The attitudes of Lebanese Armenian adolescents towards the Western Armenian language

I discuss in this section the attitudes of LAAs towards the WAL. I report on how the perceived value of WA is shaped by functional and emotional aspects. As Grosjean (1982) and Garrett (2010) discuss, language attitude is often shaped around the perceived value and functionality of a language, which are influenced by the emotional significance of a HL to its speakers.

The functional aspect of the Western Armenian language

Attarian (2014) points out that LAs do not regard the WAL in Lebanon as a functional language. Sanjian (2001) also discusses that LAs, particularly those who would like to achieve high socioeconomic statuses make an effort for their children to acquire better knowledge of Arabic, English and French in order to give them the opportunity of forming part of the future elite in Lebanon. Kouloujian (2014 b) uses the term language compartmentalization to describe the phenomenon whereby WA is perceived as a language that is not evolved enough to meet the needs of its speakers. He talks about how second or third generation WA speakers in the United States use WA only in particular contexts or to express particular thoughts and feelings, whereas on the other hand they use English to express different kinds of thoughts or feelings (ibid).

Concerning my participants, their views about the functionality of WA varied as some believed in its functionality whereas others regarded it as unimportant. Particularly when I
asked whether they think WA is important in the workplace, some commented it is useful, others said it was not important and some said the importance of WA depends on the place and area of work. For example, Levon (NAA) and Khatchig (BH) thought that WA is not important for work. Khatchig (BH) commented,

“We live in Lebanon and we are surrounded by a Lebanese entourage, so Armenian won’t be very important, and odar [foreign] languages such as Arabic and English will be more important and more used in a work setting. But even if those languages will be used at work, Armenian is important”.

On the other hand, Khajag (NAA) commented that in an Armenian working milieu, WA is important but in an “Arabic” region, English and French are important. As for Hagop (NAA), he said during GI2,

“At work, in BH, yes it is important because everybody there is Armenian. You should speak Armenian there. However, in other areas, no. There’s not much emphasis on it”.

Mark (NAA) not only commented about the lack of importance of WA outside of BH but also thought that the Arabic of LAs should improve, particularly referring to LAs in BH, because according to him Arabic is the “main language” in Lebanon and “BH is not everything”. Mark (NAA) also raised the point that LAs should integrate into broader Lebanese society instead of limiting themselves to their AOR. He added,
“At the end of the day we are inside Lebanon and you have to speak Arabic very well. Your Arabic should not be broken and so on, you should speak very well”

The perceptions of my participants reported above, give an indication that WA is typically regarded as a language that is not very functional in Lebanon and that other languages such as English and Arabic are perceived to be more important to gain access into professions in the wider society. Armenian seems to be perceived as “possibly” important in BH or in Armenian milieus or workplaces. Perceived language functionality in the migrant setting is often seen as an important factor that determines HL vitality (Pauwels, 2016). When a language is perceived as a functional one in official domains, chances of maintaining it would be higher. On the other hand, a HL is often excluded from official domains or other high status domains when its speakers perceive it as a non-functional language (ibid). This might gradually weaken the position of a HL, which may become restricted to less domains. For example, when I asked Mark (NAA) about the situation of the WAL in Lebanon, he commented,

“The Armenian language is going backwards because there is not much emphasis on it. … Why should I be that good in Armenian? I mean, where I live and with the people around me, I don’t use that much Armenian, so why would I use it?”.

Mark’s (NAA) comment prompted a response from Narine (BH), who seemed to be more attached to her Armenian roots and rejected the idea that she should improve her
Arabic. Instead, she commented that she uses English when being outside of her AOR, if need be. “I use my English more than Arabic”, said Narine (BH), implying that she does not have to speak Arabic. This led to a debate between Narine (BH) and Mark (NAA) who commented, “Yes, because you are in BH. Come here [implying to NAAs], you can’t! You will have to speak Arabic”. “I can speak English”, replied Narine (BH). “Okay then, speak English” said Mark (NAA) with a sarcastic tone.

The debate between Narine (BH) and Mark (NAA) somehow reveals that there are some LAs who continue to remain insular in BH, although we cannot generalize this to all LAs in BH. This might be a persisting trend from the days of Armenian settlement in Lebanon when Armenians remained socially and geographically distant from mainstream Lebanese society as a way to survive as a community and preserve their culture (Hovannisian, 1974; Sahakyan, 2015). Due to this self-isolation strategy, many did not even need to speak Arabic (Hovannisian, 1974). While today BH has a very different demography as discussed in previous chapters, it is possible that some LAs continue to adopt a conscious self-isolation strategy, such as in the example of Narine (BH).

During GI1, Marale (NAA) also spoke about the importance of speaking “good Arabic”,

“Even if we are Armenians, we should also speak good Arabic, and show that not all Armenians speak ges ou gadar [broken] Arabic and that Armenians can speak both good Arabic and good Armenian”.

As for Rita (BH), she commented during her individual interview,
“Arabic is the most important language at work. Now, the social circle I work with personally is Armenian, so the important language for me is Arabic and Armenian because I work amongst Armenians. But when you want to work outside [implying in NAAs] such as in a big company, definitely English and Arabic are more important”.

For other participants, such as Khajag (NAA), Angelique (NAA), Narine (BH) and Aram (BH), knowing WA is important for better job opportunities. For example, Aram (BH) commented, “Armenian is a big addition that gives you opportunities”. As for Angelique, she said,

“Yes, yes, because for example in my dad’s workplace there are lots of Armenians and Armenian clients. So it’s important to speak Armenian, you know?”.  

The comments above reveal a rather positive perception in terms of WAL functionality as participants regard it as a possible resource that might benefit LAs professionally and might provide them with economic gains. Although these are perceptions of a few participants, which cannot be generalized to the wider population, it seems that residential location does not have an influence on the varied perceptions of LAAs concerning the functionality of the WAL.
The functional aspect of the Western Armenian language: quantitative findings

For a general understanding of the perceived functionality of the WAL, I present below Figure 9.6 illustrating whether LAAs believe that WA increases their employment chances. Data for this section were obtained through the questionnaire item, “do you think that knowing Armenian increases your chances of being employed?” Participants were given the option to select one of the following responses, “yes, no”.

As the numbers reveal, 51.0% of BH participants believe that Armenian increases chances of employment and 49.0% believe otherwise. On the other hand, 57.1% of NAAs participants believe that the Armenian increases chances of employments, whereas 42.9% believe otherwise. The percentages are almost evenly split, and do not reveal that residential concentration and geographical dispersal influence the perceptions of LAAs in terms of the WAL functionality, which reflects the qualitative discussions above. Nevertheless, although non-generalizable, the numbers reveal that almost half of LAAs believe that WA is not functional when it comes to employment, which may contribute to changing the status of the WAL in Lebanon. (see additional information on the reported perceptions of language functionality at work and in social life in appendix 11, 44-45).

Figure 9.6
The emotional aspect of the Western Armenian language

When as discussed, participants revealed different opinions about the functionality of the WAL in Lebanon, many thought that continuing to speak it is important whether or not it is a socially important language or a functional one for employment. As Oakes (2001) comments, a positive attitude towards a language also has an emotional aspect through which an individual shows in-group solidarity and reveals their sentimental attachment to their HL. Such sentimental attitudes were reflected in the accounts of several participants during the interviews as many spoke about the importance of preserving WA in Lebanon as a way to preserve Armenian ethnic identity. For example, Angelique (NAA) said during her individual interview that not speaking WA leads to identity loss. As for Sergio (NAA), he commented,

“It is important to preserve the Armenian language because it’s part of our culture and part of us. If we don’t preserve it, it means we wouldn’t be Armenians. … Personally, with my children, so that they would speak Armenian more, I would let them spend much more time with my mother and my father. With them, they would only speak Armenian. Second, I would get them a private tutor with whom they practice Armenian more and learn the Armenian alphabet. Also I would ejebon [ejberon literally means force them in Arabic] to speak Armenian”.

During GI2, Simon (BH) referred to the WAL as a “mother language” that one should be “good at”. He also passionately spoke about “Armenian blood”.

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“I say it again and again, we are the children of Armenians; we are Armenian in blood. No matter what our surrounding is and no matter who the people around us are, we are Armenians. We are born Armenians so we should first know Armenian. … Our mother language is Armenian and we should first be good at it”.

Simon’s (BH) comment above reflects a strong sense of national Armenian identity that associates being Armenian to having Armenian “blood” and knowing the WA “mother language”. As discussed in previous chapters, the ideology of blood connection and its association to WA is salient amongst LAs, particularly those who are party affiliated. Simon is an adolescent who is an active member of the ARF’s Lebanese Youth Association (LEM) and his expressed ideas may possibly be inspired by ARF’s political ideologies.

Mark (NAA) also believes that WA should continue to be spoken, although as discussed, he commented on its lack of functionality and the importance of speaking Arabic “very well”. Mark (NAA) linked speaking WA to having “a sense of belonging”. Jenny (NAA) thought the same and said,

“The Armenian language is declining a lot. Before, there was a lot of Armenian speaking. Now, it is very little, and we are seeing that. There are Armenians who don’t know how to speak Armenian at all. Not even one word. That is very wrong. … It’s very important to preserve the Armenian language. … Because we will have a sense of belonging”.
Mark’s (NAA) and Jenny’s (NAA) comments reveal how their sense of ethnic belonging is somehow intertwined with speaking WA. This is a phenomenon that has been observed by several researchers in the field. For example, Phinney et al. (2001) and Gerin-Lajoie (2011) discuss how ethnic group membership and notions of belonging are highly influenced by language maintenance and vice versa. Phinney et al. (2001) report that chances of maintaining an ethnic language reduce by the third and fourth generation and that ethnic membership can continue regardless of the language. Nevertheless, language maintenance enhances and even secures ethnic group membership (ibid).

Other participants also commented on the importance of preserving WA. For example, Aram (BH) said,

“Yes of course it is important to preserve the Armenian language! Why? We have been slaughtered. They wanted to annihilate us from this world. What? Do you want us to be erased from here too?”.

Aram’s (BH) comment somehow reveals a sense of victimhood reflected in his words “we have been slaughtered”. While as discussed at length in Chapter 2, the Armenian genocide was an essential element that contributed to shaping the modern Armenian identity (Panossian, 2002; Azarian-Ceccato, 2010), Aram’s (BH) comment reflects Panossian’s (2002) discussions concerning how Armenian identity is also defined by a mentality of victimhood and a collective consciousness of being a community of sufferers.

During GI1, Marale (NAA) and Chahe (BH) also expressed the importance of maintaining WA. For example, Chahe (BH) related speaking WA to the Armenian national identity and said,
“In terms of a country, we have been unlucky as we have lost our Western Armenia. But we can maintain our traditions and maintain our language, so that in case we have a country, we can protect our country”.

When I asked what participants thought about the status of the WAL in Lebanon, many felt that it is declining and proposed behaviours that help reverse the shift. For example, Patrick (BH) said,

“If we look at us in this moment, we are already now mixing Arabic and English, and this is obvious. I mean that starting with us, it is clear that with us, Armenian is declining”.

As for Marale (NAA), she gave her own example and related going to a Lebanese school to the decline of WA in Lebanon. Marale (NAA) said,

“I think that the Armenian language in Lebanon is not going forward, because mothers and fathers are not compelled to send their children to Armenian schools. They can send them to the nearest school that can be an Arabic school; and at school, the children are not learning to read and write, so they end up only speaking the language, like me. I don’t know. I think they should be more insistent that their children should go to Armenian schools and learn the language”.
Marale’s (NAA) case is not an unusual one in Lebanon. Typically, LAs who attend non-Armenian schools, such as participants in this study, speak WA as they learn it from their parents and family and/or in Armenian institutions. However, the majority do not learn to read and write Armenian (See Chapter 7). Speaking the HL but not being able to write it and/or read it is not restricted to my participants as it is a widespread phenomenon amongst ethnic groups observed by researchers in the field. Typically, HL speakers acquire conversational skills in their HL particularly if it is consistently used with parents from early age (Veltman, 1983). On the other hand, HL speakers do not necessarily achieve writing and reading competence and more often than not their HL literacy does not match their competence in the dominant language (ibid).

Marale (NAA) and Chahe (BH) suggested that it is important to “speak Armenian together” and Chahe (BH) added,

“There are lots of groups where Armenians meet but don’t speak Armenian together. … For example, in America, if you know or heard, when the AYF [Armenian Youth Federation] has a meeting, they speak English. Such incidences should stop, because if you are Armenians and you are gathered, why wouldn’t you speak Armenian to preserve your identity?”.

Chahe’s (BH) comment, although one reported instance, reflects public discourse around the decreased use of WA in several domains, particularly in institutional domains. Armenians in the United States are perceived to be less fluent in WA than their counterparts in Lebanon. Such perceptions are possibly a result of the assimilation of Armenian Americans into mainstream American society (Sahakyan, 2015).
Patrick (BH) spoke about the clear decline of the WAL and the importance of “strengthening” it. He said,

“We are living in an odar [foreign] place where there are multiple languages; French, Arabic, Armenian, even other languages, which are less, such as the Filipino language. … At the end of the day, it is clear that Armenian is declining, and we are responsible for that, and we have to strengthen it, and the generation coming after us won’t be able to change it because it is already inheriting it weak”.

Patrick’s (BH) comment above reflects a phenomenon unique to Lebanon whereby its residents, including my participants, are multilingual. Jebejian (2007) discusses that the common explanation of language shift does not fit the case of WA in Lebanon. She explains that when typically research in the field of LMLS involves studying two languages, one “being replaced” and another “replacing”, in Lebanon, WA experiences “an increasing reliance and shift to three other languages commonly used in the multilingual society of Beirut: Arabic, English, and French” (ibid, 15). As Lebanon is a multilingual country that recognizes Arabic and French as its official languages, it is typical that LAs, even those who receive Armenian education, learn subjects such as Maths, Physics, and Biology in either French or English and subjects like literature, geography and history in either Arabic and/or French and English (Jebejian, 2007). This possibly explains why codeswitching is a common practice amongst non-Armenians and LAs alike in Lebanon. I discuss codeswitching practices amongst LAAs further in Chapter 10.
Going back to the interview discussions, all participants except for Rita (BH) expressed the importance of maintaining WA, and typically spoke passionately about this subject matter. Rita (BH) showed indifference towards this matter and said,

“Yes, the Armenian language is declining a lot a lot a lot a lot, especially now that there is social media. No one is using our letters. … Preserving the Armenian language is important for whoever loves it. For whoever doesn’t love it, it’s barz [normal]. For me it’s a’ade [normal].” [Barz and 3ade both mean normal in Armenian and Arabic respectively. Both words are often used to show indifference].

All the remaining participants, as mentioned, revealed a positive attitude towards preserving the WAL. I report below Khatchig’s (BH) elaborate account, which summarizes many of the points raised by my participants and discussed in this chapter.

“Yes it is important to preserve the Armenian language, because if we don’t preserve it, us Armenians will be lost. … The purpose of the genocide was to eradicate Armenians. So by not preserving our language we would be exterminating ourselves bit by bit and that’s why we should always preserve our language. … We are living in a multilingual place, which I think puts our Armenian language under risk of loss, and so in order to preserve it, we have to give more importance to it. … There are many people who are Armenians but their Armenian language is very weak due to their society and area they
live in, because it’s full of Arabs. They have Arabic neighbours and friends, so that’s why”

The emotional aspect of the Western Armenian language: quantitative findings

For a general understanding of the subject in discussion, I present below Figure 9.7 illustrating the attitudes of LAAs towards preserving the WAL. Data for this section were obtained through the questionnaire item, “in your opinion, how important is it to preserve the Armenian language?” Participants were given the option to select one of the following responses, “extremely unimportant, not important, neither important nor unimportant, important, extremely important”.

As the chart reveals, the percentage of participants who believe in the importance of preserving WA is significantly high, irrespective of their AOR. 65.3% of BH participants believe that it is extremely important to preserve the Armenian language and 28.6% believe it is important. Only 6.1% of BH participants believe that it is neither important nor unimportant to preserve the Armenian language, and none believes it is extremely unimportant. On the other hand, a significant percentage of NAAs participants also believe in the importance of preserving the Armenian language, with 72.0% who believe it is extremely important to preserve it and 24.0% who believe that it is important. Only 2.0% of NAAs participants believe that it is neither important nor unimportant to preserve the Armenian language, and 2.0% believe it is extremely unimportant. These numbers can be an indication that the recent geographical dispersal of LAs across Lebanon does not seem to influence the sense of ethnic identity of LAAs and their positive attitudes towards the WAL.
If such positive attitudes persist, they might influence the LPs of LAAs to the advantage of the WAL in Lebanon. Nevertheless, the link between positive language attitudes and language vitality is not necessarily a given as attitudes alone, without a clear vision and an action plan, are not enough to maintain the vitality of WA.

The quantitative findings in Figure 9.7 along with Khachig’s (BH) elaborate comment above, although non-generalizable to the wider population, possibly reveal how LAAs may experience a paradox in the way they use WA, which is perceived as a “definitely endangered” language. Although LAAs, as discussed, are multilingual and typically speak Arabic, English and/or French and while they have quite fluid LPs, in their perceptions there is a strong fix between the WAL and Armenian identity. Although they may engage in codeswitching practices (See Chapter 10), in their minds, they paradoxically see the WAL as a separate entity that should be preserved through continued use.
Experiencing paradoxes is a widespread phenomenon amongst HL speakers and has been observed by several researchers in the field (Milroy, 1982; Bedolla, 2003). Milroy (1982) discusses that while HLs contribute to developing group feelings and a sense of solidarity amongst ethnic communities, they might also be problematic particularly when they are perceived as a source of stigma or believed to be less important than the mainstream language. For example, in a study that explores how the relationship of Latinos to the Spanish language influences their ethnic identity, Bedolla (2003) reports that Latino’s relationship to their language is paradoxical despite being an important part of their identity, as Spanish creates a sense of solidarity amongst them while at the same time it is a source of social stigma. Similarly, LAAs might be experiencing paradoxes that may influence the status of WA in Lebanon.

**Conclusion**

Findings in this chapter reveal that typically LAAs and their parents continue to have a positive attitude towards the WAL and the importance of speaking it and maintaining it. While data also reveal a few instances where indifference was shown towards the subject matter and a slight shift in the positive attitudes towards maintaining WA, the majority of participants seem to be in favour of maintaining it, irrespective of their residential location.

While residential concentration and geographical dispersal do not seem to influence the positive attitudes of my participants towards the WAL, they do seem to influence attitudes towards the Arabic language which is perceived to be an important language that
provides social and professional gains. More NAAs participants spoke about the functionality of the Arabic language and the importance of speaking “good” Arabic.

Several participants from both BH and NAAs mentioned that WA is not a functional language in Lebanon, particularly when it comes to employment; however, this does not seem to affect their emotional attachment to the WAL and their opinions about maintaining it.

While Jebejian (2007) reports that LA youth are somewhat indifferent towards the WAL, data in this chapter reveal otherwise. If such positive attitudes translate into the LPs of LAAs, the perceived shift from WA to other more widely spoken languages in Lebanon may possibly be placed on hold. I discuss the LPs of LAAs at length in Chapter 10.
Chapter 10

The impact of residential location on the domains of language use and the language practices of Lebanese Armenian adolescents

Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss the domains of language use of LAAs and their LPs in order to gain a deeper insight into how residential concentration and geographical dispersal might influence the situation of WA in Lebanon and to understand whether there are differences in the LPs of LAAs who live in BH and those who live NAAs. I explore when and where LAAs use WA depending on the familial and social circumstances that surround them. Holmes (2013) comments that a language becomes endangered when its domains shrink and when its speakers become less proficient in it. Accordingly, looking into the domains of language use of LAAs might give a clearer understanding of the degree of endangerment of WA on a local level.

My analysis in this chapter is based on the interpretation of data I collected during ten individual interviews and two group interviews conducted between summer 2014 and summer 2015. I back up the qualitative data interpretations with numerical data I gathered through 100 survey questionnaires I distributed to fifty LAAs from BH and fifty from NAAs and I present the findings in charts. I also discuss the findings of two short nonparticipant observations conducted within the family setting in order to look into the codeswitching
patterns of LAAs and see if what they report during the interviews reflects their linguistic behaviours.

The domains of language use of Lebanese Armenian adolescents

**Lebanese Armenian adolescents’ first spoken language(s)**

The first domain of Language use of LAAs that I discuss is the family. Sociolinguists commonly agree that the critical stage of reversing language shift involves intergenerational transmission, the act of passing on a language at home and using it in community circles before children start going to school (Fishman, 1991; Giltrow, 2002; Lewis et al., 2014). Intergenerational language transmission is believed to be an essential factor in determining the continuity and vitality of a HL. For a language to be considered “safe”, it has to be used by members of all age groups and transmitted across generations (UNESCO, 2003).

During the individual interviews and group interviews, participants, whether from BH or from NAAs, typically reported speaking WA as their first language at home. For example, Khatchig (BH), Steve (BH), Mike (BH), Rita (BH) and Hovnan (BH) reported that the first language they spoke was WA at home. Hovnan (BH) commented,

“Of course I started speaking Armenian. I learned it at home. Then I went to Jemaran [an Armenian school], where they also teach French and Arabic and later on English when you grow up”.
As for NAAs participants, such as Khajag, Levon, and Angelique, they also reported the same. For example, Levon (NAA) commented,

“As a child I learned to speak Armenian first and then Arabic. I learned to speak Armenian at home. I was not good in Arabic. After that I learned English at school”.

Mark (NAA) and Jenny (NAA) reported that they learned Arabic and WA simultaneously as their first languages at home. “I learned Armenian from my grandmother and Arabic from my parents”, commented Mark (NAA). As for Jenny (NAA), she commented, “I learned both Arabic and Armenian from my parents at home”.

Although Mark’s (NAA) and Jenny’s (NAA) first language experiences cannot be generalized to the wider population, their comments might indicate that Arabic may gradually be encroaching on the family domain typically occupied by WA. It is common for a language of wider communication to encroach into the domain of the first language of ethnic communities. Wong-Fillmore (2000) and Tsunoda (2006) discuss that proficiency in HL is more likely to begin diminishing by the third generation, as parents would have fewer opportunities to use it with their children and transmit it to them. Consequently, the third generation loses its ability to use their HL regardless of the fluency of their grandparents.

Fishman (1966) and Marongiu (2007) also describe language shift as a three-generational procedure. They comment that the first generation of immigrants use their first language at home. The second generation continue to speak it at home but start using the dominant language at school or work. The third generation replace HL use at home with the dominant language, which then causes effective knowledge of the HL to be lost (Fishman,
1966; Marongiu, 2007). Marongiu (2007) also discusses that the bilingual phase at home might be a passing stage towards monolingualism in the dominant language of the region.

This seems to be unlikely in the case of WA in Lebanon, at least at the current phase, as its shift to the languages of wider communication has been resisted thus far. My participants are fourth generation LAs and despite being multilingual, the majority reported speaking WA with their parents at home, which possibly indicates WA vitality in Lebanon. Nevertheless, the few reported instances of using WA along with non-Armenian languages at home, which I report on below, possibly indicate that there may be a chance that WA vitality may not be maintained by the fifth or sixth generation of LAs, if we look at things from a non-poststructuralist lens.

**Lebanese Armenian adolescents’ first spoken language(s): quantitative findings**

For a general understanding of the discussions above, I present below Figure 10.1, which illustrates the first language acquisition of LAAs from both BH and NAAs. Data for this section were obtained through the questionnaire item, “please list the language(s) you learned to speak by chronological order”. As the numbers reveal, the percentage of BH participants whose first language was WA is 94.0%, a figure that is significantly high. 4.0% reported that their first languages were WA and English, and 2.0% reported that they were WA and Arabic. On the other hand, 68.0% percent of NAAs participants reported that their first language was WA, 2.0% reported that they were WA and Arabic, 6.0% reported that they were WA and English and 2.0% reported that they were WA, French, and English. The remaining 20.0%, did not mention WA as one of their first languages as 4.0% reported
Arabic was their first language, 6.0% reported that it was English, 6.0% reported that it was French, and 4.0% reported that they were Arabic, English and French.

Although we cannot generalize these findings to the wider population and while the majority of BH participants and a substantial number of NAAs participants reported that WA was their first spoken language, it seems that the encroachment of non-Armenian languages into WA is more salient amongst NAAs participants.

Figure 10.1

List the language(s) you learned to speak by chronological order.  
BH n=50/ NAAs n=50
Lebanese Armenian adolescents’ Armenian language literacy: reading and writing abilities

One of the factors that make understanding the degree of endangerment of WA on a local level complex is that despite speaking it, not all participants reported literacy in the written and read form of the WAL.

All interview participants from BH reported WAL literacy except for Rita (BH) who, when I asked her if she can read and write Armenian, said “no, not much”, despite reporting that she learned it at school. Conversely, during both group interviews, all NAAs participants reported that they do not know how to read and write WA and that they can only speak it.

The individual interviews also revealed that several NAAs participants who speak WA, either do not read and write it or barely know the Alphabet. For example, Sergio (NAA) and Levon (NAA) reported not being able to read and write WA and said that they had forgotten it. Levon (NAA) commented,

“My grandmother used to teach me Armenian when I was a child, but now I forgot everything. So now, I don’t know how to read and write Armenian. … No, I cannot read a simple passage in Armenian. I know the Alphabet, but I forgot it. I forgot every symbol”.

As for Angelique (NAA), she mentioned learning to read and write WA for her official examinations. As Migliorino (2008) and Attarian (2014) report, WA was recognized by the Lebanese state as one of the optional languages in Lebanese official examinations.
Nevertheless, as Attarian (2014) reports, ever since the accreditation of WA as part of the official Baccalaureate, the Lebanese government has not developed the plan further, which reduces hopes that this program may contribute to the revival of WA in Lebanon. Angelique (NAA) commented,

“Yes, I learned. When I was in the last year of high school, I chose Armenian for the official exams, so I took lessons to read and write it, but still, it’s difficult to read and write it. I could read but writing it is very difficult. I didn’t learn it for long. I was doing once a week for three months. When I was a child, I took lessons with my mother and sisters, but I had forgotten it. … I didn’t learn it at school because I went to Athenee school [a non-Armenian school]”.

Hrag (NAA) also commented that he forgot WA “a lot”. When I asked him if he could read and write Wa, he said,

“Yes, a bit. When I was a kid, I had a tutor who used to teach me Armenian. Now I forgot it a lot. … If I am reading something easy, I understand it a little bit. I try. … I can write so-so. There are many letters that I forgot”.

The only NAA participant who reported literacy in WA with confidence is Khajag (NAA) who went to an Armenian school. Khajag (NAA) differentiated Eastern Armenian from WA and discussed that he is faster in understanding WA. Khajag (NAA) said,
“Yes of course I understand it; and of course I write too [implying WA]. Only when it comes to Eastern Armenian, I understand it fully too, but sometimes I have to read something twice to understand it better; like for example if there is a hidden message which the writer wants to deliver. So that’s when I will have to read it twice. But when it comes to WA I understand everything by reading only once”.

Lebanese Armenian adolescents’ first read and written language(s): quantitative findings

Apart from asking participants about the first language(s) they learned to speak, I asked them about the first language(s) they learned to read and write. Data for Figure 10.2 below were obtained through the questionnaire item, “list the language(s) you learned to read and write by chronological order”. As the numbers reveal, 81.3% of BH participants reported that the first language they learned to read and write was WA. 10.4% reported that they were WA, Arabic and English, 4.2% reported that they were WA and Arabic, 2.1% reported that they were WA and English, and 2.1% reported that they were English and Arabic. On the other hand, 37.5% of NAAs participants reported that WA was the first language they learned to read and write. 6.3% reported that it was Arabic, 10.4% reported that it was English, 12.5% reported that it was French, 2.1% reported that they were WA and Arabic, 10.4% reported that they were English and Arabic, 4.2% reported that they were WA, Arabic and French, 2.1% reported that they were French and English, 10.4% reported they were Arabic, French and English and 4.2% reported that they were Arabic and French.
Although these are several different experiences of WAL literacy, what these data reveal is that WA was the first language or one of the first languages read and written by the vast majority of BH participants, the total of whom is 97.9%. Conversely, WA was the first, or one of the first languages read and written by a total of 43.8% of NAAs participants. While these cannot be generalized to all LAAs, data in this section is telling about how residential location can be a possible factor that influences the written form of WA in Lebanon.

Figure 10.2

List the language(s) you learned to read and write by chronological order.

BH n=48/ NAAs n=48
The interview discussions above along with the quantitative findings reveal that geographical dispersal seems to be disadvantageous to WAL literacy. Language literacy is believed to be an essential element that defines language vitality. Baker (2006) discusses that being bilingual without being biliterate, negatively influences the status of a language and reduces its chances of being stable. He gives the example of Welsh and reports that analysis of Welsh census data reveals that speaking the language without being able to read it and write it reduces its uses and functions (ibid). In line with this, I believe that for WA to attain a more stable or a “safer” status, it is important as Attarian (2014, 28) comments to “reinforce language acquisition through literacy practices in informal and formal educational settings, local and major media and legislative acts”.

The language practices of Lebanese Armenian adolescents in the family domain

While initially all participants reported speaking WA at home, probing deeper into the subject matter and asking them additional questions revealed that language use at home is not limited to WA. Reported LPs vary depending on which family members participants from both BH and NAAs speak or interact with. For example, when I asked Sergio (NAA) what language he spoke at home, he said, “I speak Armenian with everyone in the family. My mother, father and grandparents”. As for Khajag (NAA), before I finished my question, he interrupted me saying,
“Yes Armenian! With parents and siblings, Armenian; … with grandparents, Armenian, Armenian” [Repeating his answer twice was a way to say “of course what a question!”].

Levon (NAA) also reported speaking WA, but at the same time, he mentioned using English or Arabic words, particularly when he does not know how to say them in WA. Levon (NAA) said,

“I speak Armenian with my mother and siblings. Sometimes I use English words with my siblings. Sometimes there are some words that I don’t know how to say in Armenian, I say them in Arabic or in another language. … With my grandparents, I speak Armenian. I speak Armenian with all of them [implying his family members]”.

As for Rita (BH), she commented,

“With my mom I speak Armenian and Arabic and sometimes English a little bit if we don’t want our brother to understand what we are saying. However, mostly we speak Armenian and Arabic. … With my father, I speak Armenian and Arabic. … With my grandparents, I speak Armenian. … With my siblings I speak Armenian and Arabic”.
Angelique (NAA) gave a similar account,

“With my mother I speak French and with my father Armenian and English. With my brothers and sisters, I speak French. With my paternal grandmother, I speak Armenian. With my maternal grandmother, I speak Armenian and French because she lives in France. … When I am speaking with my dad, I start with Armenian, then I get confused and I won’t bother anymore to find words, so I turn to French or English.

The comments above reveal a range of multilingual practices in which some participants consciously “separate” languages and engage in what Creese and Blackledge (2011, 1197) refer to as “separate bilingualism” whereby speakers use a language separation approach and engage in parallel monolingualism practices with a “monolingual view of bilingualism”. To define a similar phenomenon, Preece (2015, 21) uses the term “separate bidialectalism” to describe instances where dialects, particularly vernacular and standardized, are kept separate. Often, separate bilingualism is “associated with powerful and pervasive political and academic discourse which view languages as discrete, and tied to nation and culture” (Creese & Blackledge, 2011). Such views as Creese and Blackledge (2011) discuss place an emphasis on social and linguistic categories.

By contrast, other participants revealed more flexible practices by using diverse sets of linguistic resources. Creese and Blackledge (2011, 1197) use the term “flexible bilingualism” to describe such LPs whereby “awareness of language or code is backgrounded, and signs are combined and put to work in the message being negotiated”. Preece (2015, 23) uses the term “flexible bi-dialectalism” whereby dialectal resources are for
example used as a way to reduce social boundaries by breaking down language boundaries or “building bridges” between speakers.

Flexible bilingualism amongst participants is revealed in the accounts above where they report making use of their multilingualism or bilingualism with people; for example, “with my grandparents I speak Armenian”, “with my brothers and sisters I speak French”; or in a variety of situations, for example, “I speak … English a little bit if we don’t want our brother to understand what we are saying”.

Such practices do not seem to influence perceptions of WA in terms of its importance in the home domain. Several participants reported that WA is the most important language in their home, whereas others reported otherwise. For example, during GI1, when I asked about the most important language at home, all participants, irrespective of their AOR, said that WA is the most important language in their home. “Ambayman hayeren! [Armenian with no conditions]”, commented Jacqueline (BH).

On the other hand, during GI2, answers varied. All BH participants reported that WA is the most important language in their home. By contrast, NAA participants reported dissimilar LPs. For example, Mark (NAA) reported that he speaks Arabic at home with his parents and WA with his grandparents and commented that all three languages are important and one has to know them. Jenny (NAA) also reported that both Arabic and WA are spoken in her home, and she commented that it is very important to know many languages. As for Hagop (NAA), he reported that WA is the most important language in his home, but said, “Also some English is needed”.

While WA seems to be widely spoken at home at least amongst this particular group of LAAs, without spending extended time in the family domain, there is no way of knowing what language is predominantly used in the home domain. Nevertheless, the reported
experiences of my participants reflect a salient aspect of Armenian families across the diaspora, which are perceived to be firm preservers of their HL and culture (Phinney et al., 2001; Migliorino, 2009). Nevertheless, the discussions above possibly indicate that French, Arabic and English are starting to slowly gain ground over WA, particularly in the home domain.

The language practices of Lebanese Armenian adolescents in the family domain: quantitative findings

For a general understanding of the LPs of LAAs in the home domain, I present below Figures 10.3, 10.4, 10.5, which illustrate data obtained through the following questionnaire items: “tick the language(s) you use most with the following people: with your mother; with your father; with your brothers and sisters”. Participants were given the option to select one or more of the following responses, “Armenian, Arabic, French, English, Turkish”.

As Figure 10.3 reveals, 93.9% of BH participants reported using Armenian with their mother. Conversely, only 4.2% reported speaking Arabic and 2.1% reported speaking English. As for NAAs participants, 91.8% reported speaking Armenian with their mother, 6.1% reported speaking Arabic and 2.0% reported speaking French. Although these findings cannot be generalized to all LAAs, they can be telling data that WA continues to be the main language spoken in the home domain with mothers.
Concerning most languages spoken with fathers, as Figure 10.4 below reveals, 97.9% of BH participants reported speaking Armenian with their father and only 2.1% reported speaking Arabic. As for NAAs participants, 91.8% reported speaking Armenian with their father and only 8.2% reported speaking Arabic. These numbers can be telling data that WA continues to be used by the vast majority of LAAs in the home domain with fathers.
As for most languages spoken with siblings, data in figure 10.5 below reveal that
97.8% of BH participants reported using Armenian with their brothers and sisters and only
2.2% reported speaking English. As for NAAs participants, 83.3% reported speaking
Armenian with their brothers and sisters, 12.5% reported speaking Arabic, 2.1% reported
speaking French and 2.1% reported speaking English. These numbers suggest that WA
possibly continues to be the main language of communications amongst siblings from both
BH and NAAs. The percentage of NAAs participants who reported speaking WA with their
siblings is lower. Although we cannot generalize this to the whole population, data in this
section possibly reveals increasing codeswitching practices from WA into other languages
amongst siblings from NAAs.

Figure 10.5

The questionnaire also helped form a general idea about which language is the most
important within the families of my participants. I present in Figure 10.6 below data obtained
through the questionnaire item “in your opinion, which of the languages that you speak is the
most important; at home?”. As the chart reveals, 89.8% of BH participants reported that
Armenian is the most important language at home, 2.0% reported they are Arabic and Armenian, 4.1% reported it is Arabic, 2.0% reported it is English and 2.0% reported they are Arabic and English. On the other hand, 85.7% of NAAs participants reported that Armenian is the most important language at home, 6.1% reported they are Arabic and Armenian, 2.0% reported they are Armenian, Arabic, French and English, and 2.0% reported they are Armenian and English. Only 2.0% reported it is French and 2.0% reported they are Arabic and English.

Although these findings cannot be generalized to all LAAs, they reveal that WA continues to be the most important language in the family domain of participants from both BH and NAAs. This possibly means that, at least at the current phase, residential location does not seem to have an influence on the importance of WA in the family domain.

**Figure 10.6**

In your opinion which of the languages that you speak is the most important at home?
BH n=49/ NAAs n=49
Nonparticipant observation between two Lebanese Armenian adolescent siblings

As the accounts above reveal, LPs within the LA family seem to be fluid and dynamic multilingual practices that involve using different communicative codes in a range of communicative situations. Accordingly, I was also interested in exploring “relatively” naturally occurring conversations and LPs in the home domain in order to gain a deeper insight into some “real-world” experiences with language. McAvoy (2014, 275) discusses that contemporary discursive psychology suggests studying “what people do in actual real-world sites and situations that would occur anyway regardless of the researcher”. While interviews are important in reproducing “culturally available discursive resources for making sense of particular meaning making moments” (ibid, 275), naturalistic data, such as nonparticipant observations contribute to reducing gaps between what participants report and what they actually do.

In order to achieve that, I randomly chose two interviewed participants, one from BH and another from a NAA, specifically Steve (BH) and Mark (NAA), and I asked them to record and send me a short random conversation that they have at home with one of their siblings. I received two voice conversations from each participant by email; Mark (NAA) sent me a nine-minute conversation with his sister and Steve (BH) sent me a six-minute conversation with his brother (see highlighted extracts of the two conversations in appendix 12, 46-55). As I listened to both conversations, transcribed them, and counted the total number of non-Armenian words used, I noticed a gap in the LPs of both participants with their siblings. The total percentage of non-Armenian words used by Mark (NAA) with his sibling was 90.5%. Out of the total of non-Armenian words, 90.7% were Arabic words and 9.2% were English words. Only 9.5% of the total percentage of used words were in WA.
Conversely, only 10.0% of the total words used by Steve (BH) and his sibling were non-Armenian words and 90.0% were WA words. Out of the total of non-Armenian words used, 77.2% were English words and 22.7% were Arabic words. While these data remain speculative and cannot be generalized to the wider population as they are only two very short examples of family LPs, they are still important as they give a preliminary idea about naturally occurring spoken language with siblings. In addition, it is important to note that the figures provided in this section might contain a minor degree of inaccuracy as the non-Armenian words were highlighted and counted manually, which might have given room for possible counting errors.

One possible preliminary explanation of the data above is that LPs in the home domain, at least amongst siblings, seem to be influenced by residential location. The conversation of Mark (NAA) with his sibling demonstrates a highly dynamic and fluid language practice whereas on the other hand, Steve’s (BH) conversation with his sibling also demonstrates a practice that is relatively fluid but makes less use of linguistic resources.

These data, along with the discussions during the interviews and the quantitative findings reported above, possibly indicate that although WA continues to be the main language of communication in the home domain, the LPs of my participants do not seem to be restricted to WAL use but they seem to be rather dynamic and fluid practices, particularly amongst NAAs participants.

Looking at Jebejian’s (2007) findings, which reveal the deterioration of WA in Lebanon, and at UNESCO’s map of endangered languages (Moseley, 2010) might generate pessimism concerning the reported and observed codeswitching practices in the home domain. Nevertheless, there are several points that need to be taken into consideration before adopting a pessimistic approach to this issue.
Firstly, in line with Baker and Jones’s (1998, 158) suggestion, language optimism is an important element of language vitality as it promotes the “needed psychological energy for multilingualism to struggle and attempt to survive”, while on the other hand language pessimism may contribute to language decay. Second, it is important to point out that being multilingual or at least bilingual is the norm in Lebanon. As Bakalian (1993) and Kouloujian (2014 b) discuss, learning multiple languages comes naturally to Middle Eastern Armenians who learn to compartmentalize languages they speak and fluidly use them depending on who they communicate with and what they want to express. Bakalian (1993) explains that Middle Eastern Armenians associate WA to intimacy and to social and familial ties, Arabic to the market place and French to elite status. What I can add to Bakalian’s (1993) suggestion is that LAs today do not solely associate Arabic to buying and selling and or economic progress. Arabic has rather become a language that also represents intimacy, formal and informal social ties, jokes and humour and possibly emotional sentiments to LAs.

A third element worth pointing out is that, multilingualism, which comes natural to LAs, is not a phenomenon they necessarily acquired from mainstream Lebanese society. Linguistic diversity has always been a component characteristic of the Armenian identity. Armenians were typically bilinguals and multilinguals within the Ottoman Empire, as elite Armenians received Western education. In addition, many of the Armenian immigrants who settled in Lebanon were Turkophone (Sanjian, 2001; Sahakyan, 2015). Consequently, I believe Armenians have developed the ability to engage in fluent LPs while remaining resilient against language shift, particularly following the genocide trauma, which instilled strong feelings of national identity amongst them.
Language practices and social networks

Language(s) spoken in a group of non-Armenian and Lebanese Armenian friends

Concerning the LPs of LAAs within their social networks, the interviews reveal that different adolescents have different practices influenced by several factors. As Gerin-Lajoie (2011) comments, young people choose to use a language depending on how they make sense of the society around them and what position they wish to occupy within the group they are in contact with. This means that society constructs their language choices, and sometimes in order to gain access into a particular group, young people carefully monitor their LPs.

Gerin-Lajoie’s views (2011) are attested in Mark’s (NAA) comment, who said during GI2,

“Whatever the person with me is speaking I speak. If they are speaking Armenian, I speak Armenian too. If they speak Arabic, I speak Arabic”.

Mark’s (NAA) statement, although one reported instance, possibly indicates how the social circle of LAAs may influence their language choices, leading them to speak WA when surrounded by LA friends and/or other widely spoken languages in Lebanon when surrounded by non-Armenian friends.

Language choice is not always based on the need to belong but is also a matter of perceived appropriateness. As Fishman (1972) states, people choose to speak a language based on their relation to the people they are communicating with. For example, one uses
different codes of communication depending on whether they are interacting with a stranger, a close friend or a member of the family. People use a low code of communication when speaking with someone who is close to them in terms of friendship, familial ties, age and educational background. On the other hand, they may use a more formal code with someone they consider a stranger or someone with a different social or cultural background (ibid).

During his individual interview, Khajag (NAA) reported using different language codes depending on who he talks to. When I asked Khajag (NAA) if he uses any non-Armenian words when he speaks WA, he commented that with “serious” people such as school principals or people in the agoump, club, he uses “makour hayeren [clean Armenian]”, but with less serious people, humorous people or people raised in NAAs, he uses “odar [foreign] words”. Wardhaugh (1992) discusses that an important principle in language choice is politeness and distinguishing between formal and informal codes. People consider the feelings of others while communicating and therefore carefully choose what language to use based on who they are talking to (ibid).

Apart from Khajag (NAA), several other participants, irrespective of their AOR, discussed the importance of using Arabic, English and/or French out of politeness when surrounded by non-Armenian friends. Some considered it “amot”, “shameful or impolite”, to speak WA in the presence of Lebanese friends. For example, during GI1, Nareg (NAA) commented that he speaks Arabic because “it’s amot to speak Armenian in the presence of Arabs because they don’t understand it”. Marale (NAA) gave a similar account and said,

“I feel that whenever there are Arabs and Armenians are speaking Armenian, it’s disrespectful because they think that we are always talking about them, or we are saying anything wrong about them. When there is someone next to
you who does not understand your language, it’s best to find one language that everyone understands”.

Even when some participants reported not feeling very comfortable to speak Arabic in a mixed group of Lebanese and LA friends, they still made an effort to show respect and reported using English rather than WA. For example, during GI2, Simon (BH) commented, “I am scared they wouldn’t understand my Arabic, that’s why I prefer to speak English”. Simon (BH) also said, “If there is even one person who is an Arab and does not understand Armenian, of course to respect them we try to put an effort to speak Arabic so that they would also participate in the conversation if they want to speak and cope with us. Usually this is the case; we don’t speak Armenian. We try to speak Arabic”.

Although several participants reported using Arabic and/or English in a group of Lebanese and LA friends, some, such as Carine (NAA), did not neglect the importance of speaking WA in the presence of LA friends. Carine (NAA) said during GI1, “It is important for us to speak Armenian if people in our surrounding are Armenian. However, with someone who is an Arab or odar [foreigner], we can’t speak Armenian because they don’t understand. But if they ask why, it is important to show that we love Armenian”.
Carine’s (NAA) statement reveals a combination of opinions – one that is polite and acknowledges the importance of speaking Arabic in a mixed group of friends, and another that maintains a positive attitude towards the WAL by stressing the importance of using it in a group of LA friends. While it is not possible to generalize this to all LAAs, the way adolescents in this particular group adjust their LPs to accommodate to their Lebanese friends can be linked to Giles’s Communication Accommodation theory, particularly to the process of convergence, whereby individuals from a particular speech community change their communicative strategies in order to adapt to the communicative behaviours of individuals from a different speech community and reduce social differences (Giles and Powesland, 1975; Fishman and Garcia, 2010).

While the discussions above indicate use of Arabic and/or other languages in order to minimize differences in the speech patterns between participants and their non-Armenian friends, others reported unconscious use of WA, even when surrounded by people who do not understand it. Chahe (BH) commented during GI1,

“I speak Arabic [implying with non-Armenian friends], but an Armenian always firstly speaks Armenian with a fellow Armenian, and that’s why we start speaking Armenian. We do it anesgalioren [anesgalioren is an Armenian word that literally means without feeling it. In this context it means unconsciously]”.

Jacqueline (BH) agreed with Chahe (BH) and said,
“Us too! We always try to speak Arabic, but a few Armenian words *g pakhi* [slip out of our mouths]”.

Several other participants, such as Steve (BH) and Hagop (BH) reported the same during the individual interviews and said that they speak WA unconsciously in the presence of their non-Armenian friends. As for Hagop (NAA) he said during GI2,

> “Usually I speak Arabic. However, many times without feeling it, the conversation turns into Armenian and many people feel annoyed with it, specifically those who don’t love Armenians, and they ask us to go back to speaking Arabic, or they think we are speaking about them [behind their backs]”.

The reported instances above are another example of how several participants seem to engage in flexible bilingualism practices as they attempt to break language barriers as a way to reduce social barriers between the Lebanese and LA; for example, “it’s not nice to speak Armenian in front of Arabs”, “I respect the Lebanese, I speak Arabic”. At the same time, what comes more spontaneous to some is lapsing back into WA as they use it, for example, “without feeling it” or “a few words slip out” in WA.

While several adolescents, as discussed, reported spontaneous use of WA while trying to adjust their communication patterns to accommodate to their Lebanese friends, some also spoke about consciously or deliberately speaking WA when in a group of Lebanese and LA friends. For example, Sergio (NAA) reported three patterns in his contact with non-
Armenian friends: speaking French so they would understand, deliberately speaking WA when he wants to say something he does not want his non-Armenian friends to understand and unconsciously “lapsing” back into WA while speaking French. During GI2, Jenny (NAA) also reported both conscious and spontaneous use of WA in a mixed group of friends. She said,

“I speak Arabic. However, on the side, we speak Armenian if we want to speak about someone behind their back or something like that [laughs]; Or maybe without feeling it I speak Armenian. So they tell us, why are you speaking Armenian? Speak Arabic, we want to understand too”.

Aram (BH) discussed this matter with a rebellious attitude. When I asked him during GI2 about the language(s) he uses when in a group of Lebanese and LA friends, he commented that when he finds “one Armenian” he forgets about all other languages and starts to speak WA despite the presence of non-Armenians in the group. As for Eddy (NAA), his first answer to the question was, “If Armenians are more in the group, I will speak Armenian”. Then he continued saying,

“We can speak Arabic with the Arab, and Armenian with the Armenians. However, if an Armenian wants to say anything to an Armenian and there is an Arab, they don’t need to take them aside, because I can say it in a different language [implying Armenian] because it is easier. This is not a matter of respect or not. It’s not very important”.

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Such accounts of consciously choosing to speak WA even amongst Lebanese friends who do not understand WA can be linked to the concept of divergence, one of the accommodation strategies in Giles’s Accommodation Theory (Giles and Powesland 1975; Fishman and Garcia, 2010). When a member of a particular speech community accentuates the linguistic differences between themselves and their interlocutor, they would be using the strategy of divergence as a way to emphasize their distinctiveness from their interlocutors (Fishman and Garcia, 2010). The few comments above, although non-generalizable to the wider population, possibly indicate conscious use of WA in the presence of Lebanese interlocutors as a divergence strategy that creates a sense of Armenian group solidarity. It may be a practice whereby some participants do not make linguistic adjustments to facilitate communication with the Lebanese and consciously or even deliberately use WA to strengthen their sense of group identity.

**I feel most comfortable speaking Western Armenian**

Discussions in the previous section reveal that several participants reported unconscious or spontaneous use of WA in a group of Lebanese and LA friends. One explanation can be that participants lapse back into speaking WA possibly because they feel more comfortable speaking it. When I asked which language(s) they generally feel most comfortable using, the individual interviews revealed a difference in the reported perceptions of BH and NAAs participants. Participants who reported feeling most comfortable speaking WA were typically from BH, when by contrast participants who reported feeling comfortable with other languages were from NAAs. For example, Khatchig (BH), Hovnan (BH), Steve
(BH), and Mike (BH) said that they feel more comfortable speaking WA. “Armenian of course! The second language would be Arabic”, said Steve (BH). Conversely, Sergio (NAA), Angelique (NAA), Levon (NAA) and Hrag (NAA) mentioned feeling comfortable in other languages such as Arabic, English and French. For example, Hrag (NAA) commented, “Comfortable? Arabic. And the second language I feel comfortable using is Armenian”.

Khajag is the only participant from a NAA who reported feeling most comfortable using WA. He said, “I think Armenian” and explained that he writes notes, the diary, work plans and everything in WA.

**I feel most comfortable speaking Western Armenian: quantitative findings**

For a general understanding of the subject in discussion, I present below Figure, 10.7 illustrating the language(s) LAAs feel comfortable using when speaking. Data for this section were obtained through the questionnaire item, “tick the language you prefer or you feel most comfortable using when; speaking (informal setting)”. Participants were given the option to select from the following responses, “Armenian, Arabic, French, English, Turkish, other”.

As the numbers reveal, the majority of BH participants, 91.7%, reported that they feel most comfortable speaking Armenian. Only, 2.1% reported feeling comfortable speaking Arabic and 6.3% reported feeling comfortable speaking English. As for NAAs participants, a substantial portion, 68.8% reported feeling comfortable speaking Armenian, 22.9% reported feeling comfortable speaking Arabic, 4.2% reported feeling comfortable speaking French and 4.2% reported feeling comfortable speaking English. While these findings reveal that WA
continues to be the language most participants feel comfortable using, followed by Arabic, English and French, more NAAs participants than BH participants reported feeling comfortable using Arabic. While it is not possible to generalize this to the wider population, data in this section might be an indication that residential concentration slightly influences WA in terms of its oral use (see additional charts on language preference in relation to writing, reading books/novels, and reading magazines/newspapers in Appendix 13, 56-57).

Figure 10.7

Language(s) spoken in a group of non-Armenian and Lebanese Armenian friends

quantitative findings

For a general understanding of the LPs of LAAs in social settings, I present below Figure 10.8 illustrating the percentages of participants who use WA, Arabic, French and English when in a group of Lebanese and Armenian friends. Data for this section were
obtained through the questionnaire item “tick the language you use most in a group of Lebanese friends and Armenian friends”. Participants were given the option to select from the following responses, “Armenian, Arabic, French, English, Turkish, other”.

As the numbers reveal, 53.5% of BH participants reported speaking Armenian in a mixed group of friends, 34.9% reported using Arabic and 11.6% reported using English. As for NAAs participants, 32.7% reported using Armenian, 55.1% reported using Arabic, 6.1% reported using French and 6.1% reported using English. This means that the total percentage of BH participants who reported using a non-Armenian language in a mixed group of Lebanese and LA friends is 46.5% and the percentage of NAAs participants who reported the same is 67.3%. The impact of residential location on these findings does not seem to be clear, nonetheless, tendency to use non-Armenian languages in a mixed group seems to be relatively higher amongst NAAs participants. One possible explanation of this tendency is that, as reported in Chapter 5, LAAs are more likely to be in contact with non-Armenian people and non-Armenian friends, which might create opportunities that translate into more fluidity in their LPs.

Figure 10.8
Language(s) spoken in a group of Lebanese Armenian friends

Apart from contact situations of LAAs with Lebanese friends, which may lead to more opportunities to using non-Armenian languages, such as Arabic and/or French and English, LPs within the Armenian community itself can also influence the status of WA in Lebanon. To understand the impact of residential concentration and/or geographical dispersal on the LPs of LAAs in a group of LAs, I discuss in this section the extent to which they engage in codeswitching and translanguaging practices.

Participants typically reported speaking WA in a group of LA friends irrespective of their AOR. Nevertheless, some reported that they sometimes codeswitch to Arabic and/or other languages, whereas others said that they do not use any Arabic. For instance, during GI2, Simon (BH) reported that he uses WA without codeswitching into other languages. As for Aram (BH), he expressed the following with confidence,

“When I see an Armenian I speak Armenian; and if they reply in Arabic I ask them “aren’t you an Armenian”? [Using a sarcastic tone]”.

During the individual interviews, Hovnan (BH), Steve (BH), Mike (BH) and Rita (BH) reported that they speak WA when they are with their LA friends. Khajag (NAA), Hrag (NAA), Levon (NAA) and Sergio (NAA) also reported the same. “I speak Armenian. We don’t use any Arabic amongst each other”, said Hrag (NAA).

Levon (NAA) on the other hand, reported that although he always speaks WA, sometimes he uses some Arabic words. “It happens, but only a few words; but the three
quarters of it is Armenian [the three quarters of it is an Armenian expression that means most of it]. The only participant who reported speaking “French and very little Armenian” with her LA friends was Angelique (NAA).

When I asked participants whether they could speak WA without using words from other languages, many, irrespective of their AOR, found it challenging to use WA alone without using words from another language and reported using non-Armenian words, even those who reported that they use “only” WA in a group of LA friends. The only participants who confidently said that they could speak WA without using any words from another language were Mike (BH) and Khajag (NAA). Khajag (NAA) commented,

“Yes I can, I always do that and I don’t find it difficult. It’s a matter of habit. For example, during this interview, most of the words I am using are in Armenian if you notice”.

On the other hand, Levon (NAA), Mike (BH) and Steve (BH) commented that it is difficult to speak WA without borrowing words from another language because there are words they do not know in WA or because borrowing words from non-Armenian languages “becomes a habit”. For example, Steve (BH) said,

“An odar [foreign] word will be used for sure. … We cannot not use it no matter how hard we try. … Of course, we prefer to use Armenian only, but we use odar [foreign] words because there are Arabs in our surroundings. … If I am talking to an Armenian, and there are Arabs around, it affects the way I
speak Armenian to the Armenian person [implying he uses non-Armenian].
So, eventually you get used to it and it becomes a way of speaking”.

As discussed in Chapter 3, the process of going back and forth from one language to another is a natural phenomenon amongst bilinguals. In an attempt to define the notion of translanguaging, Garcia and Wei (2014) consider the fluid practices of bilingualism as one societally constructed linguistic repertoire. LPs, according to Garcia and Wei (2014) are interrelated and complex, and when two languages are spoken within one social setting, they would not be two autonomous language systems or interdependent languages but instead one linguistic system constructed often by social conditions. Drawing on Garcia and Wei’s (2014) theory, it is possible to suggest that my participants possibly construct and communicate meaning by fluidly using multiple languages that facilitate their communication process. As Garcia and Kano (2014, 261) discuss, such practise allow multilingual speakers to “select language features from a repertoire and soft assemble their language practices in ways that fit their communicative situations” and “suit the immediate” conversational task.

Language(s) spoken in a group of Lebanese Armenian friends: quantitative findings

For a general understanding of the subject in discussion, I present Figure 10.9 below illustrating the LPs of LAAs in a group of LA friends. Data for this section were obtained through the questionnaire item “tick the language you use most in a group of Armenian friends”. Participants were given the option to select from the following responses, “Armenian, Arabic, French, English, Turkish, other”.
As the numbers reveal, a significantly high percentage of participants, whether from BH or from NAAs, use WA in a group of LA friends. 97.9% of BH participants reported speaking Armenian with their Armenian friends and only 2.1% reported using English. None reported using Arabic with their Armenian friends. As for NAAs participants, 90.0% reported speaking Armenian with their Armenian friends. Only 6.0% reported using Arabic, 2.0% reported using English, and 2.0% percent reported using French. Although it is not possible to generalize these findings to all LAAs, they are possibly another suggestion that WA continues to be the main language of communication in the social domain of LAs.

![Figure 10.9](image-url)

Apart from asking participants about the language(s) they speak with their LA friends, I also asked them the question “when speaking Armenian, do you use words or sentences from another language?”. Participants were given the option to select one of the following responses, “yes, no”.

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As the numbers in Figure 10.10 reveal, a significantly high percentage of participants, 88.0% from BH and 85.7% from NAAs, codeswitch into another language while speaking WA. Only 12.0% of BH participants and 14.3% of NAAs participants said that they do not codeswitch into other languages. (see additional chart on reported codeswitching frequencies in Appendix 14, 58).

These findings reflect the interview discussions above as they reveal that fluid LPs are possibly becoming more widespread amongst LAAs irrespective of their AOR.

**Figure 10.10**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When speaking Armenian, do you use words or sentences from another language?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BH n=50/ NAAs n=49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BH: 88.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAAs: 85.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BH: 12.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAAs: 14.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Codeswitching during group interview one and group interview two**

During the interviews, I noticed that while speaking WA, several participants were using Arabic, English or French, particularly NAAs participants. This made me think of
taking this opportunity to collect “relatively” naturally occurring data as a way to formulate a preliminary idea about the naturally occurring conversations and LPs of my participants.

In order to achieve that, I listened to both group interviews, transcribed them, and before translating them, I counted the total number of non-Armenian words participants used. Calculating the percentage of non-Armenian words used by BH and NAAs participants, has not provided surprising results, as engagement into codeswitching, particularly by NAAs participants, was somehow visible during the group interviews.

Before I present the percentages of non-Armenian words used during the two group interviews, I would like to point out that these findings cannot be generalized to the wider population because two group interviews are not an ample amount of data. Additionally, these findings are to remain speculative as they may contain a minor degree of inaccuracy as the non-Armenian words were highlighted and counted manually, which might have given room for possible counting errors (see highlighted extracts from GI1 and GI2 in Appendix 15, 59-61).

In GI1, the total percentage of non-Armenian words used was 11.8%, of which 83.5% were used by NAAs participants and 16.5% were used by BH participants. Main codeswitching was into English, as 84.2% of the total non-Armenian words were English. The remaining 14.6% of non-Armenian words were Arabic. Only two Turkish words were used.

GI2 also revealed a gap in the LPs of BH participants and those from NAAs. The total percentage of non-Armenian words was 18.8%, of which 85.8% were used by NAAs participants and the remaining 14.2% were used by BH participants. Main codeswitching was into French and English. 53.7% of non-Armenian words were English and French words and the remaining 45.9% were Arabic words. Only three Turkish words were used.
These figures suggest a certain change in the social LPs of the new generation of LAAs, particularly of those who live in NAAs. It is possible to suggest that LPs in social domains seem to be influenced by residential location, with NAAs participants demonstrating more highly dynamic and fluid language practice than BH participants.

Conclusion

The discussions in this chapter, although not to be generalized to the wider population, reveal the dynamic and fluid nature of the LPs of LAAs. Residential location seems to be playing a subtle role in shaping the LPs of LAAs, nonetheless, more data is required to verify this.

Based on the interview accounts and the quantitative findings, it is possible to suggest that, irrespective of residential location, WA seems to be the main language of communication in the home domain. It is perceived to be the most important language at home and is typically the first language LAAs learn from their parents. Although participants typically report using WA with their father, mother and siblings, data suggest that mainly Arabic along with French and/or English are possibly taking ground over WA in the home domain, as Armenian is not exclusively used with family members. Particularly with siblings, quantitative findings reveal higher levels of codeswitching into Arabic, more so amongst NAAs participants.

When it comes to WAL literacy, i.e. reading and writing, residential location seems to have a strong influence on participants’ abilities in those skills. One possible explanation could be that, as discussed in Chapter 7, the majority of NAAs participants receive non-
Armenian education. Residential concentration in BH possibly favours the maintenance of the written form of WA in Lebanon.

As for language use in the social domain, participants from BH and NAAs seem to display common LPs, such as using WA in a group of LA friends, engaging into codeswitching practices and mainly using Arabic and some WA in a group of Lebanese and LA friends. Findings also reveal that at least among this group of LAAs, fluid LPs in the social domain are common amongst BH and NAAs groups, although more visible amongst NAAs participants. Accordingly, it is possible to suggest that residential location has a subtle influence on the LPs of LAAs in the social domain.

To conclude, despite the complex nature of LPs amongst LAAs, findings in this chapter suggest that WAL vitality is relatively strong at a local level, i.e. in Lebanon, particularly when it comes to the spoken form of the language. Less vitality is revealed when it comes to WAL literacy.
Chapter 11

Conclusion and recommendations

Introduction

This study provides a sociolinguistic description of the LPs of LAAs from two main geographical locations, an area highly populated by LAs, BH, and an area with less Armenian presence, NAAs. The findings based on the comparison drawn between participants from different geographical locations in Lebanon give a clearer understanding of the current sociolinguistic situation of the Armenian community in Lebanon, a population that has relatively been little researched.

Language endangerment and language maintenance amongst minority ethnic communities is a complex area of study determined by a number of extralinguistic factors such as residential location, identity and self-perceptions, social interactions, communal involvement, school attendance, cultural practices and ideologies, as well as several other factors that either contribute to language maintenance or lead to language shift. This study reveals that LAs, particularly LAAs, are no exception to this rule as their LPs prove to be highly influenced by the factors mentioned above.

In what follows, I include a description of the findings of the study. I begin by providing a summary of the key findings derived from data obtained through individual interviews, group interviews, questionnaires as well as nonparticipant observations and I discuss them in relation to the research questions and the main objectives of this study. I
then discuss the main contributions of the study as well as its limitations and I provide recommendations which if implemented by the Armenian community in Lebanon, can contribute to the vitality of WA and possibly delay its shift to Arabic and/or other more widely spoken languages in Lebanon.

**Key findings**

This study reveals that the Armenian community in Lebanon and the WAL are undergoing a process of refinement, which may lead to modifications in the status of the WAL in terms of its usage and formal properties. The study was guided by the following research question, which was supported by sub-questions:

To what extent do residential concentration and geographical dispersal influence the status of the WAL in Lebanon?

I begin by discussing the demographic modifications currently experienced by LAs, which were uncovered by research sub-question one,

To what extent do residential concentration and geographical dispersal influence the social interactions, cultural practices, ideologies and perceptions of identity and self-understanding of LAAs?
Part of addressing research sub-question one was looking into how residential location influences the social interactions of LAAs and their perceptions of geographical and social integration. When traditionally BH was believed to be the heart of Armenian presence in Lebanon and was home to Armenian settlers who clustered within its geographical boundaries seeking security and physical, psychological and cultural survival (Sahakyan, 2015; Sanjian, 2001; Tachjian, 2009; Papkova, 2014), today, several factors, such as difficult living conditions, large waves of non-Armenian immigrant influx, smoke and noise pollution and changes in the urban fabric of BH motivate LAs with improved economic conditions to relocate to better and quieter residential areas (Voss, 2007; Jinishian Memorial Program JMP, 2004; Hediger and Lukic, 2009). Nevertheless, Armenian presence in BH continues to be significant and the strong network or Armenian schools, churches and institutions in BH continue to instil a strong sense of community and cater for Armenian culture, heritage, language and identity (Attarian, 2014; Ter-Matevosyan, 2017).

The significant Armenian presence in BH is reflected mainly in the daily interactions of my participants, who typically continue to interact with LAs on a daily basis. Nevertheless, data also reveal that BH participants increasingly interact with non-Armenians, a phenomenon that was traditionally uncommon, as LAs had very limited interactions with mainstream Lebanese society (Greenshields, 1981; Arsenian-Ekmekji, 2008; Migliorino, 2008).

Concerning LAAs from NAAs, data reveal that they are less likely to interact with or encounter LAs on a daily basis than their counterparts in BH. While BH participants interact with both LAs and non-Armenians within their neighbourhoods, NAAs participants report mainly interacting with non-Armenians. The same applies to neighbourhood friendships, as NAAs participants are more likely to develop neighbourhood friendships with non-
Armenians. While BH participants also report developing neighbourhood friendships with non-Armenians, they seem to be more likely to limit their friendships to LAs.

In terms of LPs within neighbourhoods, findings in this study reveal that residential concentration and geographical dispersal influence WAL use within neighbourhoods. Typically, LAAs from NAAs report speaking Arabic with the people in their AOR and with their neighbourhood friends. On the other hand, although Arabic is increasingly being used in BH, LAAs from BH are more likely to use WA as the main language of communication with people they encounter in their AOR as well as their neighbourhood friends.

Li (1982), Baker (2006), Maehlum (2010) and Bayley et al. (2013) discuss that language is not a detached entity from geographical dimension because the demographic characteristics of a community can either physically separate its members or create opportunities of HL use within common spaces such as immediate neighbourhoods, schools as well as social and cultural organizations. In line with this, it is possible to suggest that WAL use is supported and may be enhanced in BH as it is an area that continues to provide LAAs with opportunities of coming into contact with community members and taking part in communal activities. Conversely, LAAs from NAAs may increasingly adopt fluid and dynamic LPs inspired by their increased contact with mainstream Lebanese society.

Data in this study also suggest that residential concentration and geographical dispersal possibly have an influence on the opinions of LAAs from both BH and NAAs about geographical and social integration. When, as Sanjian (2001), Libardian (2004) and (Sahakyan, 2015) report, Armenians in the Middle East are traditionally known for their ability to resist assimilation, this study reveals more openness in the attitudes of LAAs towards integration. Nevertheless, while NAAs participants encourage integration as a way to be part of mainstream Lebanese culture, BH participants seem to be more protective of
their Armenian ties and acknowledge the importance of integration but not at the expense of their internal Armenian relationships. As language choices are often a reflection of the attitudes of a group towards integration (Fishman, 2010), it is possible to suggest that the changing attitudes of LAAs towards geographical and social integration might bring changes to the status of the WAL in Lebanon.

Research sub-question one also contributed to looking into the self-perceptions of LAAs and how they negotiate their identities, which gave a clearer understanding of the impact of residential location on different aspects of the Armenian identity.

The common approaches to defining Armenian identity involve conventional and more modern views. The conventional approach typically regards the WAL as an essential tool that defines Armenianness (Bakalian, 1993; Panossian, 2002) and the modern symbolic approach regards Armenianness as a voluntary identification with the Armenian identity (Bakalian, 1993; Aprahamian, 1999). Associating language to identity is not limited to the Armenian community in Lebanon. Several researchers have observed a complex relationship between language and identity in other ethnic communities (Phinney et al. 2001; Phinney 1989, 1990, 1992; Blackledge, 2004; Pavlenko and Blackledge, 2004; Defina et al., 2006; Auer, 2013; Preece, 2016). Identities are believed to be negotiated and constructed through language use as identification with a particular ethnic group often leads its members to opt for linguistic resources that create a sense of group identity (Pavlenko and Blackledge, 2004; Preece, 2016).

Data in this study reveal that “being an Armenian” means different things to different participants who display complex and multidimensional identities. The definitions of Armenianness that were typically discussed are; knowing Armenian, being united, being intelligent and being hardworking. While the sense of self, self-representation and sense of
belonging of participants varies, with some revealing multiple identities they make use of depending on context, a strong identification with Armenian national identity seems to be salient amongst them, irrespective of their AOR. Many continue to regard the WAL as an essential element that shapes their distinctive identity and maintains their solidarity. The discussions of identity reveal that participants believe in the importance of maintaining their inherited culture and express a strong sense of belonging to their Armenian identity, while at the same time feeling a sense of belonging to their Lebanese identity.

Despite the strong identification with Armenian national identity, data reveal that many believe in the importance of integration, particularly NAAs participants who typically associate integration to economic and social success. By contrast, there are participants who prefer to remain more insular within BH and seem to be less in favour of integration, which they regard as a threat to Armenian identity and the WAL.

In terms of self-perceptions in comparison to their counterparts, BH and NAAs participants seem to perceive each other as being different. Typically, perceived differences are related to national identity, linguistic proficiency and economic prosperity. BH LAs are perceived as having a stronger sense of national identity and being “better speakers” of WA than their counterparts, while NAAs LAs are perceived as affluent or economically more successful.

Although ethnic and national feelings seem to be strong amongst the two groups, a subtly stronger sense of national Armenian identity amongst BH participants was observed, which was reflected in passionate and elaborate responses to questions related to the Armenian identity. Lee Brown (2009) and Halsted (2015) discuss how identification with one’s culture and heritage generates motivation to learn the HL. In line with this, and based on the findings of the study, it seems that the Armenian community continues to maintain a
rather distinctive identity, which may give the WAL in Lebanon a somewhat stable status, at least in the current phase.

Research sub-question one also contributed to exploring the ideologies and cultural practices of LAAs. Part of addressing research question one was looking into how residential concentration and geographical dispersal may influence the ideologies and cultural practices of LAAs as well as their participation in Armenian community life and Armenian and non-Armenian institutions.

Data reveal that a considerable portion of participants, typically from BH are involved in Armenian community life, take part in major Armenian cultural practices, and have been to Armenian community institutions such as sports clubs and youth associations. Another important portion, typically from NAAs, revealed signs of detachment from Armenian community life and cultural practices. For instance, when it comes to participating in the Armenian genocide commemoration day, typically adolescents in both groups reported taking part in the ceremonies and said that they consider April 24th an important day. A few participants, typically from NAAs, revealed a shift in their attitudes towards commemorating the Armenian genocide and reported either minimal participation or no participation at all.

Concerning the religious practices of LAAs and the frequency of church attendance, it is not clear if residential concentration directly influences the perceived decreasing participation in Armenian religious life. Nevertheless, the quantitative findings reveal a relatively lower frequency of involvement on the part of NAAs participants.

Findings also reveal that Armenian clubs and youth associations continue to play an essential role in Armenian community life. Organizations and political parties seem to influence the ideologies of a good portion of participants from both BH and NAAs. While it is not clear if residential concentration has a direct influence on club participation, some
accounts reveal less involvement on the part of NAAs participants. It also seems that, participation in Armenian social clubs by NAAs participants is limited to social and sports activities. On the other hand, BH participants seem to be more politically involved, as many expressed political ideologies inspired by their affiliation to political parties, particularly the ARF.

Data reveal a discrepancy between the interview discussions and the quantitative discussions when it comes to opinions about marriage. Discussions during the interviews showed preference to being in a relationship with and marrying an Armenian, while on the other hand, the questionnaires findings revealed otherwise, as a significant number of NAAs participants reported that they would take a Lebanese person as a husband or a wife. Nevertheless, both groups typically believe it is “important” to be in a relationship or marry an Armenian.

The cultural practices and ideologies of LAAs from BH and NAAs seem to be relatively different not so much in terms of their views but more in terms of various degrees of involvement. For instance, there were some nonconventional or non-traditional views expressed by NAAs participants and reflected in their reduced participations in communal activities and the adoption of a more integrative ideology. Nevertheless, participants from both BH and NAAs typically expressed views that reflect a strong sense of national identity as well as continued identification with Armenian ideologies and cultural practices.

The role of organizations and institutions is believed to be essential in maintaining culture and language (Fishman & Garcia, 2010; Ter-Matevosyan, 2017). Fishman and Garcia (2010) comment that the residential concentration of an ethnic community within a geographical space can contribute to the maintenance of its cultural practices and HL, which are linked in a complex manner and typically influence each other. Drawing on Fishman and
García’s (2010) observation, it is possible to suggest that the dynamic ideologies and ideological practices revealed in this study are influenced, at least in a subtle way, by LAAs’ AOR, which might have an influence on the vitality of the WAL in Lebanon.

This study also reveals differences in the attitudes of LAAs towards Armenian schools. Research sub-question two contributed to uncovering the changes in the patterns of Armenian schooling,

To what extent do residential concentration and geographical dispersal influence Armenian school attendance as well as the attitudes of LAAs towards Armenian education and schools?

Part of addressing this sub-question was looking into the impact of geographical dispersal on Armenian education and on WAL literacy as well as exploring the attitudes of LAAs towards Armenian and non-Armenian school standards.

Data reveal a discrepancy in the attitudes of LAAs towards Armenian schools, as NAAs participants seem to be less in favour of Armenian schools. Findings also reveal that residential location seems to be influencing Armenian school attendance as the majority of NAAs participants reported going to non-Armenian schools and receiving non-Armenian education. Typically, NAAs participants reported negative attitudes towards the standards of Armenian schools and expressed that they would not send their children to an Armenian school in the future.

The functionality of the Arabic language seems to be one of the elements behind negative attitudes towards Armenian schools, as several LAAs who believe in the importance
of the Arabic language and other more widely spoken languages in Lebanon, reported that they would send their children to non-Armenian schools. On the other hand, typically, BH participants show a more positive attitude towards Armenian schools and specifically towards the importance of maintaining the WAL as they reported that they would send their children to Armenian schools.

Despite reported negative attitudes on the part of NAAs participants towards Armenian schools, data reveal that non-Armenian school attendance does not seem to influence the cultural identification of LAAs with the WAL and their beliefs in the importance of transmitting it to their children. Nevertheless, positive attitudes towards the importance of transferring WA intergenerationally do not seem to be sufficient to enhance or change negative attitudes towards Armenian schools. NAAs participants remain not in favour of sending their children to an Armenian school in the future.

Although Attarian (2014) reports that several organizations such as Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, financially support the implementation of new structural and pedagogical plans to improve the standards of Armenian schools, this study, as mentioned, reveals an increased enrolment in non-Armenian schools, which seems to be influencing WAL literacy. BH participants typically reported reading and writing WA, whereas almost half of their counterparts from NAAs reported that they do not read and write Armenian.

Schools are believed to play a major role in reversing language shift not merely for providing language literacy but also for providing opportunities of socializing and HL use (Fishman, 1991; Thornton-Wyman, 2012). This was reflected in the accounts during the interviews where typically participants who have been to Armenian schools reported being encouraged to speak WA at school, whereas by contrast, in a few reported instances,
participants who have been to non-Armenian schools reported being banned from speaking WA.

The changes in the patterns of Armenian schooling may lead to a decline in the written form of WA, nonetheless, as Attarian (2014) comments, a good strategic vision as well as leadership can redress the situation of Armenian schools and delay or reverse the perceived shift of WA.

The study reveals positive attitudes towards the WAL, which were uncovered through research sub-question three,

To what extent do residential concentration and geographical dispersal influence the LPs and language attitudes of LAAs?

In addressing research question three, I looked into the impact of residential location on the attitudes of LAAs towards the WAL and towards Arabic and/or other widely spoken languages in Lebanon. Typically, participants expressed positive attitudes towards the WAL and the majority believes in the importance of speaking it and maintaining it. Data reveals that the two groups of LAAs associate WA to Armenian identity and culture and this seems to generate strong sentiments of belonging and ethnic pride, except in a very few instances where indifference towards WA was expressed.

Residential concentration and geographical dispersal in this context do not seem to be influencing Armenian sense of identity and attitudes towards the WAL. Nevertheless, they seem to be influencing attitudes towards Arabic and other more widely spoken languages in
Lebanon as NAAs participants are more in favour of being “good” in Arabic than BH participants, because Arabic is perceived as a functional language in Lebanon.

Although data reveals that WA is typically perceived as a non-functional language, emotional attachment to WA persists amongst the two groups of participants. Positive language attitudes are often highlighted as crucial factors that determine language vitality as they may lead to increased efforts and motivation to HL learning (Grosjean, 1982; Fishman, 1991; Pauwels, 2016). In line with this, it is possible to suggest that if the positive attitudes towards WA revealed in this study translate into the LPs of LAAs, the perceived shift from WA to other more widely spoken languages in Lebanon might have higher chances of reversal.

The study reveals the dynamic and fluid nature of the LPs of LAAs. This was also uncovered through research sub-question three. Qualitative and quantitative findings suggest that WA seems to be the main language of communication in the home domain irrespective of participants’ AOR. It is typically the first language of BH and NAAs participants and is reported to be the most important language at home. WA is typically reported to be used with all family members, nonetheless, data suggest that mainly Arabic and, to a lesser extent, other widely spoken languages in Lebanon, are possibly taking ground in the home domain more amongst NAAs siblings.

Concerning reading and writing WA, participants’ abilities in those skills seem to be highly affected by their AOR. One possible explanation could be that, as mentioned, the majority of NAAs participants do not receive formal Armenian education. Accordingly, residential concentration in BH favours the maintenance of WA literacy.

Data reveals that in the social domain, common LPs are displayed amongst the two groups of participants. For example, WA is typically used in a group of LA friends and
codeswitching, mainly into Arabic, is typically practiced as an effort by BH and NAAs participants to facilitate communication in a mixed group of LA and non-Armenian friends. Data also reveals fluid LPs in the social domain amongst BH and NAAs participants, nonetheless, these fluid practices are more visible amongst NAAs participants. Accordingly, it is possible to suggest that the impact of geographical dispersal influences social LPs amongst LAAs, leading to increased use of multiple linguistic resources amongst NAAs participants.

Despite the complex nature of the LPs of LAAs, findings in this study suggest that WAL vitality, at least in its spoken form, is relatively strong in Lebanon. There are signs of decline in terms of language literacy, nonetheless not as much to conclude that WA is “definitely endangered”, at least on a local level. If language maintenance means continued vitality under pressure, resistance to shifting to languages of wider communication, continued use in a variety of domains, maintenance of a strong allegiance towards a HL, and a relatively stable number of speakers (Fishman, 1991; Batibo, 2005), it is therefore possible to suggest that WA in Lebanon somehow ticks all these aspects and shows a relative degree of vitality.

Finally, this study compares, subtly at times and more visibly at others, to Li’s (1982) study on the impact of geographical concentration and residential dispersal on the maintenance or shift of the Chinese language in Chinatown. It also compares to the LPs of children with Cuban heritage in Miami (Bayley et al., 2013).
Key contributions, limitations and directions for further research

The study is a contribution to the literature on the Armenian diaspora in Lebanon and the WAL. As mentioned in the Chapter 1, empirical studies and publications in the field of Armenian studies are in short supply. To the best of my knowledge, to date, no empirical study has been conducted on the LPs of exclusively the younger members of the Armenian community in Lebanon. Accordingly, looking into the impact of residential location on the LPs of LAAs not only contributes to understanding the status of the WAL in Lebanon but also is a contribution to the field of Armenian studies in general.

Taking into consideration the self-perceptions, cultural practices and ideologies of LAAs, the study also provides a description and a preliminary understanding of how the Armenian community in Lebanon reshapes itself. As this study is drawn on a combination of instruments, such as questionnaires, individual interviews, group interviews and nonparticipant observations, it provides a degree of triangulation, which increases the reliability of the findings. In addition, the study includes participants from two main sites, BH and NAAs, which resulted in data based on useful cross-site comparisons.

Although this study makes significant contributions to the knowledge of the Armenian diaspora and the WAL in Lebanon, it contains a few limitations that can be addressed in future studies. One of the limitations that might underpower the findings of this study is the limited number of participants. As mentioned in the methodology chapter, due to time restrictions, it was only possible to recruit ten participants for the individual interviews, fourteen participants for the two group interviews, one hundred participants for the questionnaires, and four participants for the nonparticipant observations. This means that the findings of this study have limited generalisability and thus I do not claim that they go beyond the present research participants involved in it. The study remains a preliminary
study that sheds light on several understudied aspects of the diaspora. Having said that, some of the findings are similar to those of other studies on minority communities around the world. Therefore, the findings of this study might have a wider application amidst the recent trend of immigration and the current crisis of refugee settlement across the world.

Another possible limitation is that although the study combines different instruments of data collection, its main focus is on qualitative data based on the perceptions of LAAs and their reported experiences, which means that participants might have given accounts that contradict their real behaviours. As Dornyei (2014) comments, attitudes, opinions, and beliefs do not necessarily reflect real behaviours and linguistic practices. Although I redressed this issue by including nonparticipant observations that looked into the LPs of my participants within their family, further research with a focus on observations could evaluate the accuracy of the findings in this study and explore reactions, attitudes and linguistic behaviours within a natural group setting. More data can be accessed by conducting observations in the Armenian family domain and the social domain in order to obtain a more detailed and microanalytic picture of the LPs of LAAs as well as their codeswitching and translanguaging behaviours.

Another limitation can be the presentation and interpretation of the quantitative data obtained through the questionnaires. Since this study is mainly qualitative by nature with a focus on individual and group interviews, I used the questionnaires to provide simple and easily understood statistical analysis without using any hypothesis tests. Future studies that are mainly quantitative can build on this study and provide a more detailed statistical analysis by testing hypotheses on a larger population and generating numerical data that is more objective and generalizable.
Since as discussed, statistical data with regards to the Armenian community in Lebanon is almost non-existent and national censuses in Lebanon are poor (LIC, 2013), the recent geographical dispersal of LAs in Lebanon is also statistically unclear. There is no census data that backs up my claim about the resettlement of LAs in what I refer to as NAAs. Although several researchers such as Jebejian (2007), Voss (2007) and Arsenian-Ekmekji (2008) mention in their works that LAs are increasingly relocating to different areas across Lebanon, there is no clear boundaries between BH and NAAs. It would be useful to have recent official statistics prepared by major institutions and organizations within the Armenian community. Apart from providing numeric information on the perceived recent geographical dispersal of LAs and their demographic situation in Lebanon, statistics can improve sociolinguistic literature on the Armenian community by revealing what areas require further research. It would also be useful if such census would be made available to the public as this helps provide awareness of the sociolinguistic situation of LAs and generates efforts into reversing potential language shift.

One of the ways to extend this study is by exploring the impact of mixed marriage on language use in the home domain. The practice of marriage outside of one’s own ethnic group is believed to be one of the major factors that result in language shift (Fishman, 1991). Since mixed marriages are on the increase amongst LAs (Nassif, 2014) leading to a drop in fulltime enrolment in Armenian schools (Al-Bataineh, 2014), research targeting language transmission and LPs amongst adolescents in mixed marriage households would provide a better understanding of the status of WA in Lebanon.

Another way in which this study can be extended is by looking into the impact of social media on the LPs of LAAs. Since the understanding of space and time has changed and the geography of social relations and communication has adopted a more transnational nature by giving people the opportunity to involve into distant interactions and go beyond
face-to-face relationships (Jacquemet, 2010), the recent geographical dispersal of LAAs across Lebanon might not be as influential as it would have been before the change in the recent understanding of space. Exploring this area would provide a better understanding of the status of the WAL and how it can be influenced by digital space. It would also be interesting to look into and explore publically viewable data such as on websites, Facebook pages and various blogs, in order to collect more naturally occurring data that reflect the actual thoughts of LAAs.

Another study that can build on the current one would be an exploration of the experiences of LA students in non-Armenian schools. Some participants who have been to non-Armenian schools reported being reprimanded for speaking WA in their schools. It is important to look into how supportive Lebanese schools are of ethnic diversity. As Lee Brown (2009) comments, schools should implement multicultural education where HL users would be safe and respected for speaking their language and practicing their culture. In line with this, it is important to explore to what extend Armenian and non-Armenian schools embrace heritage cultures and HLs because WAL maintenance may be influenced by the way it is promoted or diminished in schools.

Another important element that can contribute to enriching literature on the sociolinguistic situation of the Armenian community in Lebanon is conducting studies on a longitudinal basis. Although longitudinal studies in the domain of sociolinguistics are time and money consuming, it would be interesting to find out whether the current generation of LAAs opt for speaking Armenian or Arabic in their future careers, families and other domains. It would be also interesting to find out whether the self-perceptions and ideologies of adolescents from both areas translate into actual experiences in the future.
Finally, the discussions in this study reveal that there is more room for future empirical studies on the LPs of the Armenian community in Lebanon, particularly of LAAs. While, as mentioned, this study does have a few limitations, it nonetheless provides a preliminary understanding of the LPs of LAAs from two main areas, BH and NAAs; this makes it a useful basis for future studies on the Armenian community in Lebanon as well as the Armenian diaspora around the world.
Recommendations

Although this study suggests a certain degree of WA vitality, it does not deny the multiple challenges it has been undergoing. Accordingly, in what follows, I provide a few recommendations that can contribute to reversing the perceived shift of WA and maintaining its vitality going forward.

In the past decade, researchers have called attention to the critical role informal and formal education play in achieving HL maintenance (Garcia, 2013; Lacorte, 2016; Chick et al., 2017). With regards to the WAL, its classification as a definitely endangered language by UNESCO (Moseley, 2010) has also called attention on a local and transnational level to the importance of investing in formal and informal education as a way to revitalize WA (Al-Bataineh, 2014; Attarian, 2014; Bakalian and Chahinian, 2016).

The process of WAL reversal begins with a communal and transnational collaborative dialogue that involves community members, leaders, educators, scholars and innovative and creative thinkers. As Lacorte (2016) notes, to promote HL education, it is important to have a dialogue around possible HL challenges even when these dialogues do not always result in immediate answers or solutions. Chik et al. (2017, 9) also discuss that for a HL teaching program to be successful and sustainable it has to be able to “to weave together a variety of networks” such as community organizations, educational institutions and foreign and local educators “to support local and supra-local goals”. In line with this, I believe that an ongoing dialogue across the diaspora may give rise to questions that lead to an understanding of the political, social, cultural and emotional aspects involved in preserving WA and may ultimately contribute to envisioning dynamic plans that contribute to its revitalization.
Based on the findings of this study, I provide recommendations on four different domains: leadership, education, social and the family. I address the problem in a top to bottom approach as each level may have a trickledown effect on the subsequent one.

Having looked into the political conditions that have shaped, and continue to shape, the fabric of the Armenian community in Lebanon and the general perceptions of Armenian identity, this study suggests that many LAAs, particularly those from BH, continue to be inspired or influenced by party ideologies that promote a traditional way of retaining to Armenian identity and language and somehow abide by a set of boundaries and maybe fixed notions of culture and language. On the other hand, a subtle, and sometimes visible, need to detach from national ideologies was observed in this study along with the need to gradually move from traditional to symbolic identity. Drawing on this, and considering that WA is a stateless language that entirely relies on institutional support (Bakalian and Chahinian, 2016), I may suggest two lines of efforts, one at the level of political parties, and another at the level of charitable organizations that through financial aids and grants actively try to improve the socioeconomic conditions of LAAs and actively promote social programs.

While it is not possible to deny the essential contribution of Armenian political parties to Armenian survival in the years of settlement and to Armenian education in the following years (Migliorino, 2008; Sahakyan, 2015), it is also not possible to disregard that gradual refinement and expanding of national ideologies within political parties are essential in meeting the needs of the new generations who in the flux of globalization construct modern identities that are possibly less in line with traditional approaches to identity. I believe this can be promoted through allocating less sums into political lobbying and more into education and social programs.
In addition, while as discussed, Armenian political parties have maintained control over several institutions to cultivate their ideological base, in this time of changing notions of identification, it is important to attain a power sharing formula within the Armenian community whereby more individuals and apolitical organizations would be in charge of some form of leadership too. This can be promoted through more dialogue between political parties and social charitable groups and through allocating greater sums of funding into school programs. Along those lines, I suggest additional platforms and physical and digital social spaces to raise social awareness about the importance of maintaining national identity aligning with globalization and thus giving young Armenians the opportunity of “being” their hybrid identities.

With regards to the domain of education, and before I discuss details of pedagogy, I would like to point out the importance of reconceptualising notions of multilingualism whereby, as Chik et al. (2017) suggest, individual and group identities would be placed outside boxes of country of origin or nationality and their actual LPs are not perceived as inappropriate. Accordingly, I believe that the success of multilingual education in Armenian schools today should be dependent on the awareness that the place of language in society has changed and that less predictable linguistic practices may be used by young people while being on school premises. Armenian schools today continue to promote mostly monolingualism (Al-Bataineh, 2014), which may create tension, as discussed in chapter seven, between the desire to teach WA using monolingual approaches and the dynamic LPs of young language learners. Garcia (2013) suggests moving beyond national ideologies and national languages, which operate in complicity with political powers and national myths. While I do not go as far as Garcia (2013) in defining national sense of belonging as a “myth”, I suggest that giving WAL learners the chance to explore a certain degree of translanguaging in Armenian schools or even in WAL classes, gives
LAAs the opportunity to have an alternative identity to their national identity. I am by no means suggesting speaking Arabic and/or other more widely spoken languages in Lebanon, but what I am suggesting is that reprimanding spontaneous instances of codeswitching is not the solution to motivate WA learning in Armenian schools.

Developing a pedagogy of HL learning instruction is not a straightforward task because particularly when it comes to formal language instruction, language departments, schools and teachers often fail in serving their purpose (Chik et al, 2017). Community run schools, often lack the recourses and facilities to address HL shift, particularly due to the difficulty of finding trained teachers (ibid). Armenian schools in Lebanon, as reported by Attarian (2014) are no exception to this, as many are short on resources and trained teachers and thus addressing such issues may contribute to improving the status of the WAL. In line with this, I present below a few recommendations that are inspired by Chik et al.’s (2017, 8) discussions on HL teaching in relation to the concept of institutionalization which “provides both a tool for comparing programs across institutional levels and countries, as well as a formal means for gauging the state of institutionalization in the field of HL teaching”.

I believe that it is important for Armenian schools to adopt, implement and institutionalize heritage LPs into their curriculum or into WA learning programs. This would require ongoing research, advocacy, focused work, professionalism, collaboration and negotiations. It begins, as Chik et al. (2017, 2) discuss, by outlining “key issues in the design and implementation of HL programs grounded in the research of HL education”. It is important that a program like this meets the needs of LAs and thus be supported not only on a classroom level but also on an organizational level. Armenian schools may also implement “art based HL
pedagogy and multilingual digital storytelling projects that are accompanied by the creation of professional development materials for teachers that can support these innovations” (ibid, 3).

Another suggestion would be that WAL learning in Armenian schools would adopt a learner centred approach that includes a wider range of home activities, cultures and even languages. Ideally, according to Chik, et al. (2017, 8), “in the school context, HL learning opportunities are not confined to HL classes but are more embedded through the curriculum and extracurricular school activities”. Such an approach if adopted by Armenian schools may help draw on learning opportunities in the home domain as well as the community.

Another important point suggested by Chik, et al. (2017, 6), which Armenian schools can take into consideration is the importance of adopting a “collaborative and reflective model of professional development that emphasizes social processing of knowledge, and can help teachers, parents, and administrators identify and respond to changing institutional needs”.

Since innovations in a HL program are not a “one-size-fit all” solution (Chik et al., 2017, 10), if Armenian schools adopt a particular HL program, it is important that they evaluate specific pedagogical innovations and explore their degree of assimilation. Some Armenian organisations and schools have in the past few years been increasingly open to implementing such innovative approaches that promote WAL vitality. For example, just recently, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation brought together an international team of professionals with the aim of developing innovative learning tools for WAL acquisition and revitalization (Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Armenian Communities, 2017). Nevertheless, these efforts are still in their early stages and therefore they require further expansion across the diaspora as a hole and evaluation in order to determine their effectiveness.
Given the findings of this study, which reveal substantial reluctance on the part of LA parents and adolescents alike towards the standards of Armenian schools, particularly with regards to the lack of proficiency in the Arabic language, I suggest that the innovations recommended above be applied to the Arabic language equally in order to create a competitive advantage against non-Armenian schools, which may motivate LA parents in considering Armenian education.

As a second point, several of my participants commented on the importance of integrating into Lebanese society without total assimilation. One initiative on the part of Armenian schools could be encouraging and catering to a bigger number of non-Armenian students as a way to create a school environment that somehow reflects the outside world. I believe the main target of Armenian schools should be providing physical medium for LAs to interact amongst each other without however creating a sense of isolation from mainstream society.

Another suggestion would be creating and implementing free online educational interactive programs guided by live teachers as an alternative to Saturday schools. Although Saturday schools are an important opportunity to teach WA through immersion, providing additional options that eliminate logistics problems and have a much farther geographic reach may contribute to increased numbers of WA learners.

The social domain goes hand in hand with the domain of education, particularly within the Armenian community where, as mentioned, schools are affiliated to at least one social organization and they highly encourage parent and student participation in them. According to Duff and Zayas (2017), many ethnolinguistic communities establish community centres as well as personal social networks with the intention of revitalizing their language and improving their
children’s cultural connections and linguistic abilities. The Armenian community may follow a similar example particularly if charitable organizations along with political leadership raise awareness on these issues. It is also important to encourage non-Armenians to join these social clubs as a way to bridge possible gaps between LAs and non-Armenians.

Finally, educational programs, social activities and contributions cannot be possible without parental involvement and the efforts made on their part in transmitting their HL. Parental attitudes and children’s’ attitudes have been studied by researchers such as Zhang and Slaughter-Defoe (2009) and have been regarded as most effective in reversing language shift. As Fishman (1991) reports, perhaps one of the most important elements that contribute to language maintenance is parental involvement. If language learning is restricted to formal education, even the most innovative immersion programs may not necessarily secure HL maintenance. Thus, it is again important to create awareness about the importance of speaking WA within the family by encouraging family policies that promote the development of WA. Despite the fact that many families develop their rules for home language use, the language of wider communication often continues to be spoken regardless. Accordingly, I suggest that communication between parents and children about the importance of languages in general and HLs more specifically is a more efficient way than imposing a language by way of compliance.
References


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https://www.academia.edu/183324/Language_and_religion_in_the_construction_of_Modern_Armenian_identity


Appendix 1

Map 1

Armenia in its historical setting
(Hewsen 1997, 4)
Ottoman Armenian Provinces, 1878-1914

(Hovhannisian 1997a, 205)
Appendix 2

Armenian Apostolic churches in Lebanon, 2003 (Migliorino 2008, 185)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Church</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Cathedral of St. Gregory the Illuminator</td>
<td>Antelias</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Church of St. Nichan</td>
<td>Beirut – downtown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Church of St. Agop</td>
<td>Beirut – Jeitaoui</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Church of St. Kevork</td>
<td>Beirut – Rmeil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Church of the Resurrection</td>
<td>Beirut – Badawi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Church of St. John the Baptist</td>
<td>Beirut – Hayachene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Church of the Forty Martyrs</td>
<td>Bourj Hammoud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Church of St. Vartan</td>
<td>Bourj Hammoud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Church of St. Sarkis</td>
<td>Bourj Hammoud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Church of Our Lady</td>
<td>Bourj Hammoud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Church of St. Maryam</td>
<td>Bikfaya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Church of the Assumption</td>
<td>Jounieh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Church of Azounieh</td>
<td>Azounieh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Church of St. Boghos</td>
<td>Anjar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Church of the Pentecost</td>
<td>Taraboulos</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Armenian Catholic churches in Lebanon, 2003 (Migliorino 2008, 195)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Church</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Church of the Assumption</td>
<td>Bzoummar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Church of Notre Dame</td>
<td>Bzoummar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Church of the seminar</td>
<td>Bzoummar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Cathedral of St. Gregory and St. Elias</td>
<td>Beirut - Place Debbas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Church of the Annunciation</td>
<td>Beirut – Jeitaoui</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Church of the school of the Mechitarists of Venice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Church of St. Saviour</td>
<td>Bourj Hammoud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Church of the Holy Cross</td>
<td>Zalka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Church of Our Lady of Fatima</td>
<td>Zahle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Church of Our Lady of the Rosary</td>
<td>Anjar</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Armenian Evangelical churches in Lebanon, 2003 (Migliorino 2008, 196)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Church</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The First Evangelical Church</td>
<td>Beirut – Kantari</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Armenian Evangelical Church</td>
<td>Beirut – Ashrafieh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Armenian Evangelical Church</td>
<td>Beirut – Rmeil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Armenian Evangelical Church</td>
<td>Bourj Hammoud – Adana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Armenian Evangelical Church</td>
<td>Bourj Hammoud – Marash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Armenian Evangelical Church</td>
<td>Bourj Hammoud – Gomidas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Armenian Evangelical Church</td>
<td>Zahleh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Armenian Evangelical Church</td>
<td>Anjar</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 3

Armenian associations in Lebanon and areas of activity, late 1960s. The majority of these associations continue to operate to date (Migliorino 2008, 128-130)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Association(s)</th>
<th>Affiliation</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adana, Aintab, Amanos, Berejik, Hadjin, Kilis, Konia, Malatia, Marash, Ourfa, Sassoun, Tigranakert, etc.</td>
<td>Independent unions</td>
<td>Housing improvement support, scholarships, school support, food and clothes distribution, regional cultural preservation, income generating projects; some had transnational structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armenian Relief Cross</td>
<td>Party-affiliated</td>
<td>Tashnag &quot;social arm&quot;; medical services, community development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamazkayin</td>
<td>Party-affiliated</td>
<td>Tashnag &quot;cultural arm&quot;; cultural events, publishing, education, arts promotion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homenetmen</td>
<td>Party-affiliated</td>
<td>Tashnag athletic club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zavarian</td>
<td>Party-affiliated</td>
<td>Tashnag student association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homenmen</td>
<td>Party-affiliated</td>
<td>Henchag athletic club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dekhrouni</td>
<td>Party-affiliated</td>
<td>Henchag student association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nor Serount</td>
<td>Party-affiliated</td>
<td>Henchag &quot;cultural arm&quot;; cultural events, publishing, education, arts promotion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armenian Educational Benevolent Union</td>
<td>Party-affiliated</td>
<td>Henchag &quot;social arm&quot;; dispensaries, support to education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tekeyan</td>
<td>Party-affiliated</td>
<td>Ramgavar cultural association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Ely Beneficent Society, Association of the Holy Saviour, Society of Annunciation, Catholic Akkadakhnam, Catholic summer camps for boys and girls, Armenian Catholic Sisters' orphanage</td>
<td>Church-affiliated</td>
<td>Catholic charities; material and spiritual support to the destitute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apostolic Akkadakhnam</td>
<td>Church-affiliated</td>
<td>Apostolic charities; material and spiritual support to the destitute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Type of Organization</td>
<td>Support Provided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armenian Evangelical Home and Family Committee,</td>
<td>Church-affiliated</td>
<td>Evangelical charities; material and spiritual support to the destitute; support to education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armenian Evangelical Social Action Committee, Armenian</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missionary Association, Trad Social Center</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armenian National Sanatorium (Azounieh)</td>
<td>Church-affiliated</td>
<td>Jointly supported and run by the Churches (notably, Apostolic and Evangelical)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGBU</td>
<td>Independent transnational</td>
<td>Support to education and cultural preservation; sports club; support to the destitute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>diaspora</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calouste Gulbenkian foundation</td>
<td>Independent transnational</td>
<td>Support to education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>diaspora</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Howard Karagheusian Commemorative Corporation</td>
<td>Independent transnational</td>
<td>Based in the USA and connected to the US Presbyterian Church; family care, health care and counselling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>diaspora</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philibossian Foundation</td>
<td>Independent transnational</td>
<td>Support to education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>diaspora</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danish Birds’ Nest</td>
<td>Foreign charity</td>
<td>Danish missionary association; education and care of orphans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hilfsbund</td>
<td>Foreign charity</td>
<td>German evangelical charity; education, medical care, training in &quot;Anjar&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institute of the Blind, Deaf and Mentally Retarded</td>
<td>Foreign charity</td>
<td>Established by the Swiss Friends of the Armenians; run jointly with the Apostolic and Evangelical Churches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old peoples' home</td>
<td>Foreign charity</td>
<td>Established by the Swiss Friends of the Armenians; run jointly with the Apostolic and Evangelical Churches</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 4

List of Armenian schools in Lebanon and their geographical location

I have extracted the following list of Armenian school names from Attarian’s (2014, 48-49) school enrolment figures. I have added to the list the geographical location of each school in Lebanon as well as their approximate distance from Bourj Hammoud (BH).

**National Armenian Schools**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Distance from Bourj Hammoud</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Levon &amp; Sophia Hagopian</td>
<td>Bourj Hammoud</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yeghishe Manougian</td>
<td>Dbayye</td>
<td>Approximately 7.9 km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harach K. Gulbenkian</td>
<td>Anjar (Armenian village)</td>
<td>Approximately 57.0 km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Souren Khanamirian College</td>
<td>Fanar</td>
<td>Approximately 5.7 km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Srpots Karasoun Mangants</td>
<td>Bourj Hammoud</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aksor Kasarjian</td>
<td>Bourj Hammoud</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apkarian</td>
<td>Bourj Hammoud</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roupinian</td>
<td>Badawi, parallel to Bourj Hammoud River</td>
<td>Approximately 0.8 km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Distance from Bourj Hammoud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noubarian-Khrimian</td>
<td>Tripoli</td>
<td>Approximately 77.0 km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tchatalbashian</td>
<td>Bourj Hammoud (closed)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bird’s Nest</td>
<td>Byblos</td>
<td>Approximately 33.0 km</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Armenian Evangelical Schools**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Distance from Bourj Hammoud</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shamlian-Tatigian</td>
<td>Bourj Hammoud</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evangelical School of Anjar</td>
<td>Anjar</td>
<td>Approximately 57.0 km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armenian Evangelical College</td>
<td>Hamra, Beirut</td>
<td>Approximately 5.7 km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central High School</td>
<td>Ashrafiye</td>
<td>Approximately 3.3 km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trad Evangelical</td>
<td>Bourj Hammoud (closed)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Torosian</td>
<td>Bourj Hammoud</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gertmenian</td>
<td>Badawi, parallel to Bourj Hammoud River</td>
<td>Approximately 1.3 km</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Armenian Catholic Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Distance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mesrobian</td>
<td>Bourj Hammoud</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hripsimians</td>
<td>Fanar</td>
<td>Approximately 5.7 km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mkhitarian</td>
<td>Hazmiyyeh</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Agnes</td>
<td>Bourj Hammoud</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harboyan-Holy Cross</td>
<td>Zalka</td>
<td>Approximately 3.7 km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic Sisters</td>
<td>Anjar</td>
<td>Approximately 57.0 km</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Distance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tarouhi-Hovagimian</td>
<td>Horsh Tabet, Sin el Fil</td>
<td>Approximately 3.7 km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garmirian</td>
<td>Antelias</td>
<td>Approximately 6.2 km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nazarian</td>
<td>Horsh Tabet, Sin el Fil</td>
<td>Approximately 3.7 km</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Other

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Distance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M&amp;H Aslanian Jemaran</td>
<td>Mezher</td>
<td>Approximately 6.2 km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tekeyan</td>
<td>Bourj Hammoud</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sahagian-Mgrditchian</td>
<td>Sin el Fil</td>
<td>Approximately 2.2 km</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix 5

Distribution of Armenian households dissatisfied with their home according to the reasons for dissatisfaction by region (in %) (Jinishian Memoria Program, 89)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Lack of sanitary conveniences</th>
<th>Absence of adequate sewage systems</th>
<th>Unhealthy</th>
<th>Area (m²) disproportionate to number of residents</th>
<th>Housing located in a polluted environment</th>
<th>Housing located in non-Armenian environment</th>
<th>Housing located in a high risk neighborhood</th>
<th>Difficulty of accessing social services</th>
<th>Far from working place or university</th>
<th>Other reasons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bourj Hammoud</td>
<td>72.4</td>
<td>61.5</td>
<td>81.7</td>
<td>55.9</td>
<td>73.8</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>57.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashrafieh, Mar Mekhail</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dora, Bauchrieh</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fanar, Rawda</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antelias, Dbayye</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anjar</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 6:

Questionnaire

The impact of residential distribution on the language use patterns and the linguistic attitudes of adolescents: a case study of Western Armenian in Lebanon

Part I: Background Information

1. Age _______
2. Gender:
   □ Male
   □ Female
3. Place of Birth
   Country _________________________ City/Village ________________________
4. Parent’s Place of Birth
   a. Mother: Country ____________________ City/Village ________________________
   b. Father: Country ____________________ City/Village ________________________
5. Areas of Residence and Periods of Stay
   Current area of residence ________________________ Date (from/to) _________________
   Previous area of residence (if any) ________________ Date (from/to) _________________
6. Education:
   Name of current school ________________________________________________________
   Name of previous school (if any) ________________________________________________
   Name of University (if any) ____________________________________________________
   Major of study at University (if any) ____________________________________________
7. Parents’ Education:

   Mother’s highest degree obtained:
   □ Secondary school or less
☐ High school diploma
☐ BA/BS
☐ MA/MS
☐ PhD
☐ none
☐ other (please specify): ______________________________________________

Father’s highest degree obtained:
☐ Secondary school or less
☐ High school diploma
☐ BA/BS
☐ MA/MS
☐ PhD
☐ None
☐ other (please specify): ______________________________________________

8. Parents’ Occupation:

   Mother’s current occupation:
   ______________________________________________

   Father’s current occupation:
   ______________________________________________

**Part II: Domains of language use and language use patterns.**

1. Please list the language(s) you learned to speak by chronological order. Also indicate the place(s) you learned to speak it/them.

   For example,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language(s)</th>
<th>place(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Language(s)</td>
<td>Armenian and French</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>language(s)</th>
<th>place(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
2. Please list the language(s) you learned to read and write by chronological order. Also indicate the place(s) you learned to read and write it/them.

For example,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language(s)</th>
<th>Place(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Armenian and Arabic</td>
<td>at school</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Tick √ the language you use with the following people. **If** you use more than one language, rate your choices on a scale of 1 up to 3 (1 being the most used language and 3 being the least used language).

For example,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Armenian</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>French</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Turkish</th>
<th>other (please indicate)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
For example,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Armenian</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>French</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Turkish</th>
<th>other (please indicate)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speaking (informal setting)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing (informal)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Can you do the following activities using only Armenian? Please tick the right box.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Armenian</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>French</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Turkish</th>
<th>other (please indicate)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speaking (informal setting)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing (informal)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading books/novels</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading magazines and or newspapers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Watching movies</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Watching soap operas</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Listening to music</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Listening to radio programs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Writing text messages using your phone</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing notes to self or writing in your diary.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Armenian</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Yes, but it’s difficult</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Read and understand a short paragraph written in the simple or basic language.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write a short paragraph using simple or basic language</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speak with friends and family without borrowing words from any other language.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read and understand the context of a passage written in the formal language. For example, from a newspaper.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listen to and understand the formal language. For example, the news.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write a formal passage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. Do/did you take Armenian language classes?
   □ yes
   □ no

7. If you answered yes to question 6, please say how many hours a week
   □ Less than 3 hours a week
   □ between 3 and 9 hours a week
   □ between 9 and 15 hours a week
   □ More than 15

8. When speaking Armenian, do you use words or sentences from another language?
   □ yes
   □ no

9. If you answered yes to question 8, how often do you use words or sentences from another language(s)?
   □ In every conversation I have
   □ In most conversations I have
   □ In some conversations I have
   (Please indicate which language(s) you borrow words or sentences from)
   ____________________________

10. Is speaking Armenian emphasized by your parents and family?
    □ yes
    □ no

11. Is speaking Armenian emphasized in your school?
    □ yes
    □ no
Part III: Residential, Companionship and Cultural information

1. The people in your area of residence are mostly:
   - ☐ Lebanese
   - ☐ Armenian
   - ☐ both

2. Your neighbors are mostly:
   - ☐ Lebanese
   - ☐ Armenian
   - ☐ both

3. Your friends are mostly:
   - ☐ Lebanese
   - ☐ Armenian
   - ☐ both

4. Your neighborhood friends are mostly:
   - ☐ Lebanese
   - ☐ Armenian
   - ☐ both

5. The people you come across in your daily life are mostly:
   - ☐ Lebanese
   - ☐ Armenian
   - ☐ both

6. Do you attend the memorial services for the Armenian Genocide on April 24\textsuperscript{th}? 
   - ☐ yes
   - ☐ no
   - ☐ not every year

7. When do you usually celebrate Christmas Eve?
   - ☐ on the 24\textsuperscript{th} of December
   - ☐ on January 5\textsuperscript{th}
8. Have you ever joined any Armenian clubs/societies/scouts/dance schools/summer camps?
   - ☐ yes
   - ☐ no

9. Have you ever joined any Lebanese clubs/societies/scouts/dance schools/summer camps?
   - ☐ yes
   - ☐ no

10. How often do you attend Armenian mass?
   - ☐ Every week
   - ☐ Every month
   - ☐ Every three months
   - ☐ Every year
   - ☐ On special occasions (e.g. Easter)
   - ☐ Never

11. Have you ever visited Armenia?
   - ☐ yes
   - ☐ no

12. If your answer to question 11 was No, do you wish to visit Armenia one day?
   - ☐ yes
   - ☐ no

**Part IV: Identity and Language attitude**

1. How do you describe yourself?
   - ☐ Armenian
   - ☐ Armenian-Lebanese
   - ☐ Lebanese-Armenian
   - ☐ Lebanese of Armenian origin
   - ☐ Lebanese
   - ☐ other (Please indicate): _____________________________________________
2. You feel you have a stronger sense of belonging to:
   - ☐ Lebanon
   - ☐ Armenia
   - ☐ both; but Lebanon more
   - ☐ both; but Armenia more

3. How do you feel about being Armenian?
   - ☐ not proud at all or ashamed
   - ☐ not proud
   - ☐ neutral (neither proud/nor ashamed)
   - ☐ proud
   - ☐ extremely proud

4. How do you feel about being Lebanese? Please circle one answer.
   - ☐ not proud at all or ashamed
   - ☐ moderately proud
   - ☐ neutral
   - ☐ significantly proud
   - ☐ extremely proud

5. How important do you think it is that Armenians live in areas highly populated by Armenians?
   - ☐ extremely unimportant
   - ☐ not important
   - ☐ neither important/nor unimportant
   - ☐ important
   - ☐ extremely important

6. How important do you think it is that Armenians live in areas mixed with Lebanese people?
   - ☐ extremely unimportant
☐ not important
☐ neither important/nor unimportant
☐ important
☐ extremely important

7. Would you take a Lebanese person as a boyfriend or a girlfriend?
   ☐ yes
   ☐ no

8. Would you take a Lebanese person as a husband or wife?
   ☐ yes
   ☐ no

9. Do you think it is important for you to have an Armenian Boyfriend or Girlfriend?
   ☐ yes
   ☐ no

10. Do you think it is important for you to have an Armenian husband or wife?
    ☐ yes
    ☐ no

11. In your opinion, how important is it to preserve the Armenian language? Please tick one answer.
    ☐ extremely unimportant
    ☐ not important
    ☐ neither important/nor unimportant
    ☐ important
    ☐ extremely important

12. How important is it for your children to learn Armenian? Please tick one answer.
    ☐ extremely unimportant
    ☐ not important
    ☐ neither important/nor unimportant
    ☐ important
13. In your opinion, how important is it to speak Armenian? Please tick one answer.
   ☐ extremely unimportant
   ☐ not important
   ☐ neither important/nor unimportant
   ☐ important
   ☐ extremely important

14. Do you think that knowing Armenian increases your chances of being employed?
   ☐ yes
   ☐ no

15. In your opinion, which of the languages that you speak is the most important in the
    following places?
    At work: _______________________
    In your social life: ________________
    At home: _______________________

16. Do you think speaking Armenian in your area of residence would make you less socially
    accepted?
   ☐ yes
   ☐ no

17. Have you ever been criticized for having poor linguistic abilities in a certain language?
   ☐ yes
   ☐ no

18. If your answer to question 17 was yes, please indicate the language:
    ______________________________

19. If your answer to question 17 was yes, how did the criticism left you feeling?
   ☐ angry/sad/demoralized
   ☐ alienated
   ☐ indifferent
   ☐ other (please indicate): ________________
20. In the future, would you send your children to an Armenian school?
   ☐ yes
   ☐ no
   ☐ maybe

21. If your answer to question 20 was NO or MAYBE, please tick one of the following answers:
   ☐ too far away
   ☐ too expensive
   ☐ low academic standards
   ☐ inferior social milieu
   ☐ unimportant
   ☐ other (specify)

______________________________________________________________________

22. Do you have any further comments with regards to the current situation of the Armenian language?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

End of questionnaire.
Thank you very much for your time.
Thank you for considering taking part in this research. The person organizing the research might invite you to participate in a follow up interview to this project. Please indicate whether you wish to be contacted or not.

- I agree to be contacted in the future by King's College London researchers who would like to invite me to participate in follow up studies to this project, or in future studies of a similar nature.

If your answer to the question above was yes, please include your details below. All information you provide will be kept in strict confidentiality.

Name: ________________________________________________________________

phone/mobile: _________________________________________________________

Email: ________________________________________________________________

Signature: ___________________________________________________________________
### Appendix 7

#### Demographic information about group interview one (GI1) Bourj Hammoud (BH) participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Area of residence</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Parents’ education</th>
<th>Parents’ occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jack</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>Bourj Hammoud</td>
<td>Armenian school</td>
<td>both 9&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; grade</td>
<td>father: deceased</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>governorate: Mount Lebanon</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>mother: deceased</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>district: Metn</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>mother: salesperson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrick</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>Bourj Hammoud</td>
<td>Armenian school</td>
<td>both 6&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; grade</td>
<td>unavailable information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>governorate: Mount Lebanon</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>district: Metn</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chahe</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>Bourj Hammoud</td>
<td>Armenian school</td>
<td>both 12&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; grade</td>
<td>father: blacksmith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>governorate: Mount Lebanon</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>mother: accountant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>district: Metn</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacqueline</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>Bourj Hammoud</td>
<td>Armenian school/ currently 3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt; year at university</td>
<td>father: 6&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; grade</td>
<td>unavailable information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>governorate: Mount Lebanon</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>mother: 12&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; grade</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Demographic information about group interview one (GI1) non-Armenian areas (NAAs) participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Area of residence</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Parents’ education</th>
<th>Parents’ occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marale</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>Beit el Chaar governorate: Mount Lebanon district: Metn</td>
<td>non-Armenian school</td>
<td>father: 12th grade mother: 11th grade</td>
<td>clothes shops owners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eddy</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>Naccache governorate: Mount Lebanon district: Metn</td>
<td>non-Armenian school/ currently 2nd year at university</td>
<td>both 12th grade</td>
<td>clothes and shoe shop owners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carine</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>Dekwaneh governorate: Mount Lebanon district: Metn</td>
<td>non-Armenian school</td>
<td>father: 9th grade mother: high school</td>
<td>shoe factory owner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nareg</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Jounieh governorate: Mount Lebanon district: Kesserwan</td>
<td>non-Armenian school</td>
<td>both 12th grade</td>
<td>shoe shops owners</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Demographic information about group interview two (GI2) Bourj Hammoud (BH) participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Area of residence</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Parents’ education</th>
<th>Parents’ occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Simon</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>Bourj Hammoud</td>
<td>Armenian school</td>
<td>father: high school</td>
<td>father: graphic designer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>governate:</td>
<td></td>
<td>mother: secondary school</td>
<td>mother: secretary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mount Lebanon</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>district: Metn</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narine</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>Bourj Hammoud</td>
<td>Armenian school</td>
<td>father: 4th grade</td>
<td>information unavailable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>governate:</td>
<td></td>
<td>mother: BA</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mount Lebanon</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>district: Metn</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aram</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>Bourj Hammoud</td>
<td>Armenian school</td>
<td>both secondary school</td>
<td>information unavailable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>governate:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Mount Lebanon</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>district: Metn</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Demographic information about group interview two (GI2) non-Armenian areas (NAAs) participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Area of residence</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Parents’ education</th>
<th>Parents’ occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mark</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>Bsalim governorate: Mount Lebanon district: Metn</td>
<td>non-Armenian school/currently at university</td>
<td>father: Masters degree&lt;br&gt;mother: BA degree</td>
<td>father: sales manager&lt;br&gt;mother: bank employee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jenny</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>Brummana governorate: Mount Lebanon district: Metn</td>
<td>non-Armenian school/currently at university</td>
<td>both BA degree</td>
<td>father: bank employee&lt;br&gt;mother: bank employee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hagop</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>Naccache governorate: Mount Lebanon district: Metn</td>
<td>Non-Armenian school/currently at university</td>
<td>information unavailable</td>
<td>father: photographer&lt;br&gt;mother: teacher</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Demographic information about individual interview participants (Bourj Hammoud, BH)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Area of residence</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Parents’ education</th>
<th>Parents’ occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Steve</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>Bourj Hammoud</td>
<td>Armenian school/ currently 2nd year of university</td>
<td>father: elementary school mother: BA in French language</td>
<td>Both employees in a family business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>governorate: Mount Lebanon</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>district: Metn</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mike</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>Bourj Hammoud</td>
<td>Armenian school</td>
<td>both 5th or 6th grade</td>
<td>father: deceased mother: unemployed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>governorate: Mount Lebanon</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>district: Metn</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khatchig</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Bourj Hammoud</td>
<td>Armenian school</td>
<td>both 6th grade</td>
<td>father: employee mother: unemployed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>governorate: Mount Lebanon</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>district: Metn</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hovnan</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Bourj Hammoud</td>
<td>Armenian school/ currently at university</td>
<td>father: 5th grade mother: 11th grade</td>
<td>father: jeweller mother: unemployed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>governorate: Mount Lebanon</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>district: Metn</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rita</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>Bourj Hammoud</td>
<td>Armenian school</td>
<td>father: 5th grade mother: technical school</td>
<td>both owners of handbag atelier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>governorate: Mount Lebanon</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>district: Metn</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Demographic information about individual interview participants (non-Armenian areas, NAAs)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Area of residence</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Parents’ education</th>
<th>Parents’ occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Levon</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Dbayeh</td>
<td>non-Armenian school/ currently at university</td>
<td>father: high school degree</td>
<td>family business (unspecified)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Governorate: Mount Lebanon</td>
<td></td>
<td>mother: MA in Pharmacy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>District: Metn</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sergio</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Hazmiyyeh</td>
<td>non-Armenian school/ currently at university</td>
<td>both university degrees</td>
<td>both owners of a clothes shop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Governorate: Mount Lebanon</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>District: Baabda</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angelique</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Jbeil</td>
<td>non-Armenian school/ currently at university</td>
<td>both university degrees</td>
<td>father: owner of a print house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Governorate: Mount Lebanon</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>mother: unemployed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>District: Jbeil</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khajag</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Kornet Chehwan</td>
<td>Armenian school</td>
<td>father: 10th grade</td>
<td>father: jeweller</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Governorate: Mount Lebanon</td>
<td></td>
<td>mother: 9th grade</td>
<td>mother: crafts-woman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>District: Metn</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hrag</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Rabieh</td>
<td>non-Armenian school/ currently at university</td>
<td>father: BA in Engineering</td>
<td>father: engineer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Governorate: Mount Lebanon</td>
<td></td>
<td>mother: Master's degree in Business</td>
<td>mother: owner of a cake shop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>District: Metn</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Demographic information about questionnaire participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>residential area</th>
<th>BH</th>
<th>NAAs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16: 28%</td>
<td></td>
<td>16: 34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17: 28%</td>
<td></td>
<td>17: 12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18: 26%</td>
<td></td>
<td>18: 18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19: 16%</td>
<td></td>
<td>19: 32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21: 2%</td>
<td></td>
<td>21: 4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>residential area</th>
<th>BH</th>
<th>NAAs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>gender</td>
<td>42% male</td>
<td>48% male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>58% female</td>
<td>52% female</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| residential area, governorate and district | BH, Mount Lebanon governorate, Metn district: 100% | Beirut governorate: |
|                                           |                                               | Achrafieh: 6% |
|                                           |                                               | Mount Lebanon governorate: |
|                                           |                                               | Baabda district |
|                                           |                                               | Baabda: 2% |
|                                           |                                               | Hazmieh: 2% |
|                                           |                                               | Mount Lebanon governorate: |
|                                           |                                               | Kesserwan district |
|                                           |                                               | Adonis: 2% |
|                                           |                                               | Zouk Mikael: 4% |
|                                           |                                               | Mount Lebanon governorate: |
|                                           |                                               | Jbeil district |
|                                           |                                               | Jbeil: 2% |
|                                           |                                               | Jounieh: 2% |
|                                           |                                               | Kaslik: 2% |
|                                           |                                               | Mount Lebanon governorate: |
|                                           |                                               | Metn district |
|                                           |                                               | Ain Saade: 2% |
|                                           |                                               | Air Aar: 4% |
|                                           |                                               | Awkar: 8% |
|                                           |                                               | Beit el Chaar: 6% |
|                                           |                                               | Bikfaya: 4% |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>residential area</th>
<th>BH</th>
<th>NAAs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>education</td>
<td>4.8% non-Armenian schools 95.2% Armenian schools</td>
<td>73.5% non-Armenian schools 26.5% Armenian schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mother’s education</td>
<td>Secondary school: 16% High school: 40% BA/BS: 28% MA/MS: 2% PHD: 6% Other: 6% Unanswered: 2%</td>
<td>secondary school: 54% high school: 14% BA/BS: 14% MA/MS: 4% PHD: 6% Other: 4% unanswered: 4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>father’s education</td>
<td>Secondary school: 24% High school: 24% BA/BS: 18% MA/MS: 8% PHD: 8% Other: 14% unanswered: 4%</td>
<td>secondary school: 54% high school: 20% BA/BS: 8% MA/MS: 4% PHD: 2% Other: 10% unanswered: 2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mother’s occupation</td>
<td>accountant: 2% beautician: 2% caterer: 2%</td>
<td>bank employee: 4% employee in a company: 6% factory manager: 2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>father’s occupation</td>
<td>BH</td>
<td>NAAs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>deceased: 2%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>factory manager: 2%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>healthcare supervisor: 2%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>housewife: 60%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>owner of a grocery store: 4%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pharma-cist: 4%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>saleswoman: 6%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>secretary: 2%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tailor: 4%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teacher: 8%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| father’s occupation | residential area | BH |
|---------------------|------------------|
| deceased: 2%        | BH               |
| dentist: 4%         |                  |
| driver: 4%          |                  |
| electrician: 4%     |                  |
| employee in a company: 12% | | |
| employee in a factory: 4% | |
| graphic designer: 2% | |
| grocery store owner: 10% | |
| jeweller: 6%        |                  |
| manufacturer of bags: 6% | |
| mechanic: 12%       |                  |
| nurse: 2%           |                  |
| photographer: 2%    |                  |
| real estate agent: 2% |               |
| reverend: 2%        |                  |
| salesman: 6%        |                  |
| shoemaker: 4%       |                  |
| shop owner (unspecified): 2% | |
| teacher: 4%         |                  |
| technician: 6%      |                  |
| unanswered: 2%      |                  |
| unemployed: 2%      |                  |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>father’s occupation</th>
<th>BH</th>
<th>NAAs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>businessman: 12%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>construction company owner: 4%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>driver: 2%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>employee in a company: 4%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>employee in a factory: 2%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>engineer: 6%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>grocery store owner: 4%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jeweller: 8%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>manager in a company: 12%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>manufacturer of bags: 4%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>photographer: 4%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plastic company owner: 2%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>printing company owner: 2%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>restaurant owner: 2%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>salesman: 2%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shoemaker: 12%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shop owner (unspecified): 10%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unanswered: 4%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unemployed: 4%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 8

Reported perceptions of linguistic abilities in formal Western Armenian and Classical Armenian

Reading formal Western Armenian

Can you read and understand the context of a passage written in the formal language? (for example, from a newspaper)
BH n=49/ NAAs n=48

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>BH</th>
<th>NAAs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>75.5%</td>
<td>29.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, but it's difficult</td>
<td>20.4%</td>
<td>29.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>41.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Listening to and understanding formal Western Armenian

Can you listen to and understand the formal language? (for example, the news)
BH n=50/ NAAs n=50

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>BH</th>
<th>NAAs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>70.0%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, but it's difficult</td>
<td>28.0%</td>
<td>36.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Writing formal Western Armenian

Can you write a formal passage in Armenian?  
BH n=50/ NAAs n=50

Yes: BH 64.0% / NAAs 56.0%  
Yes, but it's difficult: BH 26.0% / NAAs 20.0%  
No: BH 10.0% / NAAs 24.0%

Speaking formal Western Armenian

Can you speak the formal language? (for example, giving an oral presentation)  
BH n=50/ NAAs n=50

Yes: BH 74.0% / NAAs 46.0%  
Yes, but it's difficult: BH 34.0% / NAAs 20.0%  
No: BH 20.0% / NAAs 6.0%
Understanding Classical Armenian “Krapar”

Can you understand the Classical Armenian language used in the Armenian church, i.e. the “krapar”?
BH n=49/ NAAs n=50

- Yes: BH 30.6%, NAAs 34.7%
- Yes, but it’s difficult: BH 36.0%, NAAs 34.7%
- No: BH 22.0%, NAAs 42.0%
**Appendix 9**

**Political affiliations of interview participants and the names of clubs they have been to**

**Clubs and associations attended by group interview one (GII) BH participants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Armenian club attendance and political affiliation/ time of attendance</th>
<th>Non-Armenian club attendance and time of attendance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jack</td>
<td>Currently an active member of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation’s Lebanese Youth Association (LEM) as well as the Scouts of Homenetmen [affiliated to the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Tashnag)].</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrick</td>
<td>Currently an active member of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation’s Lebanese Youth Association (LEM)</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chahe</td>
<td>Currently an active member of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation’s Lebanese Youth Association (LEM)</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacqueline</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Has been to Lebanese leisure clubs such as dance clubs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Clubs and associations attended by group interview one (GI1) NAA participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Armenian Club Attendance and Political affiliation</th>
<th>Non-Armenian club attendance and time of attendance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marale</td>
<td>Previously attended Homenetmet Sports Club, [affiliated to the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Tashnag), to learn basketball.</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eddy</td>
<td>Previously attended Homenetmet Sports Club, [affiliated to the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Tashnag).</td>
<td>Attends Lebanese sports clubs [name unspecified].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carine</td>
<td>Previously attended Homenetmet Sports Club, [affiliated to the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Tashnag).</td>
<td>Attends Lebanese leisure clubs [name unspecified].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nareg</td>
<td>Occasionally attends Homenetmet Sports Club, [affiliated to the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Tashnag), to learn basketball.</td>
<td>Attends a Lebanese sports club and play basketball there with his friends [name unspecified].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Armenian Club Attendance and Political affiliation</td>
<td>Non-Armenian club attendance and time of attendance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simon</td>
<td>Currently an active member of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation’s Lebanese Youth Association (LEM) as well as the Scouts of Homenetmen [affiliated to the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Tashnag)].</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narine</td>
<td>Currently an active member of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation’s Zavarian Student Association (ZOM) as well as the Scouts of Homenetmen [affiliated to the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Tashnag)].</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aram</td>
<td>Currently an active member of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation’s Zavarian Student Association (ZOM)</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Armenian Club Attendance and Political affiliation</td>
<td>Non-Armenian club attendance and time of attendance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Attends Lebanese sports clubs [name not specified].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jenny</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Attends Lebanese leisure clubs [name not specified].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hagop</td>
<td>Has attended the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) Antranik Chess Club as a child [AGBU has no political affiliation].</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Clubs and associations attended by group interview two (GI2) NAA participants*
### Clubs and associations attended by individual interview participants (BH)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Armenian Club Attendance and Political affiliation</th>
<th>Non-Armenian club attendance and time of attendance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Steve</td>
<td>During two summer holidays, has joined the Scouts of Homenetmen as a child. [Homenetmen is affiliated to the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Tashnag). Has also been to the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) Antranik summer school one summer as a child [AGBU has no political affiliation].</td>
<td>Has been to Buddha summer camp for a few years as a child.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mike</td>
<td>As a child he was a member of the Scouts and an Armenian social club.</td>
<td>As a child, he has been to a social club that took him on day trips but he does not remember the name as he was very young.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khatchig</td>
<td>A member of the Scouts of Homenetmen [affiliated to the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Tashnag).</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hovnan</td>
<td>Currently a member of the Scouts of Homenetmen [affiliated to the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Tashnag).</td>
<td>Was in a Lebanese football team six years ago, but didn’t stay for long.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rita</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None. Prefers to stay away from all social clubs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Clubs and associations attended by individual interviews participants (NAAs)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Armenian Club Attendance and Political affiliation</th>
<th>Non-Armenian club attendance and time of attendance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Levon</td>
<td>Went to the Armenian General Benevolent Union club (AGBU) between the ages of 10 and 15. [AGBU has no political affiliation].</td>
<td>Has only been to the sports club in his school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sergio</td>
<td>Has played Judo as a child either in Armenian General Benevolent Union club (AGBU) or Armenian Black Belts Academy. [He does not remember exactly which club it was]. [Both clubs have no political affiliations].</td>
<td>Has been to many Lebanese sports clubs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angelique</td>
<td>Has attended the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) summer camp as a child. [AGBU has no political affiliation].</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khajag</td>
<td>Currently an active member of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation’s Zavarian Student Association (ZOM).</td>
<td>Has participated in Lebanese party meetings as a way to merge with them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hrag</td>
<td>As a child, he has joined Homenetmen Aghpalian Scouts [affiliated to the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Tashnag).</td>
<td>Has been to a Lebanese summer camp but he does not remember it as he was very young.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Interview with Hagop Keshishian, head of Homenetmen Club (July, 2014)

Relevant text extracted from the transcript for further analysis

Do you notice any differences in youth participation between the current and previous generations?

Of course! Of course! First, there is the decrease in the number. When they used to live next to each other, they used to, for example, come from school, finish studying, and go to play either football, basketball or ping pong at the Agoump [club]. Today, when they are living far, they are first, far from their Agoump [club]. Apart from that, the recent geographical dispersal, the technology that came, such as the ipad, the iphone and computer games, are taking the time of our youth a lot more and are tying them; instead of their participation in sports life. Unfortunately, there are some sports that previously the youth used to pursue within the premises of our club. Today, they only reach a certain degree (vorosh degh me g hasnin). Add to that the economic situation; for example, some Armenian kids live in NAAs, such as Kornet Shehwan [NAA], and their fathers are not capable of consuming petrol in order to bring their child on a Sunday morning to the agoump. Moreover, they would have to leave and wait for three hours to come back and pick up their child. Before it was easy as the child used to go and come back on foot. Nowadays, if for example in that Arabic area there is an Arabic club, they are sending their
children there, this means that first of all you are losing your language, the child is kept far from their Armenian milieu, and for sure you are pushing that child to the path of mixed marriage.
Appendix 11

Reported perceptions of language functionality at work

Which of the languages you speak is the most important at work?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>BH</th>
<th>NAAs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Armenian</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
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<td>French</td>
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<td>21.4%</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Arabic &amp; English</td>
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Reported perceptions of language functionality in the social domain

Which of the languages you speak is the most important in your social life?

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language Configuration</th>
<th>BH</th>
<th>NAAs</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Arabic &amp; Foreign Language</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>English &amp; French</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 12

Conversation between Mark and his sibling (from a NAA)

Armenian and non-Armenian word count

TOTAL NUMBER OF WORDS: 1058
TOTAL NUMBER OF NON-ARMENIAN WORDS: 958
TOTAL NUMBER OF ENGLISH WORDS: 89
TOTAL NUMBER OF ARABIC WORDS: 869

The conversation

M: Shou 3melte rje3te re7te boxing mber7? 
G: Eh
M: Re7te rje3te? 
G: Eh re7et 
M: kif ken? 
G: enta kent nayem dakhlaq mber7? 
M: Eh, ana ba3d l dohor nemet 
G: deyman btmem 
M: Amen or ge bargim arten 
G: Ha adang e 
M: Ourish, katsir? 
G: Um.. 
M: kif ken? 
G: eh mni7, l3ebna
M: leh?
G: bas lek kir 7elo 3njad
M: ha? 3am tetsalle?
G: eh kir... mesh ennd 3am btsalla, bet7ess 7alak 3am jetmarran
M: w bet7ess enno hal shi enno 7a kdalk fi? Aw min elo jlede brezha2e
G: eh eh, eja l coach y3melle bl sayfyye 2ai fi tournaments
M: ch
G: ya3melle baddi fawtik b tournament
M: ah walla
G: eltello lah ya khayye.. ma baddc fouf b tournament kheyal
M: ma baddik ffoute b tournament?
G: ekela ate y3neh?
M: shou baddik bhal shaghle ente 3am tetsalle, Shou baddik..
G: Eh
M: shawhe 7alik 3al lade?
G: eja ya3melle enno 3am jetmarrane ma kellon ken.. ma kellon shabeb.. l benet li kenet ma3e falett.. ma ba3rif shou sar ma3a, fett b1 boutoule
M: Hmm
G: w battalet rej3et.. brefet kill.. khesref
B: akalet ate
G: eh ma khasri b1 boutoule
B: wa22afs
G: eh, la y3melle enno 3am ta3amle zet.. shou bi2oulo… endurance y3ne metl l shabeb.. w heke
B: Eh
G: y3melle I’m proud.. w ma ba3rif shou badde fawtik b match
M: chlo nsiya
G: eh ma eltello..
M: No way
G: ما باصريف
M: كهيلاء ثلاث تكلبه بنين
G: ما هايع هيايي...
M: يا تاري بني تليم ثلاث تلل
G: ص باصريف
M: (زغب) ص
G: باصلي كأ من الدفاع الشخصي... أنا بجيل اسلامي الدفاع
M: يا كأ من الدفاع الشخصي صالح با غحيك تلل شاگل تور... باصريف لي إفون انت؟
G: (يضحك) تا ليم...
M: اديري غايل؟... يا غغيك هايع؟ أنا بملت جيم إبليرك... تماران ي؟
G: لكر 7دورما ماتايف... أه غغيك هايع؟ أنا باصريف ماتايف؟ ما باصريف?
M: ما باشتي ماتراي
G: ما هايع هايع، ون كنات؟
M: ون كنتي انت؟
G: ما الالم
M: متي دباي، انتي ما الالم دباي؟
G: ضا
M: وايا... ضي... شواي متش بيجكي وروي فيلم با صح Laws
G: رد با صحي إخبار ما زهاءك؟
M: اكيد زهاةنإ... با صحي شخصي ين ين ايكارتو
G: ضا
M: باي بيسوب
G: هيايي بساسد آنت سيرستري بيا(by the way)
M: مازبوب
G: لكر ما متهيت با صاح
M: با صاح بيتا مشاءك ما بنود
G: ما
M: باي شا واتراي فلاي
G: ch ma ana ma heme mi3 ma3 min fal?
M: ik ma fal ma3 wa7ad..
G: ch
M: ma howe sa bl elche 3am yse3ed | soldiers a2an ma hiyo yerja3 yrou7 3al war
G: s7
M: la hal search li 3am yse3do hayda wa7ad mennon eja li 3ndo badde mouse3ade
G: eh leh 2atalo?
M: haydek majnoun.. haydek 3ndo mshkle. 3ndo khashe..
G: Ah
M: la wa2ta ra7o eno 3m yettarrano w 3am ye7ke ma3o la yraw2o 3an | war w heke
G: ch
M: haydek majnoun mesh 2etel 7ada sarlo medde.. fa 2atalo
G: yilh
M: ch
G: ana fakkarto houwwe yalle ken | sniper.
M: la2 mesh houwwe
G: fakkarto houwwe. y3ne ma met haydak.. 3refet?
M: ch… nazbout
G: bas hiyye marto kenet 7esse enno
M: enno shou.. enno hayda
G: enno haydake suspicious.. kif kenet 3am te talla3 li.. enno
M: ennik le mall
G: chhi
M: leh ma 7kitima?
G: ma ken 3erfe enno enta kenet
M: ch je3te shou smelit?
G: Mashi. shallasna | movie w je3el 3al be
M: ch walla
G: Um..bas khalasna. movie. y3ne la la wsolet bi bet
M: ma nemte kiff lyom bas
G: He2e..w3it 9. bade 2oum ma 2deret.. w3it 8:30
M: ah enfe daraste?
G: hm. 3nde fa7SEN. accounting w math bet lnhar
M: ana ma kent 3am be2dar 2oum
G: (laughs)
M: (laughs) ma ele jlede ken. Ma fi shi awwal marra sheghel. bala shi nhar la7ad. 7elo tte7.. nye7a 7elwe
G: bas ma jabaret 7alak mem? mbala
M: la2
G: ma jabaret 7alak?
M: w3it 9 men wara. mom e3de naddet laouda
G: shou kenen ta3am ta3mol? kenen 3am tshllak. jeans ksh ksh ksh
M: eh eh. la w3it bas. eltella khalas felle.. daharet.. w rje3et nemet la 12:30. Ma kent 3am 2oum y3ne.. eh. shou 3amle lyom?
G: ma ba3rif. badde edros
M: hmm. enta l7ousatik?
G: lyom khalas. taleta 3nde accounting w math.. enta shou 3amel?
M: accounting w math shou?
G: accounting w math bzet lnhar.
M: bzet lnhar?
G: l fare2 bayneton shi 5 hours.
M: uf.. shou baddik ta3mle? Tetla3e 3nd kiki w lederse?
G: ela3 3nd kiki eh
M: eh
G: bas ma ele jlede edros abi la7es. bkoun khalas ba3dne la7s
M: ik eh akid. bas enno shou baddik ta3mle. majboura
G: w mayneton major. w mayneton. ah eja alle estez. accounting enno mn 88 la 92 A-
M: mazbout
G: shou men aymta?
M: 82??
G: men 88 la 92
M: ah 88 fakkarej.
G: la 92. shou hal maskhara
M: che A-. bad dik ljibe aktar men 92
G: eltello
M: ik hayda ma houwwe l estez li ente mna22ayti manno mni7
G: chh.. eltello ij astez iza bteje bet7ottolle A- ma bta3rif shou ba3mol ik
M: (laughs)
G: hek eltello.. ya3melle la la w maba3ret shou. Jibile 91 eltello kell shi shtaghalto men awwal l sceance la halla2..
M: ma bestehal A?
G: la halla2 reelle jibile 91
M: hek baddik 2elilo
g: hek hek bahdalto
M: ba3d la 3ndik shi sa? ??
G: la2.. wa2taa eltello bahdalto.. eltello lek aza ma bet7ottolle A betshuf shou bisir ma3ak. Ma ra7 ekhdod ma3d next semester
M: ik aik liheye lekhd.. bas layke houwwe biffidik kif y3ne houwe l wa7id li bifassir metel ma bifassir.. ma li wala estez ate3 layye accounting bifassir metlo gher houwwe w aziz nader
G: ik Norma Freyha shou?
M: Norma Freyha betkhawwif. Norma Freyha manna mni7a abadan
G: aloule ennd ok bta3td homeworks w hek
M: kifir
G: bas kifir mni7a bi share7?
M: ah ma b3rif bas ana bensa7ik Aziz Nader. 3ndo tari2a w hek hamshare w hek.. 3ndo tari2a w iza jebe pe 85 bto2la3e A. hek y3ne
G: (shocked)
M: ta2anno bya3rif eno ma 7ada 3am yjib na 3alamet

G: ma houwe eja alle...houwe eja alle sarle medre kam sene manne sheyef talmiz

M: eh enno leh ma.. enno biestehale A y3ne.. elilo nek

G: eltello nek.. eltello akid baddak t7ottolle A

M: elilo izi shakhs metle ma byestehal | A, y3ne lamin baddak t7ott | A? ma 3am betham. Shou khass

G: 2al ya3melle ana 3nde.. shou bi2oulo.. 3nde yel3ab be 3alamet 2al 3alemten bas bye2dar yzid

M: kezzeb

G: shou kezzeb! Fiyyo yzid add ma baddo

M: eh akid.. shou ana ken fi course ra7 jib D. 7kita laj m3alme wli baddik yeh

G: coordinator ymken

M: 7kina w ma ba3rif shou.. bl ekher tattetle B+. Min bijib B+ men D?

G: shou hiyye? Ayya saf?

M: safi socio... political science ma khasne fi

G: ahh
Conversation between Steve and his Sibling (BH)

Armenian and non-Armenian word count

TOTAL NUMBER OF WORDS: 436
TOTAL NUMBER OF NON-ARMENIAN WORDS: 44
TOTAL NUMBER OF ENGLISH WORDS: 34
TOTAL NUMBER OF ARABIC WORDS: 10

The conversation

G: Menk vor jame kaniyin ge bargeyink, hedo al meds sahra ererenk. Menk minchev ardou tour garneyink.
S: Ha
A: Ha
G: Minchev ardv 6 hon ge bayteyink.
A: Menk 1-in 2-in ge bargeyink, 7-in gartennayink.
G: Kezi ??????? danne
S: Ha
A: Ad mouyse incher.. mouys taghe. Meg had tagh me ga amen paneer ladyboyerou taghere.
S: LOL
A: Vor kokon ngarvere ya, ha ad taghe ches grnar kalel 3aj2ayen. Martig ge vekhdan vra vrayi
S: Ourish inch ga aghvor degh me ga asang?
A: Our Phuket, Thailand?
S: Ha
A: Ma
S: Pigh gouzem yes
A: Pigh ga
S: Gentaninerou falan
A: Ooooh, jisht deghne. Yes meg hada gertam pan zoo, tigers in.
S: Yertank
A: Shad aghvore vordev tiger nere. Hima medstsads gllan kani
S: Tram havakenk
G: Payts Bangkok chenk yertar
A: Pattaya gertank payts
G: Anshoushd. Phuket hech chen katsads. (INAUDIBLE)
A: Pattayayi bese Phuket e. kids inchou? hotele aveli class e
G: Ha. Towne miyan islande chevor
A: Vordev Phuket shad cheap paner ga.
G: Pattaya class degh getsank, jasher gerank, ge hishes?
A: Hmm
G: Orinavor tagher gan
A: Idalagan jasharan
G: Hondeghe pabouj mabouj ga.. shad me paner
A: Y3ne Phuket..
G: Jampan, Phuket yes merg ge bddeyi, boxerov. Shad pane, payts pattaya aveli.. jbeil style e.
A: Y3ne Phuket amena class jasharanere panen, McDo, burger king e.
S: Gskamgor hon yertankne miyan mcdo burger king bid oudenk
A: Payts malle, payts heds avelort tram ellarne incher ge pereyi mallen. Chevor khentalik offener eradsen..
S: 2500?
G: Mayre kounetsink tramin, Steve. Pan me chiga vor cherink, pan me chi desank vor cherink. Yerevagaye day tour chenk arads. ??? verchatsoutsink, ??? arten minchev gesor, gesore yedka tour erink. Shad er ya3ne. Annormal erink, annormal erink
A: yev pan me chenk gerads
S: Bangkok soughe?
G: degh me sough che.
S: Hima enenkne mashrou3en, as toureroun hed oudelik gella gam miyan tour e?
A: Pane.. phi phi island, Phuket, phi phi island vor katsink, james bond island katsink. James bond island katsinkne, navoun vra pan erereyin, buffet.
S: Uf
A: phi phi island al hondeghe jasharan gar.
S: Kani vjaretsik ad tourin?
A: 35$
S: Lave
A: Shad lave
S: Aghvor degher gar asang, orva mech vor yertas, voch historical y3ne.
A: Hmm. Orva mech tourere bidnes ishte
S: Inke enthanrabs kaniyen kani gla tourere?
A: Ardv 7en minchev 4
S: Uf, ardu 7 me?
A: mini vane gouka ge havake hotelen.. pan gertas port, marfa2. Nav gelles, nave ge kale
S: Bas ganoukhe lan 7
A: Speed boat e, shad neshey
S: 7 shad ganoukhe bas, kaniyen bid bargis vor artennas. Artoun bid ellas vor doune bid chi nsdis, bdouydi bid ertas
A: Busin mech ge bargis minchev hasnis
S: kokona ge ngare
Appendix 13

Reported language preferences when engaging in different activities

Preferred language when writing (informal)

Tick the language you prefer or feel most comfortable using when; writing (informal)

Preferred language when reading books

Tick the Language you prefer or feel most comfortable using when; readings books/novels
Preferred language when reading magazines

Tick the Language you prefer or feel most comfortable using when; reading magazines and or newspapers

- Armenian: BH 38.3%, NAAs 10.2%
- Arabic: BH 2.1%, NAAs 2.1%
- French: BH 2.1%, NAAs 2.1%
- English: BH 57.4%, NAAs 65.3%

Preferred language when listening to the radio

Tick the Language you prefer or feel most comfortable using when; listening to radio programs

- Armenian: BH 37.0%, NAAs 16.7%
- Arabic: BH 2.2%, NAAs 6.3%
- French: BH 2.2%, NAAs 4.2%
- English: BH 58.7%, NAAs 72.9%
Appendix 14

Reported codeswitching frequency from Armenian into other widely spoken languages in Lebanon

If you answered yet to question 8, how often do you use words or sentences from another language(s)?

BH n=45/ NAAs n=45
Appendix 15

Highlighted extract from group interview one in Armenian

Armenian and non-Armenian word count

TOTAL NUMBER OF WORDS: 7339 (Excluding moderator’s words)
TOTAL HIGHLIGHTS: 858 (Excluding moderator’s words)
ENGLISH/FRENCH: 723: Participants from BH: 133 words
Participants from NAAs: 590 words

ARABIC: 133: Participants from BH: 7 words
Participants from NAAs: 126 words

TURKISH: Participants from BH: 1 word
Participants from NAAs: 1 word
Highlighted extract from group interview one in Armenian

MODERATOR: Abrilen zad, tser esgatsoume inche?
JACK: hay
PATRICK: yes al nouyne
CHAHE: yes al nouyne
JACQUELINE: yergoukin havasar
EDDY: yeshoskani vor avelivarjvetsank. Y3ne lifestyle-e, enndsenank yev enno hos abretsank fromwhenw’rebortillnow, sovarjvetsanktothelifestylehere, gardsemaveli tjvargella yete bid yertank hayasdan yevońskiego yed skispen varjvil. Y3ne they’re 2 different countries, way too different. mesh ennd tiny bit, they’re not even close
MARALE: amen mege meg pan me ge mdadse. Payts gsem vor yetehayasdan yertam maybe midkes gpokhem yev gsem vor bedke yes aveli hayasdan Y3ne abrim gam pan me. Payts minchev himavochoyesavelilipanantsigskamkanivor menk hos gabrinkgor, hosge medsnanggor, amen brotsnis al hose, amen inchnis hose yev engernis yev amen inche
CARINE: yeshosaveli gekakhndremkanyeshosuh..varjvetsapayts uh..sdibvadsellamnehayasdan gamedegh meyert, hayasdan yertalou, voch chem eser

MODERATOR: payts skatsoumov aveli vorou hanteb?
CARINE: hos, hos
NAREG: Yesalgoumhoussipanan aveli aghvore gskam, aveli.. uh.. arya7kell shilbas avene Y3ne
MODERATOR: Okay
EDDY: specially this age, varjvetsank yertank let’s say parties bu people, enno our friends wahk, chem eskar hondeghe.. Y3ne.. so far from what I’ve seen, aw or from what I’ve heard. Y3ne I didn’t go to experience it. bas enno I feel like it’s more fun here at this age, not for later. not for not for all the stages of life bas at this age I prefer being here
Highlighted extract from group interview two in Armenian

Armenian and non-Armenian word count

TOTAL NUMBER OF WORDS: 6973 (Excluding moderator’s words)

TOTAL HIGHLIGHTS: 1316 (Excluding moderator’s words)

ENGLISH/FRENCH: 708
  Participants from BH: 150 words
  Participants from NAAs: 558 words

ARABIC: 133
  Participants from BH: 34 words
  Participants from NAAs: 571 words

TURKISH: Participants from BH: 2 words
  Participants from NAAs: 1 word
MODERATOR: Hima arklvadse?

Mbala

JENNY: Ga policy-n? ayo ga

C3: Eh lsenne inch gsen? Pan me chen ener, payts anklerene ardonvadse, araperene ardonvadse. Asi shad anartar e

MODERATOR: Okay, toun inch ge gardses as nutin masin?

ARAM: Shad anartar e. Yerp vor free country eh, ouremn amen mart azade inch lezou gouzene khoselou

MODERATOR: Okay. Touk inch ge gardsek arklvadse eselov? Inch ge mdadsek?

MARK: yes shad problem che, inchou chevor shad emphasis chen ener vran payts uh.. … enno ma bi2assir, ma bi2addem wala bi2akher

JENNY: Ha enno ge khosink, inch vor esenne g khosink y3ne

ARAM: Hima patsvelou patsvetsav.


MARK: Deny chellar, deny chellar vor no, no genocide. Payts inch vor ellane hedo, 7atta law they agreed enno eh sar genocide, pan me chellar.

MODERATOR: Mark?

ARAM: meg vargyan Mark, Mark meg vargyan,

ARAM: 2 dariyen touna voghches, yesa voghchem. 101 amyag ellane, bid desnes vor tade bidi sharnagvi

HAGOP: Pan men bidi chella.