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**LEBANESE STUDENTS' CHOICE OF FOREIGN
LANGUAGES AND ITS INFLUENCE ON THEIR
LIFE**

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Under the Direction of
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Project Approval Form

Lebanese Students' Choice of Foreign Languages and its Influence on their Life

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To my deceased Father

I know you are watching me and hope you are proud of your daughter.

To my lovely and supportive mother

who stood next to me during the happy and hard moments.

And last, but not least, to my three wonderful brothers

I love you all.

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Abstract

This study was designed to examine the history of foreign languages in Lebanon and its influence on students' academic, professional, and social life, and to investigate the causes of the shift from French medium schools to American universities. Two methods were used to collect data in order to assure reliability and validity of the findings. The researcher, in order to collect information, employed semi-structured interviews to interview French educated students who shifted into American universities and to interview parents, and distributed questionnaires to American university students in Lebanon. The analysis of the findings revealed many similarities and some differences between beliefs about foreign languages in Lebanon. The researcher concluded that English is substituting French in Lebanon and students believe that the French language is tough whereas the English language is easy. All students agreed that being graduates of American universities will help them to improve their professional life. These beliefs pushed French educated students to shift into American universities. The results also pointed out that there are academic and social differences between French and English educated students.

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Chapter 1

1.1 Introduction

Ask parents anywhere in the world about their wishes for their children; most of them will answer good education. Ask politicians anywhere in the world about issues that concern them, intelligent politicians will absolutely include education in their responds (Pritchard, 2005).

Education is the base on which every country's economical, sociological, and financial status are built. Through education a country achieves a more mature, more effective, and more skilled population where the latter will greatly advance the country's standards (Pritchard, 2005).

In terms of educational standards Lebanon has the lead, at several levels, in the Arab world (Bashur, 2004). Lebanon possesses the lowest illiteracy rate, the greatest number of higher education degrees per person as well as the greatest number of schools per person (Bashur, 2004). This superiority of the Lebanese educational system is based on the foundations of foreign missionaries, which founded the very educational institutions that distinguish Lebanon (Bashur, 2004). Such institutions are responsible for creating a generation with foreign perspectives, aims, reliability and loyalty. Another discordant result of the foreign dependent Lebanese educational system is the fissure between the Lebanese people and their native language Arabic, since schools depend on foreign languages such as English and French as a mean of instructing students in the Lebanese curriculum (Hares, 1985).

As it is well known, the Lebanese community suffers from various social differences. In fact, Eid (1993) claimed that the Lebanese educational program has enhanced and enriched the already existing social divisions.

The Lebanese government suggested that the only solution for such a conflict was to change the curriculum into a more updated one that will help students into becoming critical thinkers and view the world from different perspectives (Frayha, 2003).

1.2 Purpose of the study

Due to Lebanon's geographical location and its position of connecting different cultures, the Lebanese educational system has always attracted students from the Middle East and the Arab World (Haidar, 2002).

Lebanese educational curriculum is universally known for its focus on foreign languages besides its native language, Arabic. English and French are the two most spread foreign languages in Lebanon (Haidar, 2002).

These facts attracted the researcher's attention to choose the foreign languages as a study that needs to be further investigated. This topic is very important for every Lebanese citizen, such as small children, students, university students, adults, parents, and administrators.

1.3 Rationale and Significance of the Study

Studying the Lebanese history showed that Lebanon has always been a connection between East and West. This special relationship with different cultures made schools integrate in their curriculum different foreign languages, mainly French and English. Nowadays, students find the English and French languages much easier and more important than their native language Arabic, but if they have to choose to be skilled

in only one of these three languages, they would definitely choose the English language. Lebanese students believe that acquiring English is important for their academic, professional, and social life; French is important for the social life; and Arabic is a necessity for communicative purposes but is unnecessary for their professional lives (Shaaban & Ghaith, 1997). These findings motivated the researcher to examine the history of foreign languages in Lebanon and its influence on students' academic, professional, and social futures.

1.4 Research Topic

The main purpose of this project is to examine the history of foreign languages in Lebanon and its influence on students' academic, professional, and social life, and to investigate the causes of the shift from French medium schools to American universities.

The two questions that will be further investigated are the following:

- Why do French educated students shift into American universities in Lebanon?
- How do French and English educated students perform academically and socially in American Universities?

1.5 Methods and Techniques

Interviews and questionnaires will be the two methods that are to be utilized during the study. The chief advantage of face to face interviews is that the researcher has more control but more importantly can fortify open-ended questions by allowing longer answers and asking complementary and additional questions to clarify a specific thought (Riley, Wood, Clark, Wikie & Szivas, 2000). On the other hand, interviews consist of various types, but for this specific research only the semi-structured interviews are to be

used as they are the most suitable in regard to the research topic. The data are to be audio-recorded and then coded and analyzed manually using the 'pen and paper' method.

The interview consists of 10 participants of different ages. To ensure qualitative comparability and reliability of sampling, the researcher will interview participants from different age groups, in order to have responses that are more reliable and not biased. Each of them will be given a copy of the questions and the interviewer will audio-tape their responses.

In short, the researcher chose, for validity and reliability purposes, to triangulate to explore the study.

- A questionnaire will be distributed for fifty Lebanese students in university X and fifty Lebanese students in university Y (Appendix A).
- An interview with ten parents will be conducted (Appendix B).
- An interview with ten French educated students that shifted into American universities (either graduated or still enrolled students) will be conducted (Appendix C).

The following chapter includes a brief history of the Lebanese educational system since 1920, passing through the civil war, until today. The researcher focused on the place and value of foreign languages in Lebanon since they are the main variables of the study.

Chapter 2:

History of Foreign Languages in Lebanon

This chapter includes a brief history of the foreign languages in Lebanon since 1920 until these days passing through the civil war. Moreover, it contains the role of the missionaries in the use of foreign languages in Lebanon.

2.1 Introduction

Lebanon is located in Western Asia on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. Its area is 10452 kilometer squares, and its population consists of 3,874,050 people that belong to eighteen different sects (Kraidy, 1998).

Lebanon has been witnessing, since the French mandate in 1920 until now, several political events that affected directly and indirectly its educational system (Ellis, 2002).

Lebanon has always been a bridge between East and West (Ellis, 2002). This fact explains the presence of different foreign languages, mainly English and French, besides its native language, Arabic. Lebanon may be considered as one of the few countries that does not use its native language as a medium of instruction in schools and universities; it rather uses foreign languages. Ghaith and Shaaban (1996) believe that Lebanon replaced its native language in schools by foreign languages because the Lebanese society is still facing identity problems. However after the Ta'if Accord in 1989, Lebanese people have been trying to develop their country and avoid serious conflicts (Ghaith & Shaaban, 1996). They believe they can achieve this high level of accepting each other through a

good educational system that will deal equally with all students despite their backgrounds and raise them to be responsible future Lebanese citizens (Ghaith & Shaaban, 1996).

2.2 Missionaries in Lebanon

Studying the Lebanese history permits readers to know that in 1535 Sultan Sulayman allowed the French community to establish their own schools (Inati, 1999). These schools exposed Lebanese citizens to several foreign languages and cultures (Jabbour, 1992). Since that date, different missionaries arrived to Lebanon and opened their own schools.

First, the French Jesuit missionaries arrived in 1636 and established several schools and colleges such as the Antura College. In 1855, they established the Catholic Seminary. This seminary was transformed later on, in 1875, into Saint Joseph University (USJ). USJ is still one of the most important French medium universities of Lebanon until this date. It has a strong connection between the Lebanese and French cultures (Ghaith & Shabaan, 1996).

Second, the American missionaries began their work in 1822. During a short period of time, they were able to open numerous schools. In 1835, the Lebanese American University was founded by the American Presbyterian Missionaries as the American School for Girls, in 1948-1949, it changed its name to Beirut College for Women, then in 1970, it became Beirut University College (BUC), and finally in 1994, the college changed its name to Lebanese American University (LAU).

What the American missionaries have reached in 1866 was considered an achievement. They opened the Syrian Protestant College, and 132 schools that were located in diverse Lebanese cities and villages (Matthew & Akrawi, 1949).

From different Arab and Mediterranean countries, people who were looking to get high quality of education were attracted to either the Saint Joseph University or the Syrian Protestant College. Moreover, these two universities increased the degree of literacy in Lebanon and allowed the spread of foreign languages (Ghaith & Shaaban, 1996).

2.3 A Brief History from 1920 till 1975

According to Sykes-Pico Agreement, Lebanon was brought under the French mandate. The French directly interfered in the education system of Lebanon. In 1924, they supported the public education and stated that Arabic and French should be considered official languages in Lebanon (Ellis, 2002). According to them, instructions in public and private schools should be in the French language. In addition, content area subjects such as physics, chemistry, math, and social sciences should be taught in French (Ellis, 2002). Also the examinations and promotion of students from one level to another was planned according to the French system and regulations. Examinations were indistinguishable from the French Brevet and Baccalaureate certificates, except that they included the Arabic language, history, and geography (Ellis, 2002).

All these factors ended with the result that the French language was spread, at that time, much more than any other foreign language (Ghaith & Shaaban, 1996).

This spread of the French language enforced the American and British missionary schools to emphasize French in order to facilitate and permit to their students to adapt in the society and enter the civil service. In 1945, the number of English schools shrank to 26 schools (Ghaith & Shaaban, 1996).

In 1943, Lebanon attained its independence. Several decrees were amended in order to state that all subjects should be taught in Arabic, and even foreign schools should use the Lebanese curriculum, but they can add to it. Moreover, the English language was introduced as another option of a foreign language besides French. Students were given the complete right to choose in which language, Arabic, English, or French, they want to present their official examinations for math and science (Ghaith & Shaaban, 1996).

While looking deeply at these decrees, people can notice that they were more emotional than academic. Their main purpose was to reinforce and support the role of the Arabic language in private and public schools; however, they did not take into account the job market. They didn't pay attention to the very important point that knowing a foreign language such as French and/or English was a requirement for being accepted in universities and then, later on, find a job.

This is why decree number 9099 was introduced after a short period of time and stated that one of the foreign languages, French or English, should be used as an instructional language (Eido, 1984). Studying different subject matters in English or French, made these foreign languages profoundly embedded in the educational system of Lebanon.

On the other hand, Lebanese people, after World War II, began to notice the importance of the English language and the great power and authority the United States have over the world. Moreover, Lebanese people were motivated to learn English since it became the 'language of international business' (Ghaith & Shaaban, 1996, p. 102). This explains that English started to take priority and superiority over French, and that schools that were based on the French program added to its program English as a foreign

language. In short, just before the civil war, English seemed to be the best and favored medium of instruction in Lebanon (Ghaith & Shaaban, 1996).

2.4 The Civil War (1975-1989)

In this critical period of time, a lot of changes were introduced to the Lebanese educational system. Official examinations were cancelled and a notable increase of private schools took place (Mosa, 1991). Schools sustained the use of foreign languages as a medium of instruction. English language continued to be the dominant one of the foreign languages (Mosa, 1991). Almost all schools that were established during the civil war adopted English as the media of instruction. Furthermore, four universities, that used the English language as a language for teaching, were founded: Notre Dame University, Balamand University, and Al Manar University. Even the two French universities Saint Joseph and the Holy Spirit universities introduced English as a foreign language. The main reason of this change was that it was easier for students to study and do research in science and technology using the English language (Mosa, 1991).

On the other hand, according to Oweini (1998), during the civil war, Lebanon lost its high educational level and witnessed a strong decline in its economical, social, cultural, and tourism status. However, Lebanese students were capable of effectively handling and coping with the war (Oweini, 1998). Zisser (2001) agreed with Oweini since he stated that the civil war did not affect the Lebanese students in specific and the Lebanese community in general. Nasr, Racy, and Flaherty (1983) opposed Oweini and Zisser's findings. They found that Lebanese students had different symptoms including depression and phobias. These symptoms were affecting students' learning process.

As soon as the civil war ended, new trends of academic works started to emerge. These trends emphasized the importance of the Lebanese system that was able to survive all the crises it faced during the civil war (Zisser, 2001).

2.5 Relation between Education, Religion, and Socio-economic Level

Just before World War I, learning foreign languages was associated with religions and sects. Maronites and Catholics learned French, Moslems studied Arabic, and Moslems, Greek Orthodox, and Protestants that belonged to a high socio-economical status studied English. This fact divided the Lebanese into different groups depending on their educational, religious, and socio-economical differences (Ghaith & Shaaban, 1996).

Moreover, during the French mandate, almost all students in the French schools were Christians. This also broadened the differences between the two biggest religions in Lebanon and gave the Catholics and Maronites the chance to receive a high level of education (Matthew & Akrawi, 1949).

Mosa (1991) assured that students, during the civil war, who were able to attend English private schools, belonged to a high socio-economical background since these schools were expensive. These students had much more opportunities for better lives in the future.

Inati (1999) believes that almost all wars and crises that Lebanon faced were a result of its educational system. Since very early ages, students were raised only to consider that their own religion is correct, and all others are wrong.

From the time different missionaries came to Lebanon, they established schools depending on their own religions. These schools misused education. They taught materials from their own perspectives, without letting students be exposed to other view

points. Schools had the chance to modify two essential subjects: Language and History. Inati (1999) considers these two subjects as having the power to “bring people together or distance them from each other” (p. 57). From this point, the problems arose. Some schools, for example, taught their students that they were Lebanese and Arabs and they should be proud of their origin. Other schools, at the opposite, taught students that they were non-Arabs and that they should be highly linked to Western culture by learning a foreign language such as French or English. Gradually, the gap between these peoples grew broader. This gap resulted in the catastrophe of 1975 (Inati, 1999).

Abouchedid, Nasser, and Blommestein (2002) commented on this way of teaching and brainwashing students' heads. When students are being appropriately exposed to the variety of beliefs and principles of the diverse Lebanese community, then they have a wider opportunity and chance to accept and respect others.

The solution, according to Frayha (2003) is simple. Teachers are viewed to be the ones who can save Lebanon. This could be accomplished by training them to respect students regardless of their backgrounds, and they teach students to appreciate and view each other as human beings and not as religious figures (Frayha, 2003). Schools should not be concerned only in academic achievements and students passing the official exams, but also in integrating the social roles of responsible citizens. Schools should minimize the problem of sectarianism, found in the Lebanese society, in the young generation (Frayha, 2003).

After the war ended, the government was aware that the curriculum needed to be replaced by another one. The old curriculum relied on students' passivity; it didn't deal with vocational training, university preparation, and technology (Inati, 1999).

2.6 New Curriculum

The future of every nation depends on its educational plan for which the latter possesses the power for influencing a large number of people. Each nation has to design its own self based educational curriculum thereby preserving its beliefs, ideas and values yet in an atmosphere that encourages evolution and development. Despite the difficulty to agree upon what forms such ideas and beliefs, however they are necessary and essential. According to Hares (1985), preplanning is an obligatory step in order to choose those features of the nation's cultural heritage that are essential to provide the requirements of adolescents in a certain community. In the Lebanese community, the lack of understanding of the society's needs, in general, and the adolescents', in particular, is portrayed in the inadequate educational goals and objectives. Therefore, there existed a grave requirement for a new educational curriculum that promotes a democratic, united and peaceful Lebanon, based on equity and freedom. Barakat (1977) states that a country's social and political problems as well as the population's character, traditions and beliefs should be integrated within the curriculum for it to be successful. Consequently, Lebanon's new curriculum must be built to guide its students into an atmosphere of cooperation and concern for the well-being of others.

A deep and intense conviction, that the Lebanese curricula must be amended as soon as possible so that it adopts today's new life requirements, was drawn from the multiple dilemmas of the educational curricula. Such changes must be observed in all domains of the curriculum including content, teaching methods, evaluation measures as well as official examination criteria. In case the National Council for Education, Research, and Development (NCERD) craves for the curricula to give the aspired

educational benefit that would profit the society and the individuals within it, a change must be witnessed (Shaaban & Ghaith, 1997).

The new curriculum was completely structured in 1997 in *Manahij al-ta'laom al a'm wa ahdafouha* (The Curricula for Public Education and Their Objectives) (Sedgwick, 2000).

All subjects were modified to meet the twenty first century requirements, except the history book. The ministry of education didn't succeed in developing a history book about the Lebanese events since each political group has a different story from others (Abouchedid, Nasser & Blommestein, 2002).

In Lebanon, according to the new curriculum, the school system is divided into four levels (Sedgwick, 2000).

First, there is the early childhood level which is made up of three grades, nursery, KGI, and KGII. Students start attending schools at the age of three.

Second, the elementary level is made up of six grades. This level is divided into two cycles; each cycle is composed of three years. The first cycle, known also as lower elementary, is structured of grades 1, 2, and 3. The second cycle, known as upper elementary, is structured of grades 4, 5, and 6.

Third, the intermediate level constitutes grades 7, 8, and 9. At the end of this level, students have to take an official exam, known as Brevet, and pass it in order to be accepted at the next educational level.

Fourth, the secondary level is made up of three grades 10, 11, and 12. In grade 11, students are divided into two tracks, sciences and humanities. Teachers and grades decide which students should enter the sciences or humanities tracks.

In grade 12, students, according to their grades, are divided into four tracks: Humanities and Literature, Sociology and Economy, General Sciences, and Life Sciences.

At the end of grade 12, students have to take an official exam, known as the Lebanese Baccalaureate, in their particular tracks. If students pass successfully this official examination, they will be rewarded by earning the Lebanese Baccalaureate Certificate of Secondary Education.

On the other hand, in order to be accepted in any institution of higher education, students must have the Lebanese Baccalaureate Certificate of Secondary Education or any other equivalent qualification. Most universities in Lebanon require entrance exams other than the baccalaureate certificate. Moreover, all universities in Lebanon are private except the Lebanese University which is public and is free for all Lebanese students. The academic year starts in October and ends in June. Subjects are taught in Arabic, English, and French (Sedgwick, 2000).

2.7 Foreign Languages in the New Curriculum

Khairallah (2000), after her long experience in teaching English, declined to characterize a language teaching process by specifying its degree whether it is a second foreign language or a tenth, for she believed a language is either acquired or isn't. She stated that "Any language is foreign until one learns it" (Khairallah, 2000, p. 40).

However, the researcher uses the term 'foreign languages' to refer to English and French languages that are considered to be second and/or third languages taught in schools in Lebanon.

Teaching a foreign language starts at the kindergarten and continues until grade 12. Shaaban and Gaith (1997) state that the English or French language replaces Arabic, the native language of Lebanese students, during the higher schooling level.

Shaaban, Iskandarani, and Jabbour (1998) confirm that the new language should be gradually introduced to students since a very young age. It should be used in everyday activities in a pleasant atmosphere. New words or difficult tasks should never be translated into students' mother tongue, Arabic. In such situations, teachers can use different techniques to send the message, such as drawing, singing, miming, gestures, intonation, and the use of realia (Shaaban, Iskandarani & Jabbour, 1998).

In order to emphasize and improve the language literacy, the new educational curriculum is based on the thematic content-based approach to teaching foreign languages. For the reason of providing equal opportunities for students in teaching languages, the curriculum changed the role of teachers and students inside the classroom. Students are expected to be more active, rather than passive, and teachers are supposed to guide students' thinking. In other words, the curriculum requests a student-centered and not teacher-centered classroom. Learning takes place when students are engaged in significant and meaningful contexts and when students are able to relate what they are studying to their own personal experiences and real life situations (Snowman & Biehler, 2000).

To effectively focus on the linguistic tasks, students must be able to concentrate on the content of the given text. In the domain of foreign languages in the Lebanese New Curriculum (LNC), the relation between the themes is as important as the themes themselves (Shaaban & Ghaith, 1997).

As the Lebanese New Curriculum was initiated its designers were aiming to create a bridge between language, life, and knowledge. Knowledge is the objective that language strives for (Snow, Cortez, & Pron, 1998).

A fundamental motive for why schools should base their foreign language teaching methods on content is that “people do not learn languages, then use them, but people learn languages by using them” (Eskey, 1992, p. 15).

On the other hand, Eid (1993) suggested that the level of proficiency of foreign languages in the Lebanese classroom will not progress, if administrators, coordinators and teachers do not cooperate since implementing the new curriculum constitutes a challenge.

Based on these facts, the new curriculum focused on elementary level themes that are highly associated with students’ surroundings and backgrounds such as the family and the neighborhood. Those themes change when students get into the intermediate and secondary in a way that meet students’ interests and needs. Themes in higher level of education deal with several important topics such as human communication, human rights, and different cultures (Shaaban & Ghaith, 1997). In other words, interest and relevance were the two main factors that affected the choice of materials.

While planning the foreign language curriculum, the designers set three main goals. Students should be able to use the foreign language in content areas, use it to communicate appropriately in the society, and use it properly in different academic, social, and cultural settings (Shaaban & Ghaith, 1997).

Language teachers can use different teaching methods. However Shaaban and Ghaith (1997) advise teachers to use the interdisciplinary approach. In planning the new

curriculum, Shaaban and Ghaith (1997) adopted the parallel scheduling and thematic units' approaches. They believe that learning according to themes, will enable students to explore meaningfully the foreign language. Furthermore, students are encouraged to work cooperatively in groups in order to think, analyze, and find out solutions. In other words, Shaaban and Ghaith (1997) adopted the cooperative learning method for teaching a foreign language, and they strongly believe that this method, if correctly implemented, will lead to a high level of students' achievement.

The teaching of foreign language in Lebanon focuses on four skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Shaaban & Ghaith, 1997).

Listening is taught in order to let students be able to transform auditory input to significant understanding and knowledge. This skill is taught by making students listen to songs, stories, TV programs, conversation on a radio, etc, and then students have to interpret and analyze the content (Peterson, 2001).

Oral fluency is a very important characteristic in learning a foreign language. Learners should be able to express their needs, and communicate easily while using the target language. Many interesting activities may be implemented in the classroom to improve the students' speaking skill. One of these activities is to ask students to debate on a particular idea that concerns them (Lazaraton, 2001).

It is very important to teach students, not just to read words and sentences, but to link whatever they are reading to their schemata and previous knowledge. Students should be able to interpret, analyze, and thus read between the lines (Ediger, 2001).

Shaaban and Ghaith (1997) advise teachers to discuss with students the main idea of the text before reading. This is known as the pre-reading stage. It helps students focus while reading.

In order to create creative student writers, the new curriculum set four writing stages: pre-writing, writing, revising, and publishing (Olshtain, 2001).

Many teachers rely only on books that the school assigned according to the Lebanese curriculum. Some schools add books according to the French or American curricula. Teachers are strongly encouraged to develop their own materials according to their students' needs and interests. Whenever teachers feel that the available books are not meeting students' attention and academic levels, they must create their own materials (Islam & Mares, 2003). Materials can be added to the accessible curriculum or can totally replace it. Studies showed that creating materials according to students' needs improve students' achievement in the target task (Islam & Mares, 2003).

Teachers are supposed, according to the new curriculum, to evaluate formally and informally their students. This could be done through "oral and written tests, peer evaluation, self evaluation, portfolios, observations, interviews, and conferences" (Shaaban & Ghaith, 1997, p.205). Moreover, the four language skills should be tested. Language tests should include both objective and subjective questions. Most importantly, they should be valid and reliable.

On the other hand Inati (1999) believes that schools are focusing on foreign languages which diminished the importance of the Arabic language among students. She disagrees that the new curriculum assigned at the lower elementary level seven hours of Arabic and seven hours of foreign language, six hours of Arabic and six hours of foreign

language at the upper elementary, and six hours of Arabic, six hours of foreign language, and two hours of a second foreign language at the intermediate level. She argued that this opposes one of the new curriculum objectives which is to let students be proud of their native language. Her argument was that students can not excel and love the Arabic language while they are more exposed to foreign languages (Inati, 1999).

2.8 Foreign Languages in Private and Public Schools

Designers of the Lebanese New Curriculum (LNC) hoped to equalize the opportunities of those attending public schools and those attending private schools, by developing the public schools to reach the standard of the more advanced private schools. They considered that by the time the Lebanese new curriculum is executed, the Lebanese public will be willing to choose the public sector of education for its educational level, especially in the midst of difficult economical circumstances. In other words, they hoped for the chance that the Lebanese student will select public schools because he/she chooses to and not because his/her economical status does not give him/her an alternative (Ellis, 2002).

On the other hand, the Ministry of Education is being blamed by the public schools for starting the implementation process before creating the suitable conditions and seriously addressing the broader historical, political, cultural, and social problems that greatly affected the implementation procedure, such as the physical setup and equipments for a successful implementation process (Hawari, 2001). Even after the introduction of the LNC public schools have not observed a change. Still, public schools harbor dormant and futile teachers that harm today's educational program as well as the rising generation that yearns for education and progress. Due to the inclination in the

economical status of the population, student enrollment in the public sector has increased since private schools cannot be afforded. Still, the new curriculum is being conducted upon old criteria and mentalities (Hawari, 2001). Public schools constitute a sanctuary for the poor upon the denial of the sectarian educational institutions. The decisive factor that divides our community into various social strata will remain the supremacy of the private educational sector on the public sector (Hawari, 2001).

The new curriculum should be applied in both private and public schools. In private schools, the Lebanese curriculum is considered to be a minimum requirement, and additional subjects can be added according to school's objectives and missions (Haidar, 2000). Lebanese public schools are more advanced than all Arabs' public schools since they stress heavily on foreign languages (Haidar, 2000).

On the other hand, the quality and level of education offered in private Lebanese schools are superior to those of the Lebanese public schools. Students who graduate from private schools are fluent in either two or three languages, while students who graduate from public schools are very weak in the second language. Despite the fact that Lebanese who belong to a low socio-economic status enroll in public schools, the results showed that the foreign language instruction and teaching methods in private schools are much better than teaching techniques of public schools (Haidar, 2000).

As a summary, in February 1994, the minister of Education recommended that public schools be free to teach the language that suited them but compulsory teaching in Arabic be withheld in the elementary stage (Hawari, 2001). Due to the fact that public schools are not able to compete against the dominance of the private schools in the domain of foreign languages, this decision would lead to the collapse of the public

schools. Accordingly, the society's educational standards would crumble, and a monopoly on the official examination certificates would be set by those who are able to utilize foreign languages proficiently (Haidar, 2000).

This chapter covered the history of foreign languages in Lebanon since the missionaries came to Lebanon until the implementation of the new curriculum in 1997 and which is still applied today. It also provided the reader with some educational methods to teach foreign languages. In short, it presented the reasons of the foundation of the French and English languages in Lebanon.

The following chapter includes an analysis of the importance and stature of both English and French languages in today's world. Furthermore, it refers to the Lebanese students' beliefs about foreign languages and their academic performances in the two American Universities located in Lebanon.

Chapter 3: Literature Review

3.1 English a Necessity at the Present Time

During the present time not only education has become an essential and crucial part of every human being's life, but languages literacy is becoming a requirement for people's survival and existence. The schools' educational systems in many countries, despite their different missions and goals, have one similar objective, teaching English as a second language (Shin, 2000). All the society members and specifically the learners' parents encouraged their children to acquire English as an additional language to their native one. Parents believe that knowing English is becoming a requirement and not an additional subject taught in schools (Shin, 2000).

Vang's studies (2006) are consistent with Shin's findings (2000). According to Vang (2006), no matter what students' native languages are, they should be English literate. Moreover, all students who are not fluent in English are seen as inferior to their classmates (Vang, 2006).

Additionally, studies showed that in ten years, people will need higher level of education and more specialized university degrees in order to get employed in any field. In addition, people who know more than two languages will have the priority of getting the job (Vang, 2006).

Many educators perceived that the amplified interest and pursue of the English language is behind the erosion of the previous dominance of the French language in the Lebanese society (Smailly-Hajjar, 1996).

There are many implications of the escalating significance of the role of the English language in Lebanon. One important implication is the growing attachment and

positive attitude towards English in general. For example, a study performed by Smaily-Hajjar (1996) reports that a minority of 30% of the Lebanese people watch French television programs, while around 73% watch English programs. Similar results were obtained in the statistics related to radio programs, for 33% listen to French medium stations whereas 45% listen to English medium stations. Another major indication, is represented in the fact that 63% of the French based schools taught English as a third language yet a mere 26% of the English based schools taught French as a third language (Smaily-Hajjar, 1996). A survey shows that 61.5% of the Lebanese public believe that English is the most essential and crucial language for the future of Lebanon whereas only 31.8% believe that the future of Lebanon lies with the French language (Abou, Kasparian, and Haddad -1996). In Ghaleb and Joseph's study (2000), 67% of the subjects surveyed preferred English and felt that it is the most important language for Lebanon as opposed to 31% who favored French.

The latter studies and surveys emphasize that English has extremely evolved and developed as a base language of education in the Lebanese society (Shaaban, 2005).

Moreover, due to the growing influence of globalization in general and international communication specifically, both qualitative and quantitative demand on the English language profession has increased tremendously. The Lebanese economic backbone is based on tourism, financial services and trade, all of which require English skills and fluency. Thus English language teaching continues to thrive and evolve (Shaaban, 2005). The enhancement and intensification of the three bases of the Lebanese economy necessitates a high level of English proficiency. This fact is well known among both the Lebanese government and population and hopefully this knowledge will trigger

a major reassessment and restructuring of the diverse factors of the English language teaching situation in Lebanon (Shaaban, 2005).

In short, in the twentieth century, English rose to claim its dominance over the title of the international language and replace the French language. Thus English became the language of business, money and world interests (Vang, 2006).

3.2 Students and Language Teachers in Lebanon

Nowadays, the students differ from those of a decade ago, due to the immense influence of satellite television, music, computers and the Internet. They can concentrate on a task for a period of ten to fifteen minutes long (Daniels & Edwards, 2004). Students realize their right to a civilized and honest life and they command it in the goods and services they purchase and over and above in the education they are offered. They deserve an exclusive level of education any teacher can offer. Teachers must remain aware of this reality, in order to supply the students with their natural right of a respectable education (Daniels & Edwards, 2004).

The new curriculum's purpose is to serve the students needs, yet if it remains unapplied and the teaching methods are kept centralized on the teachers themselves, the curriculum will fail to serve its goals. A teacher's job can not be reduced to merely teaching a curriculum, it necessitates one to adapt to the innovations and positive upgrades in a curriculum (Frayha, 2003).

Khairallah (2000) noticed that the problem with today's students is not with the spoken language but with the methods of spelling, writing, interpreting and critically analyzing. She added that students are accused of being idle and of lacking motivation, but the guilt of such charges lies on the language teachers for their lack of efficiency and

supplementing the new books that are full of mistakes. Some language teachers, unfortunately, do not know the language despite their college degrees whether BA or MA. Lebanese language teachers continuously nag from the large number of students and the little amount of time given to finish the materials. Khairallah (2000) says that teachers' complains, in Lebanon, do not justify their ineffectuality for they are not being threatened by students that are on drugs, alcoholic, or even criminals, at the same time as this occurs in other countries.

The solution to this problem, Khairallah (2000) suggests, is to get better teachers. After all teachers should teach not only from books but from their hearts too. Amin Maalouf (1994), the Lebanese novelist, in his famous novel, *The First Century after Beatrice* had the same opinion as Khairallah when he said: "the time-honored art of great teachers- that of making you feel you have always had in you what they have just at that moment taught you" (p.39). In other words, students are not only gaining another language from their teachers but the latter are also molding the characteristics and qualities that will compose the framework of the students' personalities.

3.3 Factors that Influence Students' Learning of Foreign Language in Lebanon

According to Diab (2000) there are five factors that affect students' motivation and attitudes towards learning a foreign language.

First, the religious backgrounds of students influence to a great extent the way students learn a foreign language. Parents' decisions for choosing for their children which school they must attend, and thus which second language they will acquire, is also influenced by their religious beliefs (Diab, 2000).

Second, political connections and attachments is also a factor that influences foreign language learning. Due to the identity crisis that Lebanese citizens are suffering of, parents are raising their children either that they are Arabs and Lebanese only, or they are strongly connected with the French or American culture. Thus, students are motivated to learn a particular foreign language and not the other, or they choose to learn and study all subject matters in their native language, Arabic (Diab, 2000). However, parents of students that are enrolled in Arabic-medium schools, show concern and are questioning their children's professional future since they did not acquire the English language (Shaaban & Ghaith, 1999).

Third, students' socio-economic status will directly affect the choice of schools students will attend and it will influence what kind and level of education they will receive. Therefore, students' learning and proficiency of foreign languages depends on their socio-economic status (Diab, 2000). As explained before, the level of education offered in public schools is much lower than the one in private schools. Shaaban and Ghaith (1999) explained that people belonging to low and low-middle economic status are not able to afford the fees of schools that offer a good educational level.

Fourth, some Lebanese citizens believe that learning Arabic is much important than learning English or French. They also consider that their native language should be appreciated and valued; this could be done by learning only the Arabic language and ignoring any other foreign language (Yazigy, 1994).

Fifth, gender, according to Diab (2000), strongly influences students' motivation and attitudes towards learning foreign languages. Both, males and females, in Lebanon, are interested in learning English as a foreign language. Females learn English for

academic, professional, and social purposes; however, males learn English only for professional purposes (Diab, 2000).

Another gender difference found in Lebanon regarding studying foreign languages is that almost all foreign language teachers are females. This labeled this career as being a female dominant career, and thus very few males will be motivated to be foreign language teachers (Diab, 2000).

3.4 Lebanese Students and Foreign Languages

The English and French languages are widely spread in Lebanon. In other words, Lebanese literate citizens are either bilingual or trilingual. Nowadays, knowing more than one language is a necessity to survive in the world. The globalization process and the fast improvement of technology and sciences oblige human beings to learn different languages. For these reasons, the English language is spread in numerous countries and is being taught since early ages in schools according to different curriculum (Diab, 2006). These countries, including Lebanon, integrated English to their curricula since it is defined as “the language in international business, science, and technology” (Diab, 2006, p. 82).

In the whole world, according to Constantine (1995), the importance and use of the French language has diminished in comparison with the English language. These findings are also found in Lebanon depending on Diab (2006), and Ghaith and Shaaban (1996). All Lebanese students must learn and acquire the English language because it is important for their future, while learning French is learned as an additional language for people who are interested and strongly connected with the French culture (Ghaleb & Joseph, 2000).

In Lebanese society, people are labeled as either 'French educated' or 'English-educated'. Usually, the 'French educated' students see themselves as superior to others since they consider knowing the French language as an important prestige characteristic that a person can have. Moreover, being fluent in French is a necessity to be part of some high social Lebanese groups (Diab, 2006).

According to studies, learning the French language is more difficult than learning the English language. Lebanese students described English as an easy language and French as a complex one. While comparing the learning difficulties of the three languages, Arabic, English, and French; students chose Arabic to be the hardest one (Diab, 2006).

Moreover, Yazigy (1994) found that almost all Lebanese students believe that learning English is a need and essential and that they are glad to speak English outside their classrooms whenever it is possible. Yazigy (1994) showed a satisfaction of the study's results since it confirmed that Lebanese students are aware of the importance of studying English. Yazigy (1994) explained that all students of the world should be skilled in English since it is "the language of the world, commerce, higher education and to an extent for communicative purposes" (p. 72).

Diab (2000) agreed with Yazigy (1994) by pointing out that studying and acquiring the English language is a requirement for any person who wants to improve his or her academic, professional, and social life.

The only advantage of studying French as a second language is that students would be able to learn easily English as a third language. The opposite is true, according to Lebanese students, learners who are 'English educated' would not be able to acquire

French as a third language (Diab, 2006). In other words, studying French as a second language will enable students to acquire three languages, and thus be trilingual. While studying English as a second language will not offer students the opportunity to learn the French language, and thus they will stay bilingual.

Diab (2006) believes that 'English educated' students consider their French sessions as free ones. Those students, due to the fact that they believe that they will never succeed in learning French and that French is not an important language in these days, do the homework of another subject, talk with each other, or even daydream during French sessions (Diab, 2006).

On the other hand, 'French educated' students pay a lot of attention during English hours, and consider the English subject as important as any other subject matter. Those students strongly agree and believe that learning English is a requirement for their universities' acceptance and later on for their careers (Diab, 2006).

In the United States, schools used to offer foreign language at the high school. However, since studies showed the importance of knowing different languages and since changes occurred in the world of economy, schools integrated foreign languages since the elementary level (Cataldi, 1994). Furthermore, studies showed that bilingual students perform much better than monolingual students in academic tests. Thus, it showed that there is a relation between bilingualism and intelligence (Cataldi, 1994). Educators are teaching their students different foreign languages, including French, through songs, rhymes, role playing, watching videos, and several other techniques and authentic materials. Although teachers and the American government underestimated students' potentials and abilities in learning foreign languages, those students achieved high results

in a short time period (Christian, Pufahl & Rhodes, 2005). This finding opposes to students' beliefs in Diab's study (2006), that English educated students are not capable of learning French.

Lebanese students view themselves as bilingual or trilingual, and not as speakers of first language, second language, and in some cases, third language. This way of description is due to the fact that they believe that they speak English and/or French as much as Arabic, and sometimes better (Diab, 2006).

Nevertheless, Khairallah (2000) believes that students in Lebanon are able to speak a second and/or third language, but unfortunately few are those who acquired it. With regard to university admission, language requirement are either based on the English Entrance Exam (EEE) or the Test Of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) exam, both of which are objective and do not accurately rate the students. Moreover, competition between universities caused some to decrease their admission level in order to increase the financial profits, by admitting incompetent applicants, whom eventually graduate as illiterates (Khairallah, 2000). This fact caused some prestigious companies and banks in Lebanon to institute their own tests to discover the knowledge of the graduates they want to hire (Khairallah, 2000).

On the other hand, most students in Lebanon prefer, if they had to choose learning only one language, to be skilled at English since English is more important than French (Diab, 2006).

According to Shaaban and Ghaith (2003), gender does not affect students' beliefs toward the two foreign languages. Diab's findings (2006) opposed Shaaban and Ghaith's

results. She found that females are more likely to prefer studying and speaking French, while males see English as a masculine language (Diab, 2006).

3.5 Reasons behind the Differences between French and English

Educated Students

The philosophical and psychological differences between the American and French cultures are the basic reason for the differences between their educational curricula.

According to Hall (1931), French educated students are immediately recognized due to their articulate tongues, social skills, and logical reasoning. Speech as well as writing skills represent the aim of French medium school. The latter insist on their students to acquire logical reasoning skills as well as the ability to express themselves in a clear and coherent method (Hall, 1931).

In brief, the achievement of a disciplined mind is the goal of the French curriculum whereas the American curriculum aspires to meet the student wants and needs (Hall, 1931). In other words, the key distinction between the two curriculums is that the American curriculum stresses on the child himself while the French emphasizes the subject matter.

3.6 Performance of Lebanese Students at University X

Students enrolling to University X are both 'English educated' and 'French educated'. In campus X', out of the twenty feeder schools, there are thirteen schools which language of instruction is English, while there are seven schools that use French as a language of instruction. At campus X", the number of students who came from schools

that use the French language as the language of instruction is higher than the number of students who came from English-medium schools (Academic Statistics, 1994/95).

At University X, in both X' and X'' campuses, even though the number of males is greater than the number of females, female students get higher averages and GPAs than males, and thus are better performers. Moreover, females received more honor degrees and less probations than male students (Academic Statistics, 1994/95).

In comparing the performance of the 'French educated' and 'English educated' students, results show that they are almost indistinguishable. Conversely, students who are 'Arabic educated' have lower averages than French and English educated students, and thus they are described as the poor performers (Academic Statistics, 1994/95).

In the English courses, the highest averages scored during 1994/1995 belong to English educated students and the lowest averages for French educated students.

Studies showed that French educated students performed better than English educated students on the TOFEL exam. The TOFEL is an English exam that American universities require to all students for their acceptance procedures (Academic Statistics, 1994/95).

Equally, French and English educated students received almost the same number of both honors and probations. However, Arabic educated students obtained more probation and less honors than other students (Academic Statistics, 1994/95).

3.7 Performance of Lebanese Students at University Y

Araman (2000) views French educated students, who enroll in American universities, as better performers than English educated students, especially in humanity courses. The difference of performance between the two groups is that schools that use French as their instruction language have a stronger and more systematic educational

program all over the school years and especially at the secondary level. However, Araman (2000) believes that French educated students feel uncomfortable while using the English language for oral communication.

Moreover, the difference of French and English educated students at the university level is that French educated students have more methodology and are better analyzers. There are no differences in who participate more in classrooms' discussions; it depends on each student's personality and character (Araman, 2000).

Araman (2000) pointed out that French educated students are better performers of the English language than English educated students. He points out and makes it clear that French educated students know the sophisticated English, know a large variety of vocabulary, and have more mature personalities than English educated students. These differences are becoming facts because the French system is stricter and more disciplined than the American one (Araman, 2000).

French educated students are better in writing. However, English educated students are better in discussions, thus in oral skills. Furthermore, French educated students take their courses more seriously than others (Araman, 2000).

English educated students consider the French educated students as egocentric and egoistic because they form groups and sit together on campus. French-educated students refused to be described in such a way. They defended themselves by saying that they come from similar backgrounds and have similar way of thinking, so they found it easier to build friendships with students who came from French schools. However, they don't mind to have friends from American schools (Araman, 2000).

In addition, French educated students explained their enrollment in American universities, and not French ones, because American universities are known internationally more than other universities. They wanted to meet people from different backgrounds, and American universities have the credit system which make it easier if they want to change courses or even transfer to another American university or if they fail a course they just have to repeat the course and not the whole academic year (Araman, 2000). Nonetheless, this last point is no more relevant nowadays since in 1999, twenty-nine ministers of education from different European countries signed the Bologna Process at the city of Bologna in Italy (Bollag, 2003). It states that all European universities should introduce the credit system. In other words, they were imitating the main components of the American higher-education system. They believed that their old system was traditional, tough, and rigid (Bollag, 2003). They needed to replace the strict system with a more flexible one in a way that students can transfer majors without losing all what they earned, repeat only the failed course, “combine different subjects, accumulate credits, interrupt studies, and come back at different times in their life” (Bollag, 2003, p. 3). Furthermore, one of the major reasons for this change was to attract foreign students since the number of foreign students who studied in English-medium universities was enormously increasing (Bollag, 2003).

To sum up, French educated students view American universities in Lebanon as more flexible and will provide better future opportunities than French universities (Araman, 2000).

On the other hand, differences between French and English educated students are not only found in academic settings but also in their attitudes and behaviors. French educated students are much more disciplined (Araman, 2000).

3.8 Students' Attraction to English Schools

The beginning of the scholastic year of 2007-2008 has introduced a major dilemma that faces the education in Lebanon, for the registration of students in French medium schools is decreasing whereas that of English medium schools is increasing. This in turn caused another problem with the short number of English teachers and yet there was a high demand on these teachers. The latter problem triggered a wave of contracting with new English teachers (Dahsha, 2007).

Furthermore, the registration levels in public schools have increased drastically in the past year, in Sidon alone it has increased by 15% (Dahsha, 2007).

Mrs. Jamal Baghdadi, the academic principal of the south of Lebanon, stated that the sudden increase of the flow of students to the public sector is due to the society's trust in this sector. She also stressed on the fact that all students are welcomed. However, Baghdadi recognizes a problem in the fact that parents are insisting on registering their children in English medium schools rather than in French medium schools (Dahsha, 2007).

Baghdadi explains this fact yet does not blame the parents for their choice since nowadays English is the primary language in the world due to globalization (Dahsha, 2007).

3.9 English substituting French in Paris of the Middle East

Ross (2007) made it clear that English is replacing French in Lebanon. Most of the billboards, offers, advertisements, brochures, and menus are written only in English. According to Merville, editorial writer at *L'Orient Le Jour*, "Rambo has replaced Rimbaud". He is referring to the American action hero *Sylvester Stallone* who played the role of Rambo and to the 19th century French poet Arthur Rimbaud. He is playing on words, but his point is obvious. Despite that Lebanon is known as the Paris of Middle East, English is becoming the language choice of most Lebanese students. Merville believes that this is becoming a fact because English is simpler and less challenging than French. In other words, English is easier and does not require lots of efforts to be acquired (Ross, 2007).

Ross (2007) said that even if the French language is declining but still it's very common to find Lebanese people shifting in a single sentence between the three languages, for example "Hi, Keefak, ca va?" (p.3).

Haddad (2005) also talked about Lebanese shifting easily between the three languages and the difficulties she was facing with her three-year-old daughter Yasmine who was enrolled in a French medium school which teaches English as a second foreign language. Haddad agreed with her husband that she would talk with Yasmine in French, he would talk with her in English, and she would have to communicate with the rest of the family and society in her mother tongue language Arabic. By planning this Haddad (2005), a writer in the *Daily Star*, thought she would help her daughter master the three languages needed for being a Lebanese. The problem that Haddad faced with her daughter was that Yasmine mixed and couldn't differentiate between Arabic, English,

and French. Her sentences were unclear; this obliged her mother to translate them for others. As Yasmine grew older, she continued to shift between the three languages, focusing mostly on English and French. Haddad (2005) assured that her daughter's case explains the fact of being Lebanese. This is the way Lebanese people talk and they understand each others. Other Arabs describe the way Lebanese speak by annoying since they believe that Lebanese should stick into only one language and stop shifting (Haddad, 2005).

Lebanese adults were interviewed and asked about their positions towards foreign languages in Lebanon (Ross, 2007).

First, Mustapha, trilingual, is a businessman living between Lebanon and United States. He will definitely send his kids to a French medium school even if French is losing its influence around the world. He believes that if his kids will learn French then they will learn English easily. He added that their personalities will be structured differently than English educated students.

Second, Jack believes that English is the language of 'success' nowadays and that French is losing its power in Lebanon because it was brought into it as a result of the French colonial enterprise. However, according to Jack, French will always remain the most prestigious language.

Third, Maroun states that a language guides people's thinking and way of living. French will stay important because it gives people particular attitude and position into life that no other language can do.

Fourth, Layla views that Lebanese should balance between the three languages because they have equal importance in the Lebanese society.

Lebanese beliefs about foreign languages in Lebanon will be studied in the next section of the research. In order to have reliability and validity, the researcher will triangulate the results. Both the interview and questionnaire methods will be conducted.

Chapter 4: Methodology

4.1 Introduction

In this section, the various methods used to collect the data will be introduced. Both questionnaires and interviews will be used. First, a questionnaire was distributed to one hundred university students; then an interview was conducted with ten parents, and finally an interview with ten university students who were French educated students and shifted into American universities was conducted. The questionnaires and interviews focused on answering the main two research questions stated earlier: 'why do French educated students shift into American universities in Lebanon?', and 'how do French and English educated students perform academically and socially in American Universities?' Using three different ways to collect data lead to triangulation, thus ensuring validity and reliability of the results (Campbell & Groundwater-Smith, 2007).

4.2 Questionnaires

Questionnaires are a popular means of gathering data and information. They constitute a quick, easy and cheap method of gathering information especially in large scale surveys, involving hundreds of people (Wengraf, 2001). Answers of questionnaires can be measured in many statistical methods which lead to confident and reliable results (Munn & Devec, 1995). Questionnaires are booklets of questions which are answered and completed by the respondents. The answers come in many forms such as multiple choices, stating of opinions, and stating the answers in order of importance (Wengraf, 2001). One important aspect of questionnaires is that the researcher is not present at the stage of filling it out, thus preserving the objectivity of answering process. According to Munn and Drevec (1995), the significance of questionnaires lies in their four advantages

which are efficiency, anonymity, high return and precise information, and standard questions.

However, questionnaires have their restrictions and limitations as any other method. The full realization of any research technique, in its pros and cons, is necessary to any researcher. This fact results in a more complex and elaborate understanding to both the subject studied and the results obtained (Oppenheim, 2003). The fact that the information collected is simple and limited to a descriptive form rather than an explanatory form is one disadvantage of the questionnaire. Another flaw in this method is that the data collected could be shallow. The third shortcoming is the time required to draft and pilot the questionnaire (Oppenheim, 2003).

One hundred individuals constituted the population of this study, equally divided into randomly selected students of the university X and university Y. The sampling depends on two main principles the equity between all members of the population as well as the independency of the sampling from any other factor.

The aim of random selection is that all natural differences between the samples in the population will somewhat balance out; this requires a large amount of selected individuals. The more varied the population is the larger the survey needed, if the researcher aims to deduce confident results (Kumar, 2005).

The questions of the questionnaire should be simple, clear, precise, reasonable, easy to answer, and definite. In the process of preparing the questionnaire the researcher should take the respondents' vocabulary into consideration. Also leading question must not be included in the questionnaire for they influence the objectivity of the respondent (Oppenheim, 2003).

Furthermore, the researcher did not restrict the questionnaire to one form of questions on the contrary she used open question, closed questions and question order. The researcher drafted the questionnaire, piloted it and the re-drafted it. The researcher considered the purpose of the study, consequently designed the question to yield efficient, clear and collectable information.

One very important step for a questionnaire to yield satisfactory results is piloting it. Piloting involves choosing some individual(s) to work through the questionnaire in the presence of the researcher, and then discussing the questions format as well as their significance (Munn & Drevec, 1995).

4.3 Interviews

The chief advantage of face to face interviews is that the researcher has more control but more importantly can fortify open-ended questions by allowing longer answers and asking complementary and additional questions to clarify a specific thought (Riley, Wood, Clark, Wikie & Szivas, 2000). On the other hand, interviews are comprised of various types, but for this specific research only the semi-structured interviews are to be used as they are the most suitable in regard to the research topic. The data are to be audio-recorded and then coded and analyzed manually using the 'pen and paper' method. The author of the work should form a sense of trust and understanding with the interviewee, in order to carry out a successful discussion (Finn, Elliott-White & Walton, 2000). Furthermore, the interviewer must be lenient, concerned, knowledgeable of the situation and able to comprehend and respect the interviewee's point of view (Finn et al, 2000). The main reason of choosing the semi-structured interviewing is that this type of collecting the primary data has specified and precise questions, and yet it allows more

inquisitions to seek clarification and elaboration on an unclear thought; fully structured interviews are combined with 'open-ended' questions (Finn et al., 2000). The respondents are given the freedom of response in any way they see fit, for the questions are not oriented towards a specific direction or form. Apart from the mentioned above advantages of using the semi-structured interviews, there are other numerous positive aspects to be mentioned such as "the interview is more appropriate for complex situation, it is useful for collecting in-depth information, information can be supplemented, questions can be explained, and interviewing has a wider application" (Kumar, 2005. p. 131). Proctor (2003) also added some advantages to the semi-structured interview such as "low cost, little of the investigator's time is wasted, procedures are standardized and specific, monitoring of the interviewers, and possible to use illustrative materials during the course of the interview" (p. 134).

As any other research methods, semi-structured interviews have limitations and drawbacks. Finn et al. (2000) refer to the major disadvantage of using the semi-structured interviews which is "bias may increase as interviewer selects questions to probe and may inhibit comparability of responses" (p.75). Moreover, another drawback is the time limit and the cost inadequacy that causes a lesser amount of people to be interviewed (Walliman, 2005).

The interview consists of 10 participants of different ages. To ensure qualitative comparability and reliability of sampling, the researcher will interview participants from different age groups, in order to have responses that are more reliable and not biased. Each of them will be given a copy of the questions and the interviewer audio-taped their responses.

According to Crouch and Housden (2003), interviews are one of the most flexible data collection methods. The nature of the interview has characterized it as one requiring direct personal contact between the interviewer and respondents.

Moreover, the sample chosen has to be of the targeted population. The author's desire to find new information, hidden beliefs and undiscovered perceptions entails collecting primary data, disregarding the fact that it is time consuming.

4.4 Ethical Issue

Like any other evaluation method interviews are also restricted to certain ethical restrains. Due to the interactive and personal nature of interviews, five ethical issues should be taken into consideration (Campbell & Groundwater-Smith, 2007).

The first ethical matter is confidentiality. This could be achieved with complete honesty with the respondent, meaning that the researcher should explain how he/she intends in using the personal information given by the respondent. One should also ensure that the respondent is informed with the results of the analysis based on the interview (Campbell & Groundwater-Smith, 2007).

Informed consent comprises the second ethical issue. One should acquire consent or acceptance from the respondent before administrating the interview. He/She should also make sure the respondent is aware of how he/she is planning on using the data collected, if in a quote form or paraphrased, if the respondent is to remain anonymous or if his/her name is to be revealed. One should resort in some cases in obtaining written consents and one should ensure the consent of the guardians of the individual in case the respondent is a minor (Campbell & Groundwater-Smith, 2007).

A third ethical factor of interviews is risk assessment. One should always consider all the aspects of the interview and any possible complications involving the respondent, in other words one should assess all the risks that might occur as a result of the interview. That is why it is important to include such ramifications in the consent form by that making sure the respondent is fully aware of and his/her decision and fully comprehends the possible consequences of the interview (Campbell & Groundwater-Smith, 2007).

The fourth ethical issue is the credibility of the researcher. One should keep any promise he/she promised the respondent. One should also inform the respondent of the benefits of him/her taking the interview, as in if the results will be of a beneficial nature to the society that the respondent belongs to. Quite simply one should explain to the respondent the aim of his/her contribution and if it will be rewarded by any gesture and one should be committed to any promised gesture or act (Campbell & Groundwater-Smith, 2007).

The fifth and last ethical issue is regarding the interviewing of minor individuals. To ensure the consent of the guardians or parents is, though necessary and imperative, not sufficient. One should also make sure that the minors being interviewed are completely aware of the nature, aim and purpose of the interview (Campbell & Groundwater-Smith, 2007).

Furthermore, questionnaires are also subjected to certain ethical codes. The research study carries within it a certain professional as well as legal liability of the researchers towards their respondents. Summarizing all the ethical codes of the questionnaire are three main principles that ensure the morality of the research study, which are the freedom of the respondent to participate in the survey, informing the respondents of the

intentions of the research as well as the manner in which their information is to be used, and ensuring the satisfaction of the respondents with their survey experience (Oppenheim, 2003).

Briefly, all data collection techniques require certain ethical values and restrains. Most importantly the best interest of the respondent should be kept in mind and one should ensure that no harm comes to the respondent as a result of the data collected. One should also ensure that the freedom of the respondent to refuse answering certain or all questions is respected, without any external strain being forces on the respondent. The researcher must also respect whatever agreement is set between him/her and the respondent. One should ensure the confidentiality of the process as well. In case of minors, guardian supervision should always be sought (Oppenheim, 2003).

In short, the researcher chose, for validity and reliability purposes, the triangulation method for exploring the study (Campbell & Groundwater-Smith, 2007).

- A questionnaire will be distributed for fifty Lebanese students from university X and fifty Lebanese students from university Y.
- An interview with ten parents will be conducted.
- An interview with ten French educated students that shifted into American universities (either graduated or still enrolled students) will be conducted.

Chapter 5: Reporting and Analyzing Findings

The aim of this project is to study the foreign languages in Lebanon, their effects on students' academic and social life, and the reason(s) behind the shift of French educated students into American universities. After conducting the interviews and analyzing the questionnaire samples, the researcher was able to analyze the questionnaire items and participants' answers to the interview questions. The researcher needs to refer that sometimes some of the participants switched to Arabic and French, Arabic is written using italics and French in bold. For translation purposes refer to Appendices D and E.

5.1 Interview with French educated students who shifted to American Universities

The following information was assembled through the interview (see Appendix C). The examination of these results suggested that seven out of ten students are better performer in English, and the rest of the students, three out of ten, are fluent in both English and French, and they don't have any problem using any one of these two languages for oral and written purposes.

According to the informants in the interview, they shifted from a French background to American universities because 'English is easier'; they will have more job opportunities since English nowadays is an international language, the American system is 'much more flexible and less strict'.

Moreover, five out of ten students agreed that there are academic differences between English and French educated students. These students concurred that French educated students 'have more knowledge', 'take things more seriously', and 'study more'. While the rest of the participants (five out of ten) viewed that there are not any academic

differences between English and French educated students. They believed that any differences in the academic field is related to students themselves and schools' level but not their schools' program whether it is French or English.

Furthermore, eight out of ten students believed that there are attitude differences between English and French educated students. They agreed that French educated students are 'more organized, disciplined, snobbish, strict, serious, stressed, and sophisticated', while English educated students are 'more up-to-date, relaxed, down to earth, and honest with themselves'. However, two out of ten students found that there are no attitude differences between English and French educated students. They related students' behaviors to their environments and surroundings.

On the other hand, six out of ten students want to send their children later on to French medium schools because they want them to have the opportunity to acquire both French and English in addition to their native language Arabic. The other four students chose to send their children to English medium schools because according to them 'they will never use French later in life'. Answers to question number five "If you had to choose your first foreign language, would you make the same decision your parents did? Why?" were highly associated to answers of the previous question "In the future, to which medium school will you send your children? Why?" The same six students who answered that they will send their children to French medium schools, also replied that they would have made the same decision as their parents by choosing French to be their first foreign language. The other four students, who answered that they will send their children to English medium schools in the future, responded that they would not make

the same decision as their parents for the reason that they would have chosen English to be their first foreign language.

5.1.1 Students' Comments

At university level, 70% of students believed that they are better performers in English than in French although they are French educated. One student explained this fact with the following:

"Since school I was a better performer in English. I always asked my parents to shift me after I finished **Brevet** and let me spend my secondary level in an English school... but they never accepted. I think because I hated the French language since I was a kid ... you'll laugh now but I always have thought of it as a feminine language especially that all my boy cousins and friends were in English schools. And later during the teenage period ... I was used to listen to English songs all the time and watch American movies... *enno* I never imagine myself listening to French songs or watching French movies *asslan* I don't know anyone of them".

The participant's belief that French is a feminine language is in agreement with what Diab (2006) found. She discussed, in her study, that Lebanese students view the French language as a feminine one and the English language as a masculine one.

The other 30% of students viewed themselves as fluent in both languages. According to one of the students:

"I think I am fluent in both English and French, even if these days I am not using anymore French to communicate with people. Because studying French for 14 years in an environment where you were not allowed to speak but French is not easy to forget. I believe this is the same thing as when you speak English all day and when you go back home, there is an automatic switch to Arabic. Sure your not going to forget your native language. But nowadays if there was a conversation in English I am able to communicate 100% in English, but if it was in French many English words should slip".

One participant described the shift from French medium schools into an American university by saying "it was the best year ever I felt like going out of jail to life". That is how they viewed the French system in comparison with the American one. Similar

expressions such as “French system is very strict, hard, very disciplined”, “you feel like you are still in school if you go to a French university” were repeated in all their responses. One answer was that:

“I feel that in American universities students learn not only theories but how to apply this information in life, whereas, in French universities they only memorize theories. Also, French system is much stricter. You feel that you are still in French school... same rules and the same way professors treat students”.

Araman (2000) mentioned that the French system is very strict and severe.

Moreover, 80% of students mentioned that one of the reasons that made them shift is that they will have definitely more job opportunities when they are American university graduates since English is an international language and they related this fact to the globalization development:

“English is becoming more important than any other language due to the globalization process. Companies in Lebanon, gulf, and all over the world prefer employers who have degrees from American universities. Knowing the French language may be a plus but it’s not required”.

Having more job opportunities if students were holders of American universities’ degrees was also discussed by Araman (2000). He explained his position by pointing that American universities are known internationally more than French ones.

Concerning the third question that deals with the academic differences between French and English educated students, 50% said yes these differences do exist. Students believed that French educated students are better performer than the English ones. One student explained her answer by saying that:

“Academic wise there is a difference. French educated students are better than English educated students and that’s due to their strict system at school. They are used to study a lot and they take things a lot more seriously”.

The other 50% disagreed by saying that there isn't any academic differences between the two. One answer was that:

"Academic differences... I don't think the system has anything to do with their performance. It's up to the student himself. *Ba3den* I don't believe at all that your grades will influence your life later on *ya3neh* how successful you'll be. Of course it's important to get the proper education but what matters is how you can adapt in life and how to use your personal skills with people and that's something no one teaches you... it's either you have it or not and lucky are those people who do have it".

Another response that attracted the researcher's attention was that:

"About the first part of the question if there is any academic difference between the two..... (*mhhh*) if I say yes then I totally prove that I am a French educated student (*hahaha*). I used to think in that way when I was at school that we are better than English students. But now I don't. There are A students, B, C, D, and F students from both schools. *Kel wa7had bi shatarto*".

80 % of students answered positively the second part of the question that there are social differences between the two. One student's comment was that:

" French educated students are very sophisticated in everything ... the way they talk, walk, dress up, look, eat... they love to be snobbish and they love to be perfect they can't stand one mistake and it's because they were raised according to these principles".

A second opinion was that:

"Social differences..... *Akid* but because of the differences in their systems. *Ya3neh* in French system it's like you are in military or jail. You have rules you have all to follow ... all what they are interested in is the discipline ... **Bulletin rouge et bulletin blanc**... I have a hundreds of those (*hahaha*) that was mainly my problem with them ... they don't try to see that maybe some kids need to be treated differently ... *ya3neh ana* I can't stand *7hada yejyneh men fo2* since I was a kid *bjen el 3adeh*... but if you come and talk to me *bi rawa2 byemsheh el 7hal*. So back to your question French educated students are very strict, serious, *abdyyn 7halon jad*... but English educated students *gher* u look at them you feel they are not stressed".

This point was discussed by Hall (1931). He said that the main difference between the French and American systems is that in American systems the focus is on the child while in French systems the focus is on the subject matter. In other words, Hall (1931) implied that in American systems, teachers teach according to students' needs. Furthermore, all

other responses included expressions such as French educated students are “more organized, disciplined, snobbish, and sophisticated”. Diab (2006) also conferred that French educated students viewed themselves as advanced and better than others just because they know an additional ‘prestigious language’, according to Lebanese students, which is French. Besides, Araman (2000) found that French educated are more disciplined than English educated students. This comes hand to hand with the findings of this study.

The other 20% of participants answered negatively the question: “How they behave and talk depend on how they were raised and on their personalities” and “it’s their character and it has nothing to do with coming from French or English background”.

60% of the participants will send their children to French medium school because they want them to acquire French and English. Diab (2006) also found that French educated students are able to learn English easily, but the case is not reversible, which means that English educated students are not able to learn French. She also considers that this is the only advantage of being French educated (Diab, 2006). One participant’s answer was that:

“Definitely, I am going to send my kids to a French medium school, and the reason why is the fact that it is much easier for anyone to learn French then to learn English and unfortunately this fact is not reversible. And we don’t have to forget that the French culture is so rich and that french is still important in Lebanon”.

These same 60% of participants would have made the same decision as their parents did and got enrolled in french medium schools if time went back to when they were three year old. They all explained their answers by saying that being french educated gave them the opportunity to know french and english at the same level. Two answers were that:

“the fact that I know French as well as English gives me more confidence, more opportunities and it is a plus”, and

“When I was at school, I used all the time to nag asking the purpose to study French for fifteen years and after that I’m going to enroll in an American university. But now I know that they made the right decision because I speak three languages. It’s true that English is an international language and is much more important than French but living in Lebanon people expect you to know French”.

The rest of the participants (40%) answered that they will send their children to English medium schools because they don’t want to complicate their children’s life with a language that they will never use in life. They all agreed that English is the international language and is needed to work in any field, whereas knowing French doesn’t make a difference. One of their answers was the following:

“English English English definitely. Why to complicate their life. They’ll never use French *asslan* as for the common words we use in Lebanon I’ll teach it to them or even they’ll learn it alone *ya3neh* “**bonjour- bonsoir- bonne nuit- merci- de rien- je t’aime et tu me manques**” *bas bezyedeh*. And the last two I’ll teach them to my boys just to impress girls who are always looking for romance (*hahaha*). No let’s get serious *3anjad*. They’ll never use French. English is an international language. They don’t care if you know French or not and they don’t even ask you. And if you do, it will not affect your CV. All they need besides your degree of course is that you’re fluent in English. Everywhere in the world gulf region, USA and even Europe nowadays English is a must”.

Another participant’s comment was that:

“You know now it is 2008 and English is already the first language in the world and I’m not planning to get married in 10 years so I think by that time French will be completely substituted by English. This is my own analysis due to the globalization process”.

Ross (2007) and Vang (2006) also found that English is substituting French in the whole world including Lebanon. Then again, the same 40% wished time would go back to when they were three year old in order to get enrolled in English medium schools. Two of their answers were the following:

“I’ll choose an English school and later I would have taken some French courses just the common spoken French”, and

“I didn’t have any problem being a French educated student at that time but now because I am not using it at all I ask myself why to bother from the beginning with all these complications in French... Especially French grammar and **conjugaison Ouuuuf!!** I hate it... they complicate those small innocent kids with all the exceptions and rules”.

It was also found by Diab (2006), that Lebanese students viewed French as a hard and tough language, while English an easy one.

Another interviewee focused more that his parents chose to put him in a French medium school due to their system. He was very active back then so his parents searched for a strict system in order to help them raise their child. This was exactly his problem with the French system. Going to school was not an enjoyable learning experience but rather ‘going to the military or even jail’.

5.2 Interview with Parents

The information stated below was collected after interviewing ten parents (see Appendix B). The study of the answers showed that five parents send their kids to English medium schools and the other five parents send them to French medium schools. English educated students learn French as a second foreign language, and the French educated students also learn a second foreign language which is English.

Moreover, parents of French educated students assured that their kids consider English a very important subject; they study and prepare it as any other school subject matter. While parents of English educated students made it clear that their kids don’t take the French subject seriously; they view it as a very hard subject and it’s not even important if they fail it.

Furthermore, parents of French educated students related their choice of school to the strength of the French system and to the opportunity given to students to learn French

and English at the same level besides their native language Arabic. These five parents do not regret their decisions by choosing French medium schools to their kids.

Whereas parents of English educated students chose English medium schools to their kids because, according to them, no one is in real need to know the 'hard language' French since English is dominating the whole planet and it is an international language. Only one out of these five parents declared that if time goes back, she would have chosen a French medium school to her kids only because they would learn two foreign languages and not only one but she made it clear that it is definitely not because of the system because, according to her, both of the systems are great.

All the French educated students' parents will advise their kids to enroll in American universities. Despite that they were strongly supporting the French system but they want them to get a degree from American universities. They explained their decision by saying that more job opportunities in Lebanon, Gulf, and all over the world, will be available to those who graduate from an American university. They didn't deny the importance of the English language. Alternatively, parents of English educated students made it clear that their kids have no other choice than enrolling in an American university.

5.2.1 Parents' Comments

As stated earlier, five out of ten participants send their kids to French medium schools, and the other five participants send their kids to English medium schools. All students learn a second foreign language. In the case of French educated students, English is their second foreign language. English educated students learn French as a second foreign language.

All the French educated students, in this study, consider English a serious subject. Parents are very proud that their kids know French and English in addition to Arabic since early age. They also believe that it is very important to know English nowadays especially that it's the international language of this generation. This result agrees with Vang (2006) and Shin's (2000) findings. They found that parents are strongly encouraging their kids to learn English. Moreover, English is no more viewed as an additional subject taught at schools, but as a requirement needed by all students in order to get accepted in universities and later to improve the probability of getting job offers (Diab, 2006; Vang, 2006; Shin, 2000). Some parents showed that their kids consider English an important language not only because it is needed everywhere but also because it is an 'easy language' in comparison to French:

"Of course they learn English since elementary level... since **8eme**. They were very excited to learn English because it's something new and they already had an idea about it. You know this generation I call it the internet generation. They know that it's a very important **matiere** and they love it. I think they prefer English because they find it easier and they use it everywhere where there is fun...when they play 'play station', internet, chatting, facebook, all their movie heroes are American people since they were little kids till now",

"*keef laken* ... they study three languages Arabic, French, and English. English is very important now. If you don't know English *ya3neh* you don't know anything and you can't do anything. *Eh* of course they know how important it is. *Asslan* it's very easy in comparison to French", and

"Other than Arabic and French they study English. Yes.... It's an easy subject for them. Before they started to take it at school they knew some of it. It's not Chinese... it's English and English is found everywhere now".

Diab (2006) pointed out that English is an easy language in comparison to French and that French educated students are able to study English easily but, in contrary, English educated students have lots of difficulties to learn French.

Parents of English educated students blamed the schools for not giving importance to the French topic. One parent said:

“They learn French but they don’t take it seriously at all. Actually, when they started to learn French they were very excited but when they found it very difficult and they found that the school doesn’t mind if they didn’t get good grades or even if they failed they started not to care”.

Another parent agreed by saying:

“...sometimes I feel that it’s not their fault that they don’t take it seriously...since they were in elementary classes they know from their older friends and from what they hear that at the intermediate level they’ll learn French but it’s very hard and everyone fail it and it’s not a big deal. They know that the French grades will not affect their average or if they pass or fail a class”.

A third parent’s answer was that:

“of course they don’t take it seriously although they have excellent teachers and great books. You should hear them talking French. Their pronunciation is so funny. My eldest child is in the secondary level. I hear him talking with his friends that they do other subjects’ homework during the French session and if they had a test they revise during the French session... they even sometimes ask their teacher to give them the whole session to revise for a scientific test if they have it at the same day”.

Also, in Diab’s study (2006), it has been found that English educated students consider French sessions as free ones. They spend these sessions by doing other homework, talking to each other, or daydreaming (Diab, 2006). In addition, all participants agreed that it is hard to learn French after learning English as a first foreign language.

Parents of English educated students did not show any fear that their kids are not benefiting from learning French. They agreed somehow in their responses that during this time there is no need to learn French. Vang (2006) also found that English is substituting the French language. One parent even said:

“I don’t see a need to know French. French is a very nice language but also very hard and complicated. So I didn’t want to make it harder for them. If you go everywhere in the world asking which language is most important English or French... I’m sure everyone including the Europeans will answer you English”.

Another one answered that:

“I was in a French school but believe me I never used a French word since I finished school and now if I want to, I’m sure I forgot how to”.

By declaring the importance and need of English and the decrease of the use of French by all people nowadays, the five out of ten parents explained their choice of English medium schools to their kids.

On the other hand, parents of French educated students explained their choice of schools by saying that the French system is better than the American one, and that they want their kids to learn both foreign languages French and English. They assured that being English educated will not allow a student to acquire the French language but the opposite is true. This result was also shown in Diab’s findings (2006). Moreover, studies showed that in the future, people who have more and higher degrees and know more than two languages will have the priority of getting a job (Vang, 2006). Some samples of the parents’ answers are:

“I chose French school because of their system. It’s strict and I feel that anyone who is in a French school will be raised according to definite values. Plus that, the most important thing, I’m giving my children the opportunity to know three languages Arabic, French, and English”.

“Why not to learn more than one language. Plus we can’t compare the French system with the American one... there is a very big difference between the two... of course I’m not talking about the languages just the system. From the moment you go into the lobby of a French school you can feel the discipline. They know how to *yekemsho tlemizzon*. I don’t know if I am very biased to them but students who are in French schools are more polite, gentle, respectful, organized, they respect rules a lot”, and

“Simply because I know that their system is stronger and strict so students turn out to be good and excellent students and because they will learn English without any problem but you know if they were English educated they will not learn French”.

Whether they regret their choice of sending their kids to French medium school, the five participants answered negatively. They all would have made the same decision if time goes back. Various comments were severally repeated, such as:

“of course... nothing has changed... French systems at schools are better than American systems. I think French system is much closer to our culture and traditions... there are limits for everything and they raise the kids just as we raise them at home”, and “...besides its program, students will learn English and French so they have nothing to loose”.

Four out of five participants that sent their kids to English medium schools did not regret their decision. They explained that they know they have made the right choice since English is the international language. One parent comment was that:

“I am very comfortable and proud of what my children have accomplished in this school. They teach them how to discover things, how to have the brain of a scientist, how to work not only in school but how to know that what they are studying inside the school they will have to use later in life. They don't talk French but I don't think they will ever need it. In Lebanon, the snobbish people talk French just for showing off. But English is much more important everywhere and in Lebanon too”.

One out of five participants would have changed her decision if time goes back. She would have chosen French medium schools to her kids only because she wants them to know not only English but also French. Her explanation was that:

“If we were here in Lebanon I would have sent them to a French school. I told you I am French educated and I studied **gestion** at USJ and then I got married and moved to US and I didn't have any problem with the English language. All French educated know Arabic, English and French... **et du meme niveau**. But English educated can't learn French”.

She explained that this is the only advantage that differentiates between French and English educated students.

Parents of English educated students assured that their kids don't have any choice but enrolling in American universities. They added that they do not have any problem with this fact since it is for their best. Conversely, the five parents of French educated students will advise their kids to enroll in American universities. They enlightened their decision by saying that:

“At the university level it’s different because when you study for fifteen years in a French school *khalas sar 3endik el base*. I might advise them to go to English medium universities because they can find jobs easier later on...”, and

“I think they will go to an American university. Their system is much better for students at the university level. What is wrong in the French system is that they continue to treat the university student as the school student... and that’s wrong... this is why *byehrbo mennon 3al* American universities. And all companies around the world hire students from American universities and employees should know English”.

5.3 Questionnaire

The analysis of the questionnaire (see Appendix A) has exposed some of the findings found in the literature review and in students and parents’ answers for the interviews.

Throughout this study, one hundred students attending American universities in Lebanon were asked to fill the questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed randomly to fifty students from university X and to fifty students from university Y, of which were 54% females and 46% males. After gathering the information from the participants, the researcher came up with the subsequent results:

100% of the participants are Lebanese, but some of them have more than one nationality: 5% are Lebanese American, 3% Lebanese Canadian, 2% Lebanese African, 2% Lebanese French, 1% Lebanese German, 1% Lebanese Italian, 1% Lebanese British, 1% Lebanese Australian, 1% Lebanese Ghanaian, and 1% Lebanese Brazilian.

91% of the participants use Arabic for oral purposes, 82% use also English, 41% use French, 1% use German, while some participants use also other foreign languages for oral purposes such as: 8% use Armenian, 1% Italian, 2% Spanish.

For written purposes, 44% use Arabic, 95% English, 31% French, 0% German, 3% Armenian, 2% Spanish.

84% of the participants’ mother tongue is Arabic, 4% English, 3% French, and 9% Armenian.

61% of the participants went to English medium schools, while 39% went to French medium school.

Regarding the number of languages studied at school, 87% studied Arabic, 100% English, 84% French, 2% Armenian, 5% Spanish, and 1% Italian. In other words, 84% of the participants studied Arabic, English, and French at school.

The way participants ranked in order of difficulty the three most used languages in Lebanon, Arabic, English, and French, is showed in the following table (table 1):

Arabic, English, French	13%
Arabic, French, English	28%
English, Arabic, French	0%
English, French, Arabic	2%
French, Arabic, English	20%
French, English, Arabic	34%
They are as difficult as each other	3%

In other words, 54% (20+34) of the participants found the French language the hardest one between the three languages. 41% (13+28) ranked Arabic as the hardest language, and only 2% found English hard to learn. This is consistent to Diab's (2006) results. In her study, Lebanese students also believed that English is a "very easy language" while French is a "difficult language" (p.88).

Furthermore, the way participants ranked in order of importance the three most used languages in Lebanon, Arabic, English, and French, is showed in the following table (table 2):

Arabic, English, French	44%
Arabic, French, English	12%
English, Arabic, French	19%
English, French, Arabic	13%
French, Arabic, English	3%
French, English, Arabic	5%
They are as difficult as each other	4%

95% of the participants agree that it is easier to learn French before learning English. Participants explained their answer by saying that: "Because we all know that French is much tougher so we need to learn it first and use it for a long time in order to be fluent in it", "Learning French is much more difficult and we deal with English in our daily life so if you are a French educated person you'll learn the English language directly", "Because I learned English before French and it's harder for me to be really fluent in French because the English language has less rules, while one who learned French before finds it easier to learn English because he or she is moving from more complex to more simple", "Simply because French is a harder language, that seems to require more linguistic skills than the English, which means once French is learned English becomes easy to learn", and "French is a complicated language with its vocabulary and tough grammar. So we need several years in order to learn it well. But English is found everywhere around us which makes learning this language much easier". In other words, the 95% of students have similar beliefs that by learning the difficult language, French, it will be easy to any student to learn after that a simple language, English, but this case is not reversible.

The other participants (5%) have a different opinion. They believe that it is easier to learn English before learning French because "English is my native tongue and it made learning French easier for me", and "By understanding English at an early age it was easy for me to learn French".

Also in Diab's study in 2006, almost all students (81%) agreed that it is easy to learn French and then English, while it's almost impossible to learn English and then French. Their explanation was that people can learn a 'hard language' at the beginning and then

they won't have any problem learning an 'easy language', but it is impossible to learn an 'easy language' first and then a 'hard' one (Diab, 2006).

On the other hand, 79% of the participants believe that English is substituting French in Lebanon. Their explanations were almost similar by implying that: "Because it is the language of globalization", "More and more English medium schools", "Because simply French educated are shifting to English universities", "It's part of globalization", "Because most of the students go to American universities after school", "Because French is a hard language, its grammar is more complicated, the pronunciation is more difficult, so when we are small we can easily learn the most difficult", "I think that French is harder than English so if you know the hard it will be easy for you to learn the easy language but not vice versa", "Globalization has a lot to do with the fact that English is substituting French in Lebanon and in the whole world", and "Even in American universities, originally French educated students use mostly French to chat with each other. English is more as academic language than a spoken language".

However, the other 21% of the participants disagreed by answering negatively. Their responses were that English is not replacing French in Lebanon because, according to them, "Because still French is used by large populations in Lebanon even if they are in an English university", "People are multilingual in Lebanon; they can talk to you in three languages. No language is substituting the other", "Both have the same importance in Lebanon", and "People who know French are still attached to this language even if they are in American universities or even graduated from American universities".

According to Diab (2006), English is substituting French in Lebanon because being skilled in English has become crucial for academic and professional advancement in the country.

Even though all the participants agree that English is a very important language to survive nowadays, only 63%, if given the preference to choose only one foreign language to learn, chose English, 23% French, 7% Spanish, 3% German, and 4% Italian.

The reasons to know English and French, according to participants, are shown in the following table (table 3):

	English	French
All jobs require this language.	79%	17%
It is important for communication and social purposes.	70%	50%
It is an international and universal language.	97%	19%
It is a prestigious language.	7%	53%
Don't think it is a necessity to know this language.	0%	16%

Most of the applicants agree that English is an international language (97%), thus it is highly needed for professional purposes (79%), and for communication and social purposes (70%). If it is related to the literature review it will be obvious that these findings are similar to Diab's findings (2006). She found that students believe that

English is a necessity because it is an international language (80%), for career reasons (81%), and for communication purposes (67%). Moreover, as parallel to this study, none of the students in Diab's project (2006) believed that it is not a necessity to know English.

French, alternatively, is viewed as a prestigious language (53%) and needed for communication and social purposes (50%) more than an international language (19%)

and a professional language (17%). Furthermore, 16% of the participants agreed that it is not a necessity to know French as oppose to English necessity where 100% agreed that knowing English is a must. Diab's results (2006) differed when 52% of her participants viewed that French is important for career purposes. However, the other reasons were somehow very close in percentage to each other. 23% of the students believed that French is a universal language, 8% believed that it is a necessity to know French in Lebanon, 55% agreed that it is important to know French for communication purposes.

51% of the participants agree to send their kids to English medium schools, while 49% to French medium schools and no one chose an Arabic medium school.

The results to the second research question posed in this study are that 2% of the participants believe that English educated students perform academically better than French educated students, 34% believe that French educated students perform academically better than English educated students, while 64% believe that the academic level of students depends on each person.

Araman (2000) believe that French educated students, in American universities, perform better in writing skills and are better analyzers than others, while English educated students perform better in oral skills. On the other, it has been found according to the academic statistics of university X (1994-1995) that the performance of French and English educated students is almost indistinguishable. In other words, their performance and averages are almost alike and the academic performance of each student is relevant to himself or herself.

Alternatively, 72% of the participants agree that there are differences in the attitudes of English and French educated students, whereas 28 % completely disagree.

This point is convenient to Araman's study (2000) where he found that French educated students are more disciplined and organized than English educated students. These attitude differences make them more serious and responsible toward their studies, thus it makes them higher performers.

The participants' responses of the advantages of being English or French educated students are presented in table 4:

	English educated students	French educated students
You will learn easily French/ English as a second foreign language.	5%	89%
You will have more job opportunities.	96%	21%
You will be more disciplined and organized.	13%	70%
You will be more prestigious than those who don't know it.	12%	56%

This last table (table 4) almost sums up all the results obtained from the analysis of the questionnaire. Students believe French is more a prestigious language that will allow them to learn English easily as a second foreign language, and to be more disciplined and organized. Whereas the participants believe that English is more a professional language. The only disadvantage of being English educated, according to them, is that students will not be able to learn French as a second foreign language.

5.4 Summary of Research Findings

Both Arabic and English are widely used in Lebanon for oral and written purposes. French is also used for the same intentions but by fewer number of the population. English is a necessity in today's world. The international language English is needed to improve people's academic, professional, and social life. The importance and necessity of English in Lebanon and all other parts of the world is discussed in several

other studies (Diab, 2006; Bashur, 2004; Ellis, 2002; Ghaith & Shaaban, 1996; Yazigy, 1994). However, Lebanese students believe that French is no more an international language, and it is no more needed for career purposes but only for social ones since it is considered to be a prestigious language in Lebanon. Ghaleb and Joseph (2000) also discussed in their previous study that English, nowadays, became more important than French, but French is studied, by Lebanese who are connected to the French culture, as an additional language. Even though they almost all agreed that English is substituting French, still almost half of the participants will send their children to French medium schools. Their choice is based that the French system is better than the American one at school level, but they will advise them later to enroll in American universities. They want to give their kids the opportunity to learn two foreign languages, French and English, besides their native language, Arabic. The reporter of the Los Angeles Times interviewed Dr. Joseph G. Jabbra, president of an American university in Lebanon, to discuss the differences of both the American and French Systems. Jabbra (2008) is the product of both systems and he described the French system as "very, very tough and, so to speak, was an elitist system" (p.1). He added that Lebanese students prefer to enroll in American universities since they learn how to be responsible toward themselves and the whole communities. American universities, according to Jabbra (2008), don't offer only academic help but also improve students' personalities and widen their visions by giving them second chances, whereas in the French universities "you swim or you sink on your own" (p.1). American universities also strengthen students' self confidence and self esteem by letting them feel that they are at their second home since they know their duties, but they also know that they can get all the help needed. Furthermore, he added, as

shown in the analysis of the interviews and questionnaire, all students want to get education from American universities because it is very attractive to them since they know it will higher their standards (Jabbra, 2008).

According to 95% of the participants, it is very easy to learn English after French, but the case is not reversible. In other words, being English educated will not allow students to learn French as a second foreign language. They explained their answers by implying that it is possible to move from learning a hard language such as French to then learn an easy language such as English, but the overturn is impossible. They also added that the French language has a large lexical skill and most English words derive from French, which makes learning English after French easier. Similar findings were found in Diab's study (2006) where Lebanese students talked about the undemanding effort they need to do to learn English after French but how complicated and impossible it is to learn French after English.

Moreover, the results concur with the study of Diab (2006) in that all students described French as a 'hard', 'complicated', 'tough', and 'difficult' language; while they described English as a 'simple' and 'easy' language.

French educated students are either fluent at both foreign languages, or better performer in English than in French. They justified being better performer in English, even tough they are French educated, by referring to the difficulty and complexity of the French language. However, English educated are able to communicate and write only in English besides Arabic.

Regarding the first research question which was posed at the beginning of the study, "Why do French educated students shift into American universities in Lebanon?"

the results of the students' interview suggested that the French system is very tough and at the university level, they continue to treat students as if they are still at school.

American universities, according to them, prepare them to face the world, whereas French universities are based only on theories and memorization. Almost all students agreed that by getting degrees from American universities, they will have more job opportunities especially in international companies in and outside Lebanon. In other words, being American university graduate is important for ones professional life (Shaaban, 2005).

Regarding the second research question, "How do French and English educated students perform academically and socially in American Universities?" the results showed that more than half of the participants agreed that there are no academic differences between French and English educated students. Their explanation was that students' academic level depends on themselves, their backgrounds, schools' levels, and their own efforts. This finding harmonizes with the academic statistics of university X (1994-1995) which stated that it is impossible to differentiate the academic performance of French and English educated students. The minority of the participants found that French educated students perform academically better than English educated ones. They gave explanation to their answers by saying that the French system is much harder than the American one, that's why French educated students are used to study more and take things more seriously which makes them better performer than English educated students. This result is in agreement with Araman's results (2000) by demonstrating that French educated students are better performers than English educated students.

Concerning, the second part of the question, 80% agreed that there are social differences between the two. They believe that French educated students are seeking perfectionism, and they are more snobbish, sophisticated, strict, serious, disciplined, and organized than English educated students. The other 20% of the participants, in this study, did not see any social differences between the two. They explained that the way people behave depends only on their different characters and personalities, and it has nothing to do with being French or English educated.

Baudry (2004) strongly agree that there are huge differences in the way French and English educated students behave. He believes that English educated students are independent, optimist, autonomous, good at action, and like what is straightforward. On the other hand, he referred to French educated students as disciplined, authoritarians, pessimist, good at criticism and analysis, and like what is complicated. The differences between the two are highly associated with their school systems. It is widespread and familiar that teachers in French schools describe students by referring to them as **nuls**. In other words, they are describing students as having a zero level in everything. This strongly affects students' development, self-confidence, and self-esteem (Baudry, 2004). This was shown in many interview answers, especially with one participant who said "I hated and still hate the French language and my school because I was always punished and I felt I was in a jail". Moreover, Baudry (2004) added how tough the grading system is in French system schools; where over 20 barely anyone gets an 18. All the differences between the way French and English educated students behave is also linked to their different communities and backgrounds. This can be clarified by referring to the example given by Baudry (2004) that when American children leave home to go to school their

parents ask them to have fun, but French students' parents ask their children to work hard.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.1 Limitations and Recommendations

The findings pointed out that French educated students shift into American universities in Lebanon because being American university graduates improve students' social, academic, and professional life. Furthermore, the findings highlighted the academic and social differences between both French and English educated students.

However, despite these results, three limitations should be declared. Also, recommendations will be added to these limitations in order to strengthen future studies related to the studied topic.

First, the results of the study revealed many resemblances and also some divergences to students and parents' interview responses, and to the participants' answers to the questionnaire; hence, future research need to explore these similarities and variances.

Second, the population sample of the present study was small, ten participants for the students' interview, ten participants for the parents' interview, and one-hundred students filled up the questionnaire. This is why it is hard to conclude with powerful generalizations due to the limited number of participants. For that reason, future researchers need to involve a larger number of participants in order to have more reliable and valid results.

Third, the scope of the study was limited to two American universities, universities X and Y. Furthermore, all parents who were interviewed live in Beirut. Therefore, future research need to comprise a variety of American universities in

Lebanon and interview parents and students living in different regions in Lebanon and belonging to different socio-economic statuses.

6.2 Conclusion

Although, according to Ellis (2002), the French and Arabic languages were both considered, in 1924, the official languages of Lebanon, but today almost all participants of this study agreed that English is substituting French. Students' responses agreed with previous findings showing that the use of French has diminished in comparison to English all over the world (Constantine, 1995) and in Lebanon too (Diab, 2006; Ghaith & Shaaban, 1996).

The few other participants didn't deny the importance of English, but they pointed out that English and French have the same importance in Lebanon. These people, as Diab (2006) described them, are still very connected and attached to the French culture. Despite that deep in their heart they know that English is the international language that rules the whole Earth, due to the globalization process, they just can't accept and confess the withdrawing role of the French language.

Moreover, it has been found in this study that Lebanese students believe that the English language is necessary for professional, career, and communication purposes; while French is seen as a prestigious language needed for social purposes.

Even though all the participants agreed that it is essential, nowadays, to be English literate, however, almost half of them (49%) will send their kids to French medium schools. They believe that by enrolling in French medium schools, children will be offered the opportunity to learn two foreign languages, French and English, instead of one. They pointed out that their choice is also based according to the French system

which is, in their opinion, much better than the American one. However, they will advise their children to pursue their university studies in American universities since the latest will offer them the best education and better job offers. According to Hall (1931) American and French systems are just different than each others; none of them is better or worse than the other. The whole difference is that the French system focuses on the subject matter, while the American one focuses on the child's needs and wants (Hall, 1931).

Then again, the results of this study concur with those of Dahsha (2007) and Haidar (2002) that the English medium schools are attracting Lebanese students more and more each year since 51% of the participants in Lebanon will send their children to English medium schools.

The results clearly showed that French educated students learn English as a second foreign language without any barriers, but English educated students, no matter the efforts put, do not succeed in learning French as a second foreign language. All participants described the French language as being a 'hard, difficult, and tough' while the English language as 'simple and easy'. According to the participants, it is easy to learn a simple after a difficult one but the case is not true in the opposite flow.

In addition, the interview with French educated students highlighted that they shifted into American university because they are sure that by being graduates of these universities their academic and professional life will improve. They also added that at the university level, American universities have better and more advanced programs and systems than French ones.

The findings also agreed with Ghaleb and Joseph (2000) and Yazigy' results (1994) that showed that all students should know English since it is important and can improve their academic, professional, and social life.

More than half of the students revealed that there are no academic differences between French and English educated students. They exposed that students' academic levels depends on their own efforts, backgrounds, and schools effectiveness. The academic statistics of university X (1994/1995) also showed that there are not academic differences between French and English educated students.

Participants who agreed that French educated students are better performers than English educated ones, implied that this because of the French system. They explained that in French schools, students are used to study seriously and be anxious all the time about their performance.

On the other hand, almost all participants agreed that French and English educated students have different attitudes. They indicated that French educated students are much more disciplined, organized, serious, snobbish, and prestigious.

6.3 Reflexivity

The researcher enjoyed working on this project especially that it is highly associated with her own life and the whole environment she is living in.

The researcher herself is the product of both the French and American programs. She can not declare that they are similar to each other, but all that could be said that they are different than one another. She learned that none of them is better or worse than the other. Being English educated has only one disadvantage which is not being able to learn French as a second foreign language. Whereas being French educated has completely a

different disadvantage which is being able to survive the long scholastic years, since kindergarten till grade 12, in a tough and overloaded program.

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Appendix A

Dear Participants,

As part of my MA final project, I chose to examine the history of foreign languages in Lebanon and its influence on students' academic, professional, and social life, and to investigate the causes of the shift from French medium schools to American universities.

I would appreciate if you can spare a few minutes to fill in this questionnaire.

American University Students' Beliefs regarding Foreign Languages

Circle the most appropriate answer:

1- Gender:

- Female
- Male

2- Nationality:

- Lebanese
- Other (please specify):

3- Which language(s) do you use for oral purposes? (Circle as many as apply)

- Arabic
- English
- French
- German
- Other (please specify):

4- Which language(s) do you use for written purposes? (Circle as many as apply)

- Arabic
- English
- French
- German
- Other (please specify):

5- What is your native language?

- Arabic
- English
- French
- Other (please specify):

6- Your school was:

- English-medium school
- French-medium school

7- Which language(s) did you study at school? (Circle as many as apply)

- Arabic
- English
- French
- Other (please specify).....

8- Rank in order of **difficulty** the three most used languages in Lebanon. (from most difficult to least difficult)

- Arabic, English, French
- Arabic, French, English
- English, Arabic, French
- English, French, Arabic
- French, Arabic, English
- French, English, Arabic
- They are as difficult as each other

9- Rank in order of **importance** the three most used languages in Lebanon. (from most important to least important)

- Arabic, English, French
- Arabic, French, English
- English, Arabic, French
- English, French, Arabic
- French, Arabic, English
- French, English, Arabic
- They are as important as each other

10- Do you believe that it is easier to learn:

- French before learning English
- English before learning French
- Why?

.....
.....
.....
.....

11- Nowadays, do you believe that English is substituting French in Lebanon?

- Yes
- No
- Why?
-
-
-
-

12- If you had to choose only one foreign language to learn, which one would you choose?

- English
- French
- Other (please specify):

13- You think it is a necessity to know English because: (circle as many as apply)

- All jobs require this language
- It is important for communication and social purposes
- It is an international and universal language
- It is a prestigious language
- You don't think it is a necessity to know English
- Other (please specify):

14- You think it is a necessity to know French because: (circle as many as apply)

- All jobs require this language
- It is important for communication and social purposes
- It is an international and universal language
- It is a prestigious language
- You don't think it is a necessity to know French
- Other (please specify):

15- In the future, you will send your own children to:

- Arabic-medium school
- English-medium school
- French-medium school

16- Are there differences in academic performances of English and French educated students?

- English educated students perform academically better than French educated students.
- French educated students perform academically better than English educated students.
- There are no differences between the two. It depends on the student himself/herself.

17- Are there differences in the attitudes of English and French educated students?

- Yes
- No

18- In your opinion, the advantage(s) of being English-educated students is/are:
(Circle as many as apply)

- You will learn easily French as a second foreign language
- You will have more job opportunities
- You will be more disciplined and organized
- You will be more prestigious than those who don't know it
- Other (please specify):

19- In your opinion, the advantage(s) of being French-educated students is/are:
(Circle as many as apply)

- You will learn easily English as a second foreign language
- You will have more job opportunities
- You will be more disciplined and organized
- You will be more prestigious than those who don't know it
- Other (please specify):

Thank you for your help & time

Appendix B

Interview with Parents

- 1- What is the first foreign language that your child/children learn at school?
- 2- Do they learn a second foreign language? If yes, what is it? Are they taking it as seriously as the first foreign language?
- 3- According to which standards you chose a French/English medium school for your children?
- 4- If time goes back when your first child was born and you had to decide on which first foreign language he/she should acquire, would you make the same decision?
- 5- When applying to universities, will you advise them to enroll in English or French medium universities? Why?

Appendix C

**Interviews with French Educated Students who Shifted into American
Universities**

- 1- Do you believe you are a better performer in English or French?
- 2- Why did you shift from a French medium school to an American university?
- 3- Do you believe there are academic and social differences between English and French educated students? Justify your answer.
- 4- In the future, to which medium school will you send your children? Why?
- 5- If you had to choose your first foreign language, would you make the same decision as your parents did? Why?

Appendix D

The translation of the *Arabic* words quoted
from the interviews of students and parents

<i>Arabic Word / Expression</i>	Page(s)	Translation to English
<i>Enno</i>	50	I mean
<i>Asslan</i>	50, 54, 57	Anyway / Anyhow
<i>Ba3den</i>	52	Moreover
<i>Ya3neh</i>	52, 54, 57	Which means
<i>Kel wa7had bi shatarto</i>	52	It depends on how much efforts a person put in order to succeed .
<i>Akid</i>	52	Certainly / Definitely
<i>Ya3neh ana</i>	52	In my case
<i>7hada yejyneh men fo2</i>	52	Anyone that treats me as being inferior to them by shouting at me.
<i>Bjen el 3adeh</i>	52	It makes me loose my mind
<i>Bi rawa2 byemsheh el 7hal</i>	52	If you talk to me in a decent way, I'll listen and follow your rules.
<i>Abdyyn 7halon jad</i>	52	Very serious and strict
<i>Gher</i>	52	Are different
<i>Keef laken</i>	57	Of course
<i>Eh</i>	57	Yes
<i>Yekemsho tlemizzon</i>	59	Are able to control their students.
<i>Khalas sar 3endik el</i>	61	You already have the
<i>Byeherbo mennon 3al</i>	61	They run away from them to
<i>(mmm)</i>	52	A sound made for a moment that implies that they are thinking about the question posed.
<i>(hahaha)</i>	52, 54	A loud laugh

Appendix E

The translation of the **French** words quoted
from the interviews of students and parents

French Word / Expression	Page(s)	Translation to English
Brevet	50	Grade 9
Bulletin rouge et Bulletin Blanc	52	Red and white cards used at some French schools as warnings
Bonjour	54	Good morning
Bonsoir	54	Good evening
Bonne nuit	54	Good night
Merci	54	Thank you
De rien	54	You're welcome
Je t'aime	54	I love you
Et	54	And
Tu me manques	54	I miss you
Conjugaison	55	A French subject
(ouuuff)	55	A sound made for showing suffer
Seme	57	Grade 4
Matiere	57	Subject matter
Gestion	60	Business Administration
Et du meme niveau	60	And at the same level
Base	60	Base / Foundation