UNVEILING THE VEILED AND VEILING THE UNVEILED: REVEALING THE UNDERLYING LINGUISTIC IDEOLOGIES AND THEIR IMPACT ON PERSIAN LANGUAGE LOSS AND MAINTENANCE AMONG SECOND-GENERATION IRANIAN-AMERICAN COLLEGE STUDENTS

by

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ABSTRACT

This study adopted an interpretive/qualitative methodology to explore the issues and challenges of developing and maintaining Persian/Farsi as a heritage language in homes and neighborhoods for second-generation Iranian-American youth living in a major US metropolitan area with a sizable concentration of Iranian immigrants. The purpose of the research was to analyze the interplay of various socio-psychological and socio-institutional/political factors, which affected the relationship between a majority/minority language and culture in a geographically multilingual/multicultural setting, by relating them to learners' linguistic experiences.

The findings were based on data collected through three semistructured interviews with 22 second-generation Iranian-American college students residing in the states of New York and New Jersey.

The research showed that the choice to maintain Persian was not necessarily easy, nor was it straightforward; it was further complicated given the underlying linguistic ideologies and the status and power relations between majority/minority languages in the US, specifically when an ethnic group, language, and/or culture was vilified and negatively represented.

The research showed that for Iranian-American second-generation, the process of identification with Iran was especially complex when their country of origin was so very *Othered*. Politically, religiously and ethnically, these young people were up against

powerful forces from both worlds that made identification with Iran and Persian language a special challenge. For these reasons, they found it necessary to strategically align themselves with different aspects of their identity at different times and spaces, depending on their audience and the effect they hoped to achieve. I looked at the process of *Othering* through the lens of world-as-real constructed by contemporary Orientalism and demonstrated how negative representations of Iranians affect Iranian-American students' decisions on which aspects of their identities to perform, including whether to speak Farsi at home or in public.

While the research showed that second-generation heritage language loss is a grim reality complicated by major obstacles for the Farsi-speaking population in America, this researcher hopes that by unveiling some firsthand stories of the people whom this phenomenon affects, she has sowed some fresh ideas in the minds of researchers and policy makers who can take action to stanch the bleeding.

To my children: Aliakbar and Zahra

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"I don't know if you've ever tried on a corset. …Because yeah, a corset is pretty much impossible to put on all by yourself. You need someone's help." ~Garance Dore

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

> *Millennia of human experiences are wrapped up in the planet's many languages, and this linguistic diversity may be as essential to our cultural health as biological diversity is to our physical health. No language is an exact map of any other, each is, in a sense, its own world, By allowing so many of these worlds to slip away, we may be forfeiting a lot more than just words. (Sampat, 2001, p. 34)*

At the turn of the 21st century, "the membership of the United Nations will comprise about 200 states. However, the number of 'nation-peoples' (groups evincing a 'peoplehood' through the retention or expression of separate languages, customs, folkways and religions) is estimated at 2000, 10 times the anticipated number of recognized nation-states" (Cohen, 1975, p. ix-x). Rapidly, nations are becoming even more diverse in their population make-up through globalization and migration (Collier & Dollar, 2002). Movements of populations for various reasons to different parts of the world are characteristic of the 21st century and no country can stay unaffected. The United States is no exception. In fact, the influx of immigrants and refugees to the United States in the last half of the 20th century represented the largest wave of newcomers the US had seen since the 19th century, each representing a great diversity of languages, cultures and lifestyles (Passel & Capps, 2003). In addition, there has been a remarkable

shift in the immigrant population of the US from a European background to a non-European background, which has led to a momentous change in the overall complexion of the American society. During the 1990s and 2000s, for instance, an unparalleled number of immigrants from all over the non-European world entered the United States, adding to an already diverse population (Passel & Capps, 2003). In fact, the 2000 census indicated that the US population grew 13.2% from 1990 (from 248.7 million in 1990 to 281.4 million in 2000), yet this increase was not steady across different population categories. For example, the increase in the Hispanic population was 57.9% (from 22.3 million in 1990 to 35.5 million in 2000) and that of the Asian population was 72% (from 6.9 million in 1990 to 11.9 million in 2000) during the same time span (Passel & Capps, 2003).

Whatever their initial motives for migration -- ranging from political oppression and flight from wars or religious persecution to work, joining other family members or a better future for their children -- migrants have at least one thing in common: Collectively, they all bring with them a multitude of languages and cultures. The children of these migrants comprise an essentially significant sector of this population. Putting the 2000 census numbers into educational terms, one out of five children in the US had immigrant parents, and 80% of these children were United States citizens (Passel & Capps, 2003).

The terms used to describe these children are the “second generation” and sometimes “one and a half generation.” The term “one and a half generation” refers to the immigrant children who were born in their parents’ native country and were brought to the United States as children. The term “second generation” refers to the American-born

children with at least one parent who immigrated to the US as an adult (Harklau, Losey, & Siegal, 1999; Rumbaut, 1997; Rumbaut & Portes, 2001).

As a result of increasing international migration and accelerating change in the multilingual and multicultural character of our world, we see within the ethnic communities across the US upwards of 150 heritage languages other than English, spoken or at least understood (Brecht & Ingold, 1998). From the perspective of language educators, the term heritage language (HL) describes the "endangered[1] or immigrant languages" and a heritage language learner (HLL) is a person "who is raised in a home where a non-English language is spoken, who speaks or at least understands the language and who is to some degree bilingual in that language and in English" (Valdes, 2001, p. 38). Fishman (2001) broadens the definition of HL to include "any ancestral language such as indigenous [American Indian languages or Alaskan Native languages], colonial [Spanish, French, German], and immigrant [Arabic, Chinese, Korean, Persian] languages," pointing out that because of HL loss, the HL "may or may not be the language regularly used in the home or the larger community." From this perspective, a HL may or may not be a child's primary language; however, according to Fishman (2001), heritage languages "have a particular family relevance to the learner" (p. 81).

Despite the reality of diverse demographics and multiple languages in the United States, it is highly likely and altogether typical for immigrant families to undergo a three-generation shift to English and the accompanying loss of HL (Castillo, 2004; Fishman, 1991; Portes & Schauffler, 1994; Rivera-Mills, 2001; Rumbaut, 1994; Veltman, 2000, 1988, 1983; Wiley, 2001; Wong-Fillmore, 2000, 1991). The characteristic pattern of a

[1] Endangered languages are those languages that are prone to be lost and thus become extinct languages due to lack of surviving speakers (Crystal, 2000).

three-generation shift to English and HL loss, according to Veltman (2000, 1988), is threefold. The first generation is HL dominant with some knowledge of English, always staying true to the native tongue and maintaining it as the strongest communicative force. The second generation is bilingual in both the HL and English. Literacy level, however, is high on the English side and low in the HL due to subtractive (Valenzuela, 1999) English-language schooling. The third generation tends to become fluent in English, with little or no knowledge of the HL spoken by the grandparents.

The pattern of HL loss does not develop in all communities with the same speed, but it is pervasive. In the United States, many studies show that, contrary to popular opinion that immigrants resist learning the English language, linguistic minorities are acquiring English rapidly, and at the same rate, losing their first or heritage language or taking it into hiding – using it only in the private spaces of home and family and small circles of HL-speaking friends (Fishman, 1966; Krashen, 1981; Roca & Colombi, 2003; Veltman, 1988). Portes and Hao (1998) observe that, "The United States is [such] a veritable cemetery of foreign languages that the mother tongue of hundreds of immigrant groups has rarely lasted past the third generation" (p. 269). Veltman (1988) also points out that as the rate of immigration increases, the rate of language shift is also accelerating toward a two-generation shift and that we are approaching a two-generation model of language loss even among the children of Hispanic immigrants, 70% of whom become dominant or monolingual in English by the age of 14. This has significantly to do with the young people's sense of being treated as Other than the dominant group – they must speak the dominant language in order to belong to mainstream society. This sense of *Otherness* is worse for people of Iranian descent because the Occidental West (the US,

Canada and Europe) treats the Oriental East (the Middle East including Iran, and Asia) as Other – strange, scary, even evil. Said (1978) called it Orientalism, but I take it a step further in the 21st century – the post-9/11 age of the Gulf Wars and the Axis of Evil – and term it *contemporary Orientalism*. Under this influence, it is no surprise that American young people take their HL into hiding, forget it to the point where it is useless to them, or do not learn it at all. If they do decide as young adults that they have something to gain from speaking their HL – communication with family, better academic performance through multilingualism, or advantages in the job market -- the best result they can hope for is a constrained recapturing of the HL, and they will likely never communicate on an adult level or be literate in the HL.

The disappearance of HL within a couple of generations is so alarming that the Scientific and Cultural Organization of the United Nations conducts studies worldwide to monitor this problem. According to current estimates, the number of languages spoken around the globe is about 6000-7000 (Crystal, 2000; Krauss, 1992; Moseley & Asher, 1994; Wurm, 1996), of which half are in a state of decline, meaning that the numbers of people who are able to speak those languages are constantly decreasing[2] (Krauss, 1992; Wurm, 1996). If this trend continues, according to Krauss, by the year 2100, only 10% (about 600) of the world's oral languages may survive, and the chances of survival for the remaining 90% seem gloomy. Crystal (1997) also believes that "80 % of the world's 6,000 or so living languages will die within the next century" (p. 17).

Some may argue that assimilating into of one of the world's major languages such as English, which has also attained the position of a "global lingua franca" (Crystal,

[2] Among the world's 6000-7000 languages, half have fewer than 10,000 speakers and a quarter have fewer than 1000 speakers (Krauss, 1992).

2000, 1997), is in effect ideal and that people would largely benefit if everybody spoke the same language. There is no doubt that English has attained a worldwide "gold standard" position and that it grants access to social, political, and economic domains both nationally and internationally. Nevertheless, it is also true that since America is a country of immigrants, it consists of many cultures and languages. In the future, America will have more immigrants with even more diverse cultures and languages, which they bring with them into the US. The immigrants who come to the US know their heritage languages and will not see a need to spend money in the US to formally teach the HL to their children in a classroom setting. With only family and close friends to practice with, these children will lose the HL and be forced to try to recapture it as young adults, with seriously limited results. Rather than letting these languages be lost in the first place due to lack of support, it will be better for society in general to take advantage of incoming HL knowledge and build on that.[3] The alternative is constrained recapturing – people decide as young adults that they are missing something by not knowing and using their HL, and they try to learn it at home or in the classroom, but there are many socio-psychological, socio-political, socio-historical and socio-institutional factors working against their learning process. HL learners may easily become discouraged when they realize just how much they have to learn, how much effort and time is involved in learning the HL, how few opportunities they will have to practice outside of family (especially in the post-9/11 world where Americans see Farsi as the language of terrorists) and ultimately, how unlikely they are ever to achieve fluency.

[3] In 1990, a non-English language was spoken in one out of six US households, home to an estimated 9.9 million school-age children (Waggoner, 1994).

The reasons and wisdom for maintaining immigrant languages have been an ongoing discussion from various perspectives in a range of political, social and academic debates. In general, there are two opposing approaches: One espouses language assimilation and giving up immigrant languages, and the other embraces multilingualism and HL maintenance.

People who favor language assimilation (including many first-generation immigrants who learn from subtractive American schools that their children must speak the dominant English and not the HL) view immigrant languages as problems, claiming that HL use places obstacles in the way of English language learning; this is despite the fact that the US census of 1990 showed that 97% of the American population speaks English "very well" or "well." In the HL-as-problem orientation, languages other than English are stigmatized in all official domains and their speakers are treated as having deficits that need to be fixed. In contrast, Standard English speakers are attributed with higher prestige and English is seen as a prerequisite to upward mobility, self-improvement, and financial success. By Americans' according disproportionate power to the English language and *Othering* the speakers of immigrant languages, they send the implicit message that immigrant languages are less important than English and language minority groups should give up their linguistic and cultural identity in order to assimilate (Freeman, 1998). Furthermore, the English language is positioned as a unifier and immigrant languages are vilified as politically divisive and unpatriotic, and a threat to national identity. Farsi in particular is seen as an Other language because it carries the baggage of Iran's being labeled as part of the Axis of Evil, misconceptions about Islam and general American racism toward people from the eastern hemisphere. To be a true

American and have full allegiance to the United States, immigrants are expected to leave their heritage languages behind. This view of language not only adds to xenophobic ideologies, but also ensures the protection of the privilege enjoyed by native speakers of Standard English, falsely promising inclusion to those immigrants who conform to its norms.

Other arguments consider multilingualism and language maintenance as rights and resources that society should preserve for the sake of individuals as well as for humanity as a whole. This approach posits that it is the right of every ethnic group to maintain and develop its HL as a means of communication, keeping family relations and cultural vitality, as well as a vehicle of identity and identity development (Cho & Krashen, 1998; Faltis & Hudelson, 1998; Hornberger, 2003; Tse, 2001; Wong-Fillmore, 1991). Another argument, which is as important as the language-as-right argument, contends that heritage languages are priceless resources (Freeman, 1998; Ruiz 1984) which can play a vital role for the members of ethnic communities in terms of cognitive, academic and cultural growth (e.g., Portes & Hao, 1998) in addition to career opportunities (Krashen, 1998). HL learners in the East Coast University study reported that when one understands two languages, picking up a third is easy. They also perceived that being bilingual would make them more valuable on the global job market, as well as allowing them to tailor their services to the local ethnic community if they chose. The language-as-resource argument views languages as tools that provide access to a wealth of heritage literature as well as other knowledge in terms of communication, and ultimately, access to a capital of material riches. To elaborate on this view, Bourdieu (1991) speaks of a linguistic market in which linguistic competence functions as a capital

or resource. He believes that languages are always spoken in a particular market, and the characteristics of these markets accord them a certain value. For example, an American who speaks and is literate in a non-English language may be valuable as a translator or interpreter, not only among family and friends in the home market and abroad, but in a professional or official capacity as well. Carriera (2003) discusses the value of heritage languages as a resource on a collective level. She states that heritage languages are important resources for national and international interests in many areas such as world relations, community affairs, and economy. The closely-related intellectual argument views languages as instruments of thought, asserting that each language embodies a unique culture, knowledge and understanding of humanity as well as the Self. If people lose their heritage languages, it will be difficult, if not impossible, to understand human history and connect with cultural knowledge that ties together generations, communities, and the world. Still another approach is the global human heritage argument in which languages are as unique as biological species, and "linguistic diversity is inseparable from biological and cultural diversity…. When an indigenous language is lost, so is the traditional knowledge of how to maintain the world's biological diversity" (the Leadership of the Permanent Forum on indigenous issues in the United Nations, 2008, p. 22[4]). From these perspectives, languages serve as a portal to various capabilities and limits of the human mind, which linguists, cognitive scientists, philosophers, and researchers in various fields can study further.

[4] Retrieved on 15 August 2008 at http://64.233.169.104/search?q=cache:TfgzH7JzPY4J:www.tebtebba.org/index.php percent3Foption percent3Dcom_docman percent26task percent3Ddoc_download percent26gid percent3D149 percent26Itemid percent3D27+linguistic,+biological,+the+Leadership+of+the+Permanent+Forum+on+indigenous+issues+in+the+United+Nations&hl=en&ct=clnk&cd=7&gl=us

Due to an increasing awareness of the many potential advantages of HL maintenance and a growing realization of the consequences of language loss, after the turn of the 21st century there has been a growing appreciation for and interest in HL maintenance and development, not only in the academic and research communities, but also in the general public and various institutions from government to higher education. For instance, there has been an increasing desire among immigrant and language minority populations to preserve their heritage languages, and a greater appreciation of these immigrant languages has appeared in the larger community (Campbell & Peyton, 1998; TESOL, 2004). This is apparent in the growing number of foreign language courses which sprouted up at colleges and universities across the nation, and the rising number of students in these classes. Evidence, nonetheless, shows that immigrants and language minority populations alone cannot maintain heritage languages in their children (see for example, McGregor & Li, 1991). Children spend much of their time at school and in the larger society, under various pressures that play important roles in HL loss and maintenance. Heritage language loss and maintenance is affected by a range of socio-psychological, socio-political, socio-institutional and socio-historical variables as well as the intersections of these variables with each other. Despite the increased interest and participation in foreign language study at the university level, statistics still show that, even after 9/11, only 8.6% of American college students register for foreign language courses (http://www.adfl.org/resources/enroll.htm). Those students who do register for foreign language courses only take these courses for a semester or two, which is far from what one needs to achieve fluency. Among these students are second-generation HL learners who missed the opportunity to pick up their HL at home, for a variety of reasons

ranging from lack of interest to parental choice to use only English with their children. Decisions not to use HL are the result of feeling *Othered*. It is much easier and more economical to maintain students' heritage languages than to develop them from scratch, but many young people and their families learn this too late. Research shows that while in higher education, billions of dollars are spent to train students in a foreign language (or a lost HL); it is unwise and uneconomical to lose these linguistic resources in the first place. The best that HL learners can hope for is a constrained recapturing – because they learn the language in a formal, artificial environment or struggle along with it in the private space, most of them can never hope to communicate at a level where they can think in both languages simultaneously, as they would if they had been raised bilingual.

Another form of support for HL development and maintenance in the first decade of the 21st century has been evidenced in the rhetoric and practices of the American government. After September 11, 2001, for instance, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) made official calls, hastily requesting Arabic and Persian translators and interpreters to aid the government in translating intelligence information and documents. The US government recognized the potential value of immigrant languages as a resource for preserving American national security. Facing the lack of proficient adult speakers of foreign languages (TESOL, 2004), the US declared five languages -- among them Arabic and Farsi -- as "critical languages," deeming their knowledge as vital for American security, international relations, foreign policy, and economy. (*Middle East Quarterly*, Summer 2005, Volume XII: Number 3, Retrieved at http://www.meforum.org/article/754). President George W. Bush's administration also repeatedly asked Congress to fund various programs to bring Persian language teachers to

the US, including one $5 million program specifically inviting 200 Iranian professional and foreign language teachers (Gedda, George, Associated Press Writer, *US to Encourage Iranians to Visit,* September 6, 2006). All of this has happened too late for Iranian-American college students who were raised, and whose HL slipped away from them, in the 1990s. Constrained recapturing will not be enough to serve the government's needs.

The government's (e.g., FBI) direct support of heritage languages through an increased backing of foreign language courses or its indirect sponsorship by offering economic advantages to speakers of "critical" languages, may only result in a temporary increase in the number of students in those classes and a fleeting increase in the number of courses offered. This approach is highly unlikely to have a long-term impact on HL maintenance. Essentially, this is due to two key reasons.

Primarily, this form of emergency support is self-serving, attaching the destiny of heritage languages to the interests of governments and linking them to the world's political/historical events and immigration patterns. It does not stop immigrants from being *Other*ed and subsequently taking their heritage languages into hiding. Throughout history, with various waves of immigration patterns involving people from different religions, races, and nationalities, and also with each change in the political events around the world, the support for foreign language education either increases or decreases, granting it sometimes a positive slope and often a negative one. In 1917, for instance, when the US entered World War I against Germany and with Americans' ensuing anti-German feelings, several laws were passed requiring language restrictions at schools, based on the argument that "it poses a menace to Americanism, and part of a plot formed

by the German government to make the school children loyal to it" (Cox quoted in Crawford, 1989, p. 23). One year after the war, English was mandated as the language of instruction in 15 states. These patterns have appeared repeatedly throughout US history after World War I and World War II, the Vietnam War, the Cold War, and recently after the 9/11 attack, the "War on Terrorism" and Americans' concerns about Iran's possibly developing nuclear weapons.

This kind of temporal support for instruction in "critical" foreign languages in direct response to political/historical events has no long-term effect on reversing HL loss. Moreover, it may well have a negative effect on HL maintenance. By placing a language in the context of preserving national security and fulfilling the American government's interests, the government transforms a language into a weapon to be used in obliterating the enemy, further *Othering* the Americans who feel pulled in opposite directions. A heritage language learner would be put in a position of "either-or" category -- either you are with *us* or with *the enemy*. In this scenario, HL speakers or learners find themselves in a position in which there is no gain for them. In fact, the loss is tremendous. At a critical time when their loyalty to America is in question, those with an Arabic or Persian language ancestry must prove their innocence by avoiding looking or sounding like *the enemy* if they hope to claim insider identities (Wong, 2006). It becomes necessary to give up the heritage culture in order to blend in with the adopted one. On the other hand, they are expected to help the government by acting as translators/interpreters or registering in language courses to help build a reservoir of speakers of "critical" languages in case more need arises later. The nation's investment into constructing a patriotic American identity through language temporarily changes depending on each world event, and the immigrant

is expected to live a prescribed linguistic identity according to national requirements. By participating in this patriotic game, the HL learners are trapped into a system where they would be isolated and become Other in either world. Both the ethnic community as well as the larger society would look at these people with suspicion; they could be considered both traitors in their ethnic community and a threat to the American community. This self-serving and shortsighted government approach to the development, maintenance and appreciation of immigrant languages measures the value of a language by the yardstick of how much and when it can serve the interests and security of the country. It leaves no room for individual rights and security.

This study focuses on the complexity of HL loss, development, and maintenance for Iranian-American youth in the context of the War on Terrorism, which started long before 9/11 and continues into the 2010s. The US has become a demographically multilingual and multicultural, yet ideologically monolingual and monocultural society with a long history of fear of Others. Despite increased awareness of the necessity of HL maintenance and development, the problem of HL loss cannot simply be reversed by the desire of families and individuals to maintain heritage languages, nor will a few self-serving, short-lived government declarations save a HL. The best we can hope to accomplish is a constrained recapturing of the HL. The process may even be further complicated when a language and its ethnic community are vilified and negatively represented, as is the case of Iranians in America. In order to understand the problem of HL loss in ethnic communities, it is necessary to examine the issues and challenges that each community faces, and to analyze various factors that interact to affect the process of HL loss and maintenance. The phenomenon of HL loss is pervasive across many heritage

communities, but it is a special concern for Iranians, who are vilified, stereotyped and negatively represented, and who constitute such a minority that there are limited opportunities for heritage language learners to practice the HL outside of the private space.

Purpose of the Study

Listen, oh, listen to my plaintive cry
Listen to my longing or else I die.
From the sweet home of my bed I was torn
So my pain and crucial longing was born."
~ (Rumi, 13th century Persian poet and Philosopher[5])

The above epigram is a beautiful story of separation and longing. It symbolizes the complexities of a desire to separate oneself from the pain of association with the mother tongue (heritage language) and a longing to adhere to it despite all the pain. It can be interpreted as the story of a language (and an identity) dying within a generation or two. Within the context of separation and union between the HL learner and the HL, this study evaluates this longing for and the struggle to recapture the HL against the backdrop of the larger, more complex factors that come into play in the process.

The study adopts an interpretive, qualitative methodology to explore and examine the issues and challenges of developing and maintaining Persian as a heritage language in homes and neighborhoods for second-generation Iranian-American youth living in a major US metropolitan area with a sizable concentration of Iranian immigrants. The goal of the research is to analyze the interplay of various socio-psychological, socio-political,

[5] Mawlānā Jalāl-ad-Dīn Muhammad Rūmī, simply known as Rumi in the English-speaking world, was a 13th century Persian philosopher and poet. His marvelous work is *Mathnavi* which consists of 24,000 verses. He has been the best-selling poet in the United States and many other countries for more than a decade at the turn of the 21st century. In his honor, UNESCO named the year 2007 as the "Year of Rumi."

socio-historical and socio-institutional factors affecting the perceived relationship between a majority and a minority language and culture by relating them to learners' linguistic experiences. This understanding will help us to assess the operation of these factors in different contexts and at different times, their effects on HL loss and maintenance and the choices that the learners make in recapturing or maintaining their heritage languages. This knowledge will, in turn, create a greater understanding of HL loss and maintenance by adding a new perspective in this area of research and helping to close the gap between research and public knowledge. It will lead to markedly enhanced and relevant recommendations for future research on HL development and maintenance for learners of immigrant background, especially in the absence of a tightly connected language community/neighborhood where heritage language and culture are practiced on a daily basis (Fishman, 1991). In addition, this study will provide a gateway to help promote intergenerational language transmission for Persian language development and maintenance, based on individual, social, historical, and political accounts of the ongoing struggle in HL development inside and outside a minority community, and it will seek to describe, analyze, and record what is happening to individuals, to one language, and to one community at a specific political and historical point in time.

The study will analyze the impact of socio-psychological factors on HL loss and maintenance because they include the sociological as well as the psychological variables (Allard & Landry, 1994; Baker, 1992; Hamers & Blanc, 1982). In the socio-psychological analysis, using the data from the study, I will evaluate instrumental factors -- meaning the practical or functional value of learning a HL, attitudinal factors such as feelings toward heritage language and culture and perceptions about the value and uses of

HL, and integrational and identity factors including desire to integrate into a target group and the relationship of language to identity formation. I will argue that all of these factors affect HL loss and maintenance by driving families and individuals to take their HL into hiding for fear of being maltreated in mainstream society if they use the HL in public. There is a significant amount of research indicating a strong relationship between HL learning and instrumental factors such as a desire to get a better job or to meet a particular academic or job-related requirement (Gardner, 1983; Wong, 2002). Instrumental factors tend to come into play later in life and are not enough to inspire in childhood the kind of effort that would be needed to achieve fluency as a young adult. The socio-psychological analysis will examine crucial attitudinal factors such as personal and collective practices and feelings of learners toward their HL, its community of speakers and their culture compared to those of the dominant language and culture, as well as their perception of the value and uses of HL compared to those of the dominant language (Burnett & Syed, 1999; Cho, 2000; Kondo, 1999; Kondo-Brown, 2001; Shibata, 2000; Sung & Padilla, 1998). There is also substantial literature illustrating a link between HL loss and maintenance and integrational factors such as identity formation and the aspirations of integrating into a particular group (Cho, G., Cho, K.S., & Tse, 1997; Feuerverger, 1991; Kondo-Brown, 2000; Oketani, 1997; Pao, Wong, & Teuben-Rowe, 1997; Tse, 2000).

HL loss and maintenance, however, do not occur in a social vacuum. They are closely interconnected with the histories and politics of given language communities and greatly influenced by language ideologies surrounding those politics and histories, which in turn strongly interact with the socio-psychological variables. In this case, those

variables include pride in the long and rich Persian history juxtaposed with discomfort about the enmity between the abandoned country and the adopted one; the sense of *Otherness* that develops from being visibly marked as members of a misunderstood religion (as with the veil worn by Muslim women); and the negative feelings that stem from racial profiling. The socio-psychological factors with regard to language acquisition, development, recapturing and maintenance are interrelated with the socio-institutional characteristics and power relations of the dominant language community and those of the HL community (Giles, Bourhis & Taylor, 1977; Lambert & Freed, 1982). These socio-institutional factors might include ideology about the status and power relations between minority and majority communities and language such as social, national, political or historical status and position of a dominant language or community. For example, American schools tend to be subtractive (Valenzuela, 1999), treating any heritage language – especially one loaded with negative political baggage like Farsi -- as extraneous and unimportant or even detrimental to an American public education. Various institutional discourses and representations of minority groups are also socio-institutional factors as they affect the process of identity negotiation for the HL community and their belief in the ethnolinguistic vitality of their language, "the status and prestige of a language as seen from an individual's perspective as shaped by a host of social, political, cultural, and psychological influences" (Tse, 2001, p. 686). These factors can include pride in language and culture learned in a heritage language classroom versus ambivalence toward the heritage culture learned in a public school environment; affront at one's heritage culture being negatively represented in the media and the arts; and the sense of exclusion brought on by a government that views members of the heritage

culture as tools, but does not make room for them in its social reckonings such as the census, financial aid for higher education, and other programs that consider race as a variable.

In order to understand the process of HL loss and maintenance, one must examine language loss and maintenance by considering and relating the interconnections between socio-psychological variables and broader socio-institutional/political variables. It is critical to examine the impact of language ideologies surrounding various societal institutions on the attitudes, identities, discourses, and practices of people with a recent HL background. This will further help to explain the conditions under which it might be possible to maintain heritage languages within HL communities.

Research Questions

To achieve the goal of the study the following questions will be explored:

1. How do Iranian-American youths understand HL loss and the factors that contribute to it?
2. What are the Iranian-American youths' experiences with historical views on language ideologies in the US?
3. How do Iranian-American youth define being Iranian-American in the United States across various socio-psychological and socio-institutional/political contexts?
4. How does language come into play in the negotiation of identity for Iranian-American youth?

Background of the Study

> *Why do our Iranian second-generation children have a problem with their parents' native language and ethnicity? Why do they not speak Farsi (Persian)? Is it cheap, third-worldly, Middle Eastern, backward, uneducated, belonging not to them but to the country of terrorists? The country of barbarians? ~ Excerpts from first-generation Iranian-Americans collected during my 1-year interactions with them*

The focus of this study will be on the children of Iranian immigrants in the United States, both those who arrived here at a young age and those born in the US to immigrant parents. The study will refer to the entire group as the "second generation." Statistics show that the population of Iranian immigrants in the US has been growing since the 1970s, leading to an increase in the number of second generation. During the 1960s and '70s, due to Pahlavi's[6] drive to industrialize Iran, a great demand for educated and skilled labor was created in Iran. Iranian universities were not able to meet such high demands; thus, a large number of Iranians pursued higher education in other countries such as the United States, France, and Britain (Fischer, 1986; Keddie, 1992). Bozorgmehr (1996) states that, during these times, Iran had the greatest number of students in the US but their stay in this country was always temporary. At that time, Iran did not have a large immigration movement. This trend, however, changed during and after the Islamic Revolution of 1979, which was the first major permanent outflow of people that Iran had ever experienced. They started leaving the homeland in great numbers, mostly to escape religious and political persecution (Sabagh & Bozorgmehr, 1987). Estimates have totaled this migration at around 2,000,000 Iranians, with the majority moving to the United States. The US 1990 census estimated the number of Iranian-Americans residing in the

[6] The Pahlavi dynasty ruled Iran from the crowning of Reza Shah Pahlavi in 1925 to the overthrow of Mohammad Reza Pahlavi (Reza Shah's son) by the Islamic revolution of 1979. The collapse of this dynasty marked the end of the monarchy system in Iran.

United States, including those who were born in Iran and those who were born into immigrant families, to be 285,000, and the 2000 US census estimated that population to be 338,000 individuals. However, there has always been a disagreement regarding the number of Iranians in the US and the Iranian community has disputed these numbers repeatedly, stating that these statistics are based on self-identification on the US census. Since the US census categories are based on either a geographical location such as Asian, or a race construction such as Caucasian, Iranian-Americans check various categories relevant to them ranging from Asian[7] to Caucasian[8] to Other. In a newer study conducted in 2004, a group of Iranian-American Ph.D. candidates at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) estimated the number of those who identified themselves as Iranian-Americans to be closer to 691,000. However, the exact number is still unknown and many Iranians argue that these numbers are misrepresentations, believing the actual number of those with Iranian heritage to be much higher.

Nonetheless, central to the understanding of this immigrant community is that this large population had left their country due to political chaos, which made remaining there dangerous, if not impossible, for themselves and their families; yet they entered a society that was hostile to them. The Islamic Revolution of 1979 and the subsequent crisis in which 52 American diplomats were held hostage for 444 days created an antagonistic environment in the US for the Iranian immigrants who were seen as extensions of the

[7] Iran is located in Southwest Asia, in the south of the Caucasus Mountains.

[8] Caucasian is one of five geographic race constructions invented by Johann F. Blumenbach (1752-1840) in 1781 based on the [European racist] idea that humanity's progenitors (meaning their forefathers and their original model) descended from Noah's Ark settling on Mount Ararat, the southern slope of Mount Caucasus (The Caucasus Mountains are a mountain system in Eurasia between the Black and the Caspian seaS in the Caucasus region.). This was a large and rather vague division of humankind, which in the 18th century was comprised of the chief races of Europe, North Africa and Southwest Asia. The term is no longer used today in most parts of the world but it is still one of the categories on the US census. www.geocities.com/paris/chateau/6110/europeconceptsterms.htm

new Iranian government. This hostage crisis not only eroded the relationship between the two countries, but also generated a public fear and hatred toward Iranians living in the US. The images of flag-burning Iranian Islamic zealots and the headlines in American media reading, "America held hostage," altered the state of affairs from the antagonism between the two governments into an unforgiving and sustained hatred toward Muslims in general and Iranians in particular. Recognizing that they were denied the presumption of innocence until proven guilty, most Iranians, in order to steer clear of racial profiling and becoming targets of hate, chose to create for themselves an invisible image and took refuge not in America, but in silence. In order to share the cloak of invisibility enjoyed by the dominant groups in American society, the sign that signified Iranians in terms of their most overt expressions -- the Persian language -- had to be silenced. They took their heritage language and culture into hiding, which made it almost impossible for their children to become fluent in Farsi outside of the home. The price of belonging to America was renunciation of everything Iranian, including the Persian language. Hiding heritage language and family nationality was the only way Iranian school children knew how to protect themselves from the hatred of classmates. The most common phrase used by the second-generation Iranian-American children addressed to their parents when reaching school grounds was "No more Farsi." Hoffman (1988) quotes an Iranian professional in his article, *Cross-cultural adaptation and learning: Iranians and Americans at school*, saying, "We are [becoming] a quiet minority" (p. 166). In their silence, Iranian-Americans displayed the "unhomely" world (Bhabha, 1994. p. 9).

After the hostage crisis finally ended and things seemed to get quieter, negative events followed, one after the other. The war between Iran and Iraq (1980-88) and the

backing of Iraq by the US government due to the linking of Iran with terrorism, the Salman Rushdie affair of 1989, and the two Gulf wars all increased the index of anti-Muslim sentiments in America. These sentiments in the form of hate responses were immediately felt among Iranians, a signifier that had become synonymous with Muslim fundamentalists and terrorists. Then came the 9/11 tragedy and its aftermath, which once again brought to the surface of American discourse the hostility and scorn toward Muslim Middle Easterners, including Arabs and Iranians. President Bush branded Iran as part of the "Axis of Evil" and a threat to world security. Iran was once again linked to terrorism. Iranian-Americans who felt the tremendous loss this country has borne with the heinous attacks also had to face the backlash of negative politics between Iran and the United States. The US government's adoption of the PATRIOT (Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism) Act of October 2001, which essentially lifted all legal protections of liberty for Middle Easterners in the United States, left no room for showing a face that might resemble a terrorist. The "terrorist face" was not that of Timothy McVeigh, the White supremacist who bombed the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City in 1995, but of a Muslim or Middle Easterner. In the attempt not to appear as such, Iranians used their ethnicity, and not their nationality, as their identifier, stressing the fact that they are not Arabs but "Persian"[9] (Iranian).

[9] In trying to distance themselves from the contemporary Islamic Republic of Iran and to differentiate themselves from Arabs and Muslims (which reads as fundamentalists, Islamists, terrorists), most Iranians in the US identify themselves as Persian, an ethnicity, which is more grounded in ancient Persia. See for example, http://youtube.com/watch?v=ADU1lhEb1X0&feature=related).

Hollywood, too, came to the rescue of America from the invasion of "Persians" with the movie *300.*[10] In this movie, Spartans (representatives of the Europeans and the West) fight Persians (represented as the Eastern savages and barbarians) in order to form an enlightened, free, and democratic path to be traveled for centuries to come. Familiar signifiers existing in the dominant Eurocentric discourse of binary logic about Westerners and Easterners and in particular Persians are reproduced in the form of good, righteous, and masculine Spartan King Leonidas, and the sexual pervert, feminine, corrupt, and totalitarian Persian King Xerxes. Xerxes' army is presented as a bunch of angry, irrational, deformed, dark skinned, veiled towel-heads assailing 300 handsomely sculpted Spartan soldiers fighting for freedom and their way of life. When Iranians criticized the visual characterization and controversial depiction of Persians, they were "enlightened" that the movie is "cartoonish."[11] Hollywood marketed *300* as a movie in the genre of historical fantasy, not reality. However, for the Iranian-Americans who live in this "cartoonish" world, the reality is that no part of their identity or their heritage is safe to claim, not their nationality, not their religion, not their language, and not even their ancient Persian-ness which had, as they thought, nothing to do with Iranian-ness, and certainly nothing to do with the Islamic Revolution. Apparently, to those who made the movie *300*, they were all the same and part of the Axis of Evil.

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[10] *300* is a box office record 2007 film adaptation of the graphic novel, *300*, by Frank Miller, a fictionalized retelling of the Battle of Thermopylae. King Leonidas and 300 Spartans fight to the last man against Persian "God-King" Xerxes and his army of 1,000,000 soldiers. Retrieved on May 10th at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/300_(film)

[11] See for example the article found at http://www.blu-ray.com/movies/movies.php?id=451&show=review Retrieved on August 17th in which paragraph 3 reads "Based on the Frank Miller illustrated novel, *300* takes CGI filmmaking and postproduction to cartoonish levels, blurring the distinction between actors and animation."

> Dominant groups have the material power to make reality fit their ideas; less dominant groups become the reality the ideas suggest. In other words, for the dominated groups, the idea is the reality. What is said and thought about them becomes the reality of their lives, because those who have the power to say and think also have the power to construct the world in that image. (Sampson, 1993, p.27)

Vital for all discourse is to know who controls the knowledge and whose voice gets heard. With *300*, the White dominant group succeeded, once again, in exercising its power by implementing a positive representation of Whites as modern and civilized, and at the same time, a negative representation of Others as backward and barbarians.

In the struggle to "re-create the self in the world of travel" (Bhabha, 1990, p. 4), and move from the margins to the center, "Iranian" became a too-dangerous identification card, and Farsi was a picture one could not afford to put on the card and show in public. Farsi was taken into hiding in the private sphere of homes and cultural centers. In the private sphere, parents make an effort to inculcate their children with language and customs, but the message is clear that the heritage culture is not part of one's public life if one wishes to avoid negative experiences. However, for Iranians, whose history is tied with their language and whose "identity is defined by and intertwined with the Persian language" (Yarshater, 1993), Persian[12] is more than a

[12] "The Persian language, which is spoken throughout Iran and over large areas of Afghanistan, has historically been the lingua franca for the educated élite in the Indian subcontinent and is still taught there while it is the official language of Iran and part of Afghanistan and Tajikistan. Throughout history, Persian has always been the intellectual, academic, artistic, and cultural language of many countries ranging from Iran to Central Asia to northwestern India. It is also the language of Persian literature and poetry, both of which have a significant role in that part of the world. Its literature contains some of the finest epic and lyric poetry and its general intellectual and artistic contribution to the Islamic culture is unmatched. There is also an intimate alliance between Persian mysticism and Persian literature. The ecstasy of the soul with the Creator has been beautifully expressed in the famous works of Iranian Poets such as Rumi, Attar, and Hafiz, to name only a few. For Iranians, Persian literature is a way of communication whose beauty is untranslatable. Persian language is also associated with intense feelings of nationalism because Iranians have always been driven by a common pride in a culture and language that has evolved and has been refined over several thousand years, resisting many attacks by occupiers and colonizers."
Adapted from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Persian_language

linguistic tool facilitating comprehension. It is an intellectual and a cultural medium via which certain values, wisdom and knowledge are transmitted to future generations. As stated by Yarshater (1993), the editor of *Encyclopedia Iranica*, Farsi is "the chief carrier of the Persian world view and Persian culture…a reservoir of Iranian thought, sentiment and values, a repository of literary arts: It is only by loving, learning, teaching and above all enriching that the Persian identity may continue to survive" (pp.141-142).

Equally, if not more important, Persian, in the discourse of Iranian history, has been used as a means of resistance toward occupying and invading forces. During numerous attacks and invasions by Arabs, Ottomans,[13] Romans, and Greeks, Iranians have repeatedly proved their devotion to the Persian language by maintaining it and resisting adoption of the languages of the occupiers. After the Arab conquest of the Persian Empire in the 7th century and during the 700 years of the reign of Arabs, the Arabic language was imposed as the primary language on the "subjects" throughout the whole of Persia and orders were placed to change the official language of the conquered people to Arabic. Some opposed these policies publicly, many resisted privately and there are many reports of Persian speakers being tortured due to their resistance (Frye & Zarrinkoub, 1975, p.46). The great Iranian poet, Ferdowsi,[14] is an example of such a model of resistance and is highly regarded and honored for his vow to compose a text ensuring the continuity of Iranian heritage and the Persian/Parsi/Farsi language. *Shahnameh (The Book of Kings)* is the national epic of Iran (Persia). It narrates the mythical and historical past of Iran from the "creation of the world" up until the country's

[13] The Ottoman Empire (1299-1923) –Late Ottoman and the modern Turkish

[14] Ferdowsi is renowned for his magnum opus *Shahnameh* (*The Book of Kings* or *The Epic of Kings*, also written *Shahnama*), written around 1000 AD. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ferdowsi

Islamization in the 7th century. The *Shahnameh* is composed of 62 stories, 990 chapters, and contains 60,000 rhyming couplets, making it more than seven times the length of Homer's *Iliad*. There have been a number of English translations, almost all abridged. Some experts believe the main reason the modern Persian language is more or less the same language as that of Ferdowsi's time more than 1000 years ago is due to the very existence of works like Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh,* which have had lasting and profound cultural and linguistic influence (adopted from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shahnameh). After 30 years' work, upon completion of his masterpiece, Ferdowsi closed the book with the following verse:

> *Basi ranj bordam dar in sal si,*
> *Ajam zende kardam bedin parsi*
> *Namiram as in pas ke man zendeam*
> *Ke tokhme sokhan ra parakandeam*
>
> I worked hard during these thirty years and endured a lot of pain
> I revived *Ajam*[15] (Iranians) with the Persian language.
> I shall not die since I am alive again,
> As I have spread the seeds of this language…

This verse is Ferdowsi's testimonial of refusal to give up Persian as a heritage language, equating the revival of Persian identity with the revival of Persian language.

Despite numerous struggles to avoid language loss throughout Iran's history, in the beginning of the 21st century, Iranians for the first time are witnessing a language loss

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[15] *Ajam* is an Arabic term primarily meaning non-Arabs, or in particular, non-Arabic-speakers. According to the political language of Islam, *Ajam* was originally used as a reference to denote those whom Arabs in the Arabian Peninsula viewed as "alien" or outsiders. The early application of the term included all of the peoples with whom the Arabs had contact including Persians, Greeks, Ethiopians, and the somewhat related Nabataeans. Over time the term became specialized and referred to Persians almost exclusively as an ethnic term…. During the early age of the Caliphates [Islamic rulers], *Ajam* was often synonymous for stranger. In some cases, it was considered a derogatory word…. In many Persian books postdating the Arab conquest, for instance the *Shahnameh* of Ferdowsi, the word is used to refer to Iranians and to the Persian language, in contrast to their Arab counterparts. There is no derogatory concept for this word in Persian literacy but sometimes pride. Adopted from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shahnameh

in the second generation after migration. A people who are well-known for their acclaimed classical poetry, a people whose lives are immersed in literature, a people who talk about everything from history and politics to love and morality through literature, is now faced with what Shamloo[16] calls *"yek nasle bee shensanameh"* -- a generation without identity -- who can only enjoy these writings in translation. "A population who on the whole, not just the educated elite, is well versed in literature -- from a baker, to shopkeeper, to taxi driver who whispers Omar Khayyam[17] under his breath" (Keshavarz, 2007) is now struggling to understand why its second generation in America, despite all these accomplishments and successes, has not been able to preserve its HL at a competent level.

Being part of an ethnic community with 26.2% of its population having a Master's degree or higher (the highest percentage of the 67 ancestry groups in a statistical study by the Iranian Studies Group at MIT), 56.2% with a Bachelor's degree or higher (second highest), and 90.8% with a high school diploma or higher (second highest), Iranians in the US are only seen through the lens of political tensions between the two governments and not through their accomplishments and contributions to this society. Thirty years after the Islamic Revolution of 1979 and its subsequent international dispersal, which produced major population clusters for whom this was the first time they

[16] Ahmad Shamloo (December 12, 1925 - July 24, 2000) was an Iranian poet, writer, playwright, and journalist. Besides his own extensive writings, he also translated many works from German and French into Persian. In 1984, he was nominated for Nobel Prize in Literature.

[17] Omar Khayyam (Nishapur, Persia, May 18, 1048 – December 4, 1131) was a Persian poet, mathematician, philosopher, and astronomer. He is Iran's best-known poet in other countries, and for the quatrains (*rubaiyaa*s) in *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*, popularized through Edward Fitzgerald's translation. His substantial mathematical contributions include his *Treatise on Demonstration of Problems of Algebra*, which gives a geometric method for solving cubic equations by intersecting a hyperbola with a circle. He also contributed to calendar reform and is suggested to have proposed a heliocentric theory well before Copernicus. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Omar_Khayyám

had lived for a long time outside Iran, Iranian immigrants as political survivors and historical witnesses of "unhomely moments" desire to be recognized for "somewhere else and something else'" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 9).

Significance of the Study

> *The next generation has to be the best global citizens they can be. You can't be a global citizen and be monolingual. (Friedman, 2006, p. 340)*

The significance of systematic research into socio-psychological and socio-institutional/political patterns of HL loss and maintenance within Iranian communities in the United States lies in its contribution of relating the social, psychological, political, and historical backgrounds of the people involved, in an effort to explain the complex and contradictory factors that inform their lives. Unlike most studies on heritage language, this research will investigate HL loss and its effect on one of the most recent linguistic minority groups in the US by analyzing the experiences of a largely underrepresented linguistic group in the area of education and linguistics. The irony is that, at the same time, this is an overrepresented group in media reports and politics both before and since 9/11.

So far, few studies, indirectly related, have been conducted on Iranian communities in the US with regard to language, and those are self-reported surveys, which only give census data of the population and its communicative language use and knowledge.[18] These studies, though very useful, fail to account for and explain the impact of the socio-psychological environment on the Iranian and Iranian-American

[18] See, for instance, the study by the Iranian Studies Group at MIT.

communities and their relation to the socio-institutional/political environment surrounding the dominant and HL communities.

This study seeks to investigate and analyze the interplay of the factors involved in the processes of HL loss, maintenance, and development among Persian heritage language learners living in the United States by focusing on the narratives and experiences of second-generation Iranian-American college students. The present study is timely; its significance lies in its contribution to the knowledge of the Iranian-American community, historically one of the most controversial immigrant groups in the US, by examining the effects of socio-psychological and socio-institutional/political environments on HL loss, development, and maintenance in the context of a society with a dominant language and culture.

It also provides a socio-historical basis for enriching immigrant groups' HL development and maintenance, ideally leading to intergenerational language transmission, by identifying factors affecting language loss and maintenance. This will further contribute to a deeper understanding of the existing theories and hypotheses related to HL education, foreign language education, bilingual education, and the education of culturally diverse students in US. Finally, this study will raise general consciousness of the connections between language use and unequal power relations where one language is assigned a superior position by those who have the power of defining reality for everyone and the power to make it stick.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

> *All the fundamental and essential acts in human life are brought about by social stimuli in conditions of a social environment. If we know only the physical component of the reaction, we still understand exceedingly little about a human act. (Voloshinov, 1973, p. 22)*

Immigrant parents and grandparents in the United States of America may consider it imperative that their children and grandchildren learn and use the language of their heritage; however, outside pressures ranging from practicality to politics, and inside concerns such as youngsters' attitude toward the heritage culture and desire to assimilate into the dominant culture tend to act against these well-intentioned families. This makes it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to preserve the HL beyond the third generation. This chapter will review some of the literature containing the wisdom gleaned from other studies, to set the stage for the East Coast University study with Iranian-American youth by demonstrating how other groups have managed or failed to manage the delicate balance between assimilation into the dominant group and preservation of the heritage language and culture, with the goal of all-encompassing integration and additive bilingualism. This will advance my argument that in the US, there have always been socio-psychological and socio-institutional/political factors that drive learners to make strategic and deliberate choices whether to use or eschew their heritage languages and

cultures. Immigrants and indigenous peoples walk a tightrope, balancing between the desire to integrate into a dominant culture and the desire to preserve their heritage. The reasons for both choices are many, and it takes a great deal of effort to achieve that balance. Because the outside factors affecting linguistic and cultural choices are always in flux, the challenges to HL speakers are even greater. The historical status of a given minority among the majority group as well as the changing political discourse affecting the relationship between the two are major forces to which individuals and families respond. They often choose to hide their heritage language and culture in order to avoid persecution, even in a country that purportedly bases its most fundamental principles on the idea that persecution must be prevented through tolerance. How immigrants and indigenous peoples are treated by societal institutions, ranging from the federal government to neighborhood schools, also affects the choices they make with regard to their languages and cultures. Together with all of these variables, individuals' own feelings toward their heritage language and culture and their intersections with other factors will directly affect their willingness to pursue and preserve it, or their preference to assimilate into the dominant culture.

Numerous researchers have looked at this process from various standpoints, each focusing on one key factor affecting HL loss and maintenance – socio-psychological, socio-historical, socio-institutional or attitudinal concerns -- and each using different methods and measurements. This study at East Coast University seeks to add to that knowledge by making a qualitative analysis of how all of these factors affect one over-represented but under-studied group: Second-generation Iranian-American young people attending a diverse university in a major metropolitan area. The dominant American

society with its adherence to one of the most widely used languages in the world puts immigrants and their progeny at serious risk of losing who they have been in their need to become something new. This study and the literature on which it draws show the pitfalls and pinnacles that are possible depending on the interaction of all of those internal and external factors.

This literature review will also serve build understanding of the homogenizing effects of the English language in the United States and provide a basis for how heritage languages can be maintained in the face of a dominant and powerful language, making English learning additive and not subtractive (Lambert, 1975; Valenzuela, 1999). Simultaneously, the existing literature will serve to deconstruct the ideological beliefs and values of a society that trusts in democracy but advocates monolingualism as a means of achieving it, creating a false promise of realizing the American dream thorough acquiring knowledge of the English language while abandoning heritage languages. In this way, readers can approach the East Coast University study with a general understanding of how various factors interact to produce a range of results with heritage languages for immigrant groups.

Socio-Institutional/Historical Factors

Underlying Linguistic Ideologies

> *…[A]ssimilate and amalgamate these people [immigrants] as a part of our American race, and…implant in their children, so far as can be done, the Anglo-Saxon conception of righteousness, law and order, and our popular government. (Cubberly, 1909, quoted in Skutnabb-Kangas, 1995, p.157)*

The United States has always claimed for its motto *E Pluribus Unum* – From Many, One. This can be taken in two ways – either that many different peoples can

coexist as one nation *(pluribus)*, or that many different peoples must be blended together into one culture *(unum)*. In this section, I will argue that while America's forefathers and certain government documents since their time have claimed to espouse the first view, it is the latter which has become common practice – and in some cases, was the overtly stated plan for the achievement of nationhood. An examination of the United States' linguistic ideology throughout its history reveals that the United States has always been caught up between the assimilationist *(unum)* and the pluralist *(pluribus)* ideologies (Le Page & Tabournet-Keller, 1985). The discourses between these two ideologies have extended from the political arena, been translated into polices, and penetrated into the underlying values and beliefs of individuals, families, society and its institutions. A continuum of ideological discourses encompassing the two extremes of *unum* and *pluribus* has always been present throughout the United States' history, reflecting the tension that exists around the topic of immigrant languages (Le Page & Tabournet-Keller, 1985). The ongoing political debates around "English only" and "English as the official language" schemes of the US are examples of the assimilationist ideology. Discussions about multilingualism, bilingual education, and heritage language maintenance are examples of the pluralist ideology.

One popular myth is that the United States has always been a monolingual society threatened by intruders. Beginning with indigenous peoples and as each successive wave of immigrants arrived on American shores, the dominant society, which was comprised primarily of northern European descendants, developed xenophobic stereotypes about the newcomers. Through it all has run the notion that the latest wave of immigrants or colonized peoples were "savages or senile people" who needed to be civilized, and that

their refusal or inability to learn English marked them as inferior to English-speaking Americans (Crawford, 1989). An examination of historical facts, however, shows that America has never been monolingual, no matter how the dominant group may have wanted it so. When the Europeans first came to America, the indigenous people living here were already speaking a multitude of languages, of which only half – an estimated 175 – of indigenous languages exist today (Krauss, 1996). Many different languages were also brought by the Europeans, which added to the linguistic diversity. Crawford (1989) states that, "In 1664…at least eighteen tongues were spoken on Manhattan Island, not counting Indian languages" (p. 19). Despite the most important document in US history being written in English, the fact is that when the original 13 colonies won their independence from England in 1776 and became the United States, one of the main characteristics of the land was multilingualism (Kloss, 1997).

Indeed, through the 18th century and by the middle of the 19th century, bilingualism was common in the US. Many schools had bilingual curricula, or cross-curricular instruction held exclusively in their own native tongues. Neither the United States' government nor any of its states formally adopted an official language, and no particular language was enforced at schools. Castellanos, in his chronicle of bilingual education in the United States, *The Best of Two Worlds*, explains, "…before the 1880s, the [locally controlled] structure of American public education allowed immigrant groups to incorporate linguistic and cultural traditions into the schools" (Crawford, 1989, p. 21). In other words, the decision on what language to choose for instruction was made by the local immigrants.

The basis for this decision was not concern about the cognitive and academic development of learners or the individual, psychological, and social advantages and disadvantages of bilingualism, but "ethnic politics" (Perlaman quoted in Crawford, p. 21). As Crawford (2000) puts it, "It is politics, not pedagogy, that determines how children are taught" (p. 3). The main concern at the time was not how or in which language children learn best, but how to become good Americans.

The *unum* ideology of linguistic assimilation in the United States goes as far back as 1750 when Benjamin Franklin, unable to communicate with and thereby influence German voters who had managed to keep their language through bilingual German/English language schooling, with the backing of the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge launched and promoted a project to replace German instruction with English (Crawford, 1989, p. 19). By 1850, with a dramatic increase in the number of immigrants from Eastern and Southern European countries as well as China, and later with the conquest of Northern Mexico (1848), the purchase of Alaska from Russia (1876), and the annexation of the Philippines, Puerto Rico, and several Pacific islands, the US government faced a large number of immigrants who came from different countries than previous groups and brought with them foreign languages, cultures, and religions (Crawford, 1992). These demographic changes brought about a whole new batch of stereotypes to excuse the distrust, domination and even hate of the newcomers. It alarmed politicians and intellectual leaders who not only called for a restriction in immigration but also submitted legislation to ensure that new immigrants had a command of the English language before they could be qualified for citizenship. A new definition of "American" was invented and the melting pot ideology was transformed into an ideology of forced

assimilation, including linguistic assimilation. The result, eventually, was complete loss of cultural identity once the immigrants had to give up the old ways and learn to speak and be literate in English (Crawford, 1992; Donato, 1997). In Gramscian language, a non-English speaking citizen became the equivalent of a "bad subject."

In 1885, the belief that knowledge of the English language was essential for all to understand their duties and obligations as citizens led to an action by the government and religious and philanthropic associations, especially in the eastern states, to start various projects to ensure the next generation of Americans would be able to speak English. They assumed that through the spread of English, the laws and institutions of the land would be more firmly established and widely disseminated, and a feeling of unity would develop among different peoples. So, cultural and linguistic homogeneity was enforced in many states, in addition to the new Spanish-speaking colonies of Puerto Rico and the Philippines and the territories acquired by US from Spain, Mexico, and Russia (Gonzalez & Aront-Hopffer, 2003). For example, the implicit guarantee for Spanish-language publications, also entailing protection of language, signed under the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo that ended the Mexican-American War in 1849, was disposed of when California's constitution was rewritten in 1878, making California one of the nation's first "English-only" states (Crawford, 1992; Donato, 1997).

In 1879, the project of civilizing native tribes of Indians, whose age-old cultures were stereotyped as savage and backward nationwide, took place by forcing their children off reservations into boarding schools, forcing them to speak no other language but English and "if students were caught speaking native tongues or 'barbarous languages,' they would be punished, like the victims of Nazi concentration camps" (Dog

& Erdoes, 1991, p. 28). Ostensibly in the best interest of the Indian, this policy was strictly enforced among various schools on and off of Indian reservations. When resistance started and several tribes wanted to establish their own bilingual schools, the Bureau of Indian Affairs stepped in to close the schools (Crawford, 1989).

Through stereotyping of "Other" people and vilifying "Other" languages as a threat to national unity, linguistic homogeneity was enforced and played out everywhere from the Americanization project of Native Americans, Pennsylvanian Germans, Louisianan French (1803, after the Louisiana Purchase), Californians, and the new Spanish-speaking colonies of Puerto Rico, where laws establishing English from the end of the Spanish-American War until 1948 resulted in an 84% drop-out rate (Crawford, 1989) and Philippines, and the territories acquired by the US from Spain, Mexico, and Russia (Gonzalez & Aront-Hopfer, 2003). The "Americanization" projects did not favor the *pluribus* approach; instead, the vilification of other languages and cultures juxtaposed with the glorification of the English language and American culture served as an important instrument in the establishment of the *unum* ideology, building structures of domination and subordination in the name of loyalty to America. One New York school superintendent stated, "Americanization would cultivate an appreciation of the institutions of this country [and] absolute forgetfulness of all obligations or connections with other countries because of descent or birth" (Crawford, 1989, p. 22). By forced language assimilation and exclusion of languages and cultures other than English from the mainstream, the assimilationists argued that those immigrants who insisted on maintaining their heritage languages and cultures would have split allegiances to the US and to their ancestral or symbolic land (Shain, 1999). They further stated that the

"purpose of a common language and culture is to unite a nation…. A single language [would serve] as a foundation for nationhood and multilingualism [would be] anti-American" (Buran quoted in Gonzalez & Aront-Hopfer, 2003, p. 222). In this quest for power, the "material interests such as social and economic supremacy were at the heart of the linguistic politics which normally lurk beneath the surface of public debate" (Crawford, 2000, p. 10). By educating children exclusively in the English language their thoughts, customs, and habits were molded and people were assimilated through sameness of language, and fused into one homogeneous mass based on northern European cultural values and mores. Proficiency in English became equal to political loyalty and Americanism. Language restrictions were used as a surrogate for other unstated goals, such as religious intolerance, economic advantage, political oppression, and racial discrimination (Crawford, 1989). Becoming proficient in Standard English and conforming to values and norms brought from northern Europe served as prerequisites for partial inclusion and a key for limited access to the American Dream. "Becoming a member of a discourse community and developing discourse competency requires having linguistic knowledge, as well as knowing how to act, talk, interpret and think according to a particular cultural or social group," observes Gutierrez (1995). Language became a political tool and "English" became the language of power. As each group assimilated and their languages and cultures fell by the wayside, the stereotypes and negative representations that accompanied their arrival in this country would finally begin to fade, just in time for the next batch of strangers to arrive.

The discourses between the two opposing ideologies of assimilation and pluralism have led to some national and state policies attempting to make English official. The

United States has no formally declared official language, but at the turn of the 21st century, 29 of the 50 States, encompassing the majority of the population of the US, have implemented official English laws. English has remained the official language of government, law, commerce and trade, and education not only nationwide, but increasingly throughout the world, maintaining its position as the undisputed super-language of power and status.

Today, the implicit fear that minorities will not learn English and the regressive and xenophobic discussions on immigrant languages as a threat that can lead to a division of nation or loyalty to other countries are still at work to create an atmosphere of fear, distrust and even hatred of other people and other languages. Negative representation of minority groups in the media and arts feed these fears, from skewed news reports to attempts at comedy by making fun of people's accents. Attempts to restrict languages other than English and coercive measures toward assimilative conformity of immigrants predominate, even as different programs and models of language maintenance and development (English plus, immersion programs, transition program, etc.) are used to cope with language barriers. The ideology that points fingers at language diversity as a cause of ethnic hostility and political separatism and the belief that language is America's strongest social glue are but the surface of discussions. The unspoken is that linguistic diversity is a threat to the core of the "American" power structure, reaffirming the superior position of the English language over any minority.

A critical examination of the socio-institutional environment affecting linguistic practices and attitudes in the US shows how the underlying ideology of a society and the context within which heritage languages exist are of particular significance in their

development. The outcome of the linguistic hegemony evident throughout the history of the United States, from the "Americanization" project through forced assimilation of native Americans to recent "English only" laws -- both Wisconsin and Illinois have English-only school laws on the books (Crawford, 1989) -- has been production of a society of "Americans," who are for the most part monolingual,[19] despite the rising trend in immigration and wealth of linguistic and cultural resources stored in the indigenous and immigrant communities. Whereas evidence indicates that in most countries around the world bilingualism and multilingualism are demanded and given a high value (Linguistic Society of America, 1996),[20] the United States with its ideologies of forced assimilation and by constructing "Other" languages and cultures as deviant from the norm, has created a society in which the material and social interests and values of the dominant group are protected at the expense of the loss of immigrant and heritage languages.

Socio-Psychological Factors

Instrumental Factors

> *English is not merely an instrument for communication, it is a value one identifies with for the social functions the language is seen as serving, its utility in the linguistic market. (Phillipson, 1992, p. 5)*

In this study, Fishman's definition of heritage language will be used, according to which, heritage language may or may not be the learner's primary language. This allows

[19] The US Census of 2000 indicates that only nine % of the American population speaks two or more languages. http://www.census.gov/prod/2003pubs/c2kbr-29.pdf

[20] Statistics show that many people in the world speak more than one language (53% of Europeans speak at least two languages, people in Asia speak three or four languages, Africans speak at least one language besides English or French).

us to consider the benefits of bilingualism and HL maintenance as a useful "commodity" in the academic, social, and business circles of the global and transnational world of today rather than looking at HL maintenance as a transitional phase only necessary for advancement to the "higher" phase of English mastery. I will argue that the opportunity, or lack thereof, for practical use of a heritage language is a major determining factor for its survival in the midst of a dominant society that pressures the heritage community to shift to English.

There is a vast amount of literature documenting the numerous instrumental, practical advantages of HL maintenance including academic, social, and economical benefits (Cummins, 1989; Krashen 1996; Lambert & Tucker, 1972; Willig, 1985). At the same time, research indicates that heritage language maintenance has no adverse effects on the development of the dominant language and there is no academic loss due to HL instruction, or bilingualism, for that matter. In fact, the opposite is true: Being bilingual in HL and English facilitates learners' acquisition and communicative proficiency in subsequent languages (Cummins & Mulcahy, 1978), improving learners' cognitive development and academic performance and promoting respect for the languages and cultures of both heritage and dominant group (Bialystock & Hakuta, 1994; Cummins, 1983; Zentella, 1997).

Numerous studies have demonstrated the educational, cognitive, socio-cultural, economic, and "cultural capital" that comes with additive bilingualism (Lambert, 1975) -- proficiency in HL as well as the dominant language of a society (Bialystock & Hakuta, 1994; Cummins, 1983; Fantini, 1985; Hakuta, 1986; Zentella, 1997). There are many empirical findings on the cognitive effects of both a well-developed heritage language

and English language development, and ultimately production of bilingual literacy (Cummins, 1983; Lambert & Tucker, 1972; Yeung, Marsh, & Suliman, 2000). Cloud, Genesee and Hamayan (2000), for instance, have indicated a strong positive relationship between social and cognitive development of learners and bilingualism or HL maintenance, on an individual as well as on a collective level.

More than 100 empirical studies conducted in the past 30 years demonstrate a positive relation between additive bilingualism and students' linguistic and academic growth. Shabita (2004), in her research on the academic achievements of a group of second-generation Japanese-American college students, showed the positive relationship between English language proficiency, Japanese language proficiency, and academic achievement. According to Shabita, the knowledge of Japanese language gave students access to enrichment educational material available in Japanese as well as granting them access to study circles in which the knowledge of Japanese language was a must.

Cummins and his colleagues have also reported academic advantages after conducting research on French-English bilinguals, Irish-English bilinguals, and Ukrainian-English bilinguals (Cummins, 1978; Cummins & Mulcahy, 1978; Cummins & Gulutsan, 1974). In a study on Ukrainian-English bilinguals in Edmonton, Cummins and Mulcahy (1978) analyzed and examined the metalinguistic development of Grade 1 and 3 students, and concluded that not only does additive bilingualism have no adverse effect on the development of a second language, but having a strong basis in a HL enhances the learning of the dominant language. The participants in the study who were students relatively fluent in their HL (Ukranian) were considerably better able to detect ambiguities in English sentence structures than students who were monolingual in the

dominant English. Similarly, Lee (2002) also conducted research on the correlation between HL maintenance and academic achievement in school. Lee studied 105 Chinese-American and Korean-American students who were born in the United States and were attending public schools in Southern California. He found that those who preserved their HL while learning the dominant English language had a much superior academic level of achievement to those who were monolingual in English.

Various studies also indicate the interdependency of literacy-related skills, academic skills, and knowledge across languages and the transfer of oral and literacy proficiency and cognitive skills between the two languages (Cummins 2000, 1983; Freeman, 1998; Krashen, 1999). To demonstrate the importance of literacy skills, Krashen (1999) cites strong evidence that literacy transfers across languages, thus stating that fostering literacy in a HL is a shortcut to literacy in another language. Those who read well in one language will read well in the second language; a student who, for example, understands history in one language will have a better chance of learning history taught in another language than a student without this background knowledge. Cummins (2000) further states that "transfer of academic skills and knowledge across languages is evidenced consistently by research literature on bilingual development" (Cummins, 2000).

Similarly to what Cummins and Krashen have found about skill transfer and fluent bilingualism, many studies have also documented that those students who have maintained their heritage languages while studying English learn much faster and ultimately outperform English dominant students in all subject areas by the fifth grade (Faltis & Hudleson, 1998; Freeman, 1998). For instance, many studies that evaluated

bilingual immersion programs found that English language learners attained a high level of achievement in comparison with national norms (Genesee, 1987; Willig, 1985). These studies conclude that in math, reading ability, and language proficiency achievement, bilingual immersion students significantly outperformed students enrolled in nonbilingual programs (Genesee, 1987; Willig, 1985). Of course, the perceived cognitive and academic advantages of bilingualism are not the only instrumental gains that could be achieved through HL maintenance.

Other instrumental benefits associated with HL maintenance are social and economic gains. For example, there are many studies that show HL maintenance has positive effects on social and psychological growth of individuals and results in more productive communication and a more satisfying relationship with family and ethnic group (Cho & Krashen, 1998; Kondo-Brown, 2002; Portes & Hao, 2002; Rumbaut, 1994; Wright & Taylor, 1995). There is also a vast amount of literature documenting the economic gains brought for the individual as well as society through maintaining and developing heritage languages. For the individual HL learner, studies show that HL knowledge and skills, when added to English language knowledge, result in an increased chance of employment and greater economic success. For example, many Canadian citizens, by being competent in two languages and cultures, have greatly enhanced their opportunities in the economic and employment market of Canada and the global market. Carreira (2003) in her studies illustrated the importance of bilingual/biliterate abilities in English and Spanish and concluded that, "The most lucrative and prestigious professional opportunities available in Spanish in the US require highly developed literacy skills in this language" (p. 70).

However, HL maintenance not only brings economic possibilities for individuals but also is an effective, efficient, and economical approach to train individuals in a new language. Campbell and Lindholm (1987), document this in a study by showing that by age 5, Korean immigrant children achieve higher proficiency in their native tongue than adult graduates of an intensive Korean-as-a-second-language program run by the US military. Swain and Lapkin (1991) reached similar results in a study on a Canadian French immersion program whose main goal was to improve French skills of English-speaking students for economic survival in multilingual Canada. In this research, focusing on 190 target-group students in grades 4 through 8, Swain and Lapkin showed that French heritage language children who participated in French immersion schools to improve their grasp of their HL outperformed students who were monolingual in English on a variety of grammatical measures of French. On oral and written measures of French, also, HL learners showed much more competency than Anglo students.

Overall, despite the large body of literature documenting the instrumental advantages of HL maintenance on academic, economic, and social opportunities, the three-generation language shift is very typical in societies with a dominant language and culture and it can be seen that English is preferred across the second and third generations in the United States. For that reason, many researchers have evaluated language attitude of young people toward their heritage language and culture to evaluate its impact as a deciding factor in HL maintenance, which will be discussed in the next section.

Attitudinal Factors

> *I am my language. Until I can take pride in my language, I cannot take pride in myself. (Anzaldua, 1999, p. 59)*

One hypothesis with regard to HL learning and language attitude states that positive attitudes toward a target language and group (either HL or the dominant language, as the case may be) results in a higher probability of success in learning that language; on the other hand, negative attitudes would lead to a lack of learning (Landry, Allard, & Théberge, 1992). Literature documents this positive relationship as found in numerous studies (Beaudrie & Ducar, 2005; J.S. Lee, 2002; Oh & Au, 2005; Shum, 2001; Sung & Padilla, 1998). In this section, I will argue that despite limited support for heritage languages in American schools and limited practical opportunities to use HL outside of the home, those individuals and families who have a positive attitude, who are interested and believe in the importance of their heritage language and culture, will make an effort to preserve them.

To examine the role of positive attitudes toward heritage language and heritage culture and their relation to HL learning, a number of researchers have focused on the linguistic attitudes and behaviors of HL learners in the university context by using student self-reported data (Beaudrie & Ducar, 2005; J.S. Lee, 2002; Oh & Au, 2005; Shum, 2001). Beaudrie and Ducar (2005), for example, examined attitudes, behaviors, and motivations of 20 beginning-level Spanish HL learners toward their language and culture through survey and follow-up interviews. They confirmed that there is a need for beginning level HL courses for those who have positive attitudes toward HL but lack any knowledge of it. In 2005, Oh and Au conducted a study on Spanish HL learners' socio-cultural background to measure their HL proficiency in Spanish. They surveyed 55

students and found that students' positive identification with heritage language and culture their positive identification with the heritage group had a positive impact on their Spanish pronunciation, and that their use of Spanish outside of class had a positive effect on their grammar. Shum (2001) did a study on 13 Asian-American graduate students who were HL learners, in an effort to understand factors involved in HL loss and maintenance. Through a survey, he revealed that those students who were interested in developing a cross-cultural identity with the heritage group were more interested in maintaining their heritage language and culture, and showed a stronger HL proficiency. Lee (2002) studied 40 second-generation Korean-American university-level HL learners. She concluded that there was a positive relationship between HL proficiency and a strong bicultural identity. Similarly, on the importance of the positive attitude toward the target language and language learning, Gardner and Lambert (1972) affirmed that learners' perception of the target language and the target language group is an important factor in identification with that group and adoption of its linguistic skills.

However, literature also shows that there are other factors that are important to consider. In a study of language attitudes in Canada, Lambert (1960) illustrated the difficulty and complexity of measuring language learning in terms of language attitudes. Lambert's matched guise technique is an indirect technique permitting a higher degree of introspection and privacy for the person interviewed, presumably leading to more spontaneous and sincere responses. The process involves recording a bilingual speaker reading a prepared text aloud; then the participants listen to the recordings and fill out a questionnaire to judge the speakers in terms of personality and character (1967). In this study, Lambert illustrated that some HL speakers present negative attitudes toward their

heritage language and heritage group while demonstrating high levels of proficiency in their HL. This study concluded that while the degree of exposure to language should not be overlooked, attitude also is an important factor in language learning. In other words, a heritage language speaker might show high levels of proficiency in the HL due to high levels of exposure to it, but might have negative attitudes toward the language and the group. It is not uncommon to find HL speakers who express rather negative attitudes toward their HL in the US context but who demonstrate high levels of proficiency, probably because the language is heard and used so much in their daily lives. Nevertheless, in spite of their insistence on the great significance of HL maintenance, due to social, cultural, economic, literary value of heritage languages, some people consistently use the dominant language with parents, siblings, and friends at home and in the larger community. It is hard to be motivated to use one's HL and live one's heritage culture when one feels stereotyped or even hated in the public sphere. Thus, the relationship between HL attitudes and HL proficiency is not always as simple as it looks.

Studies also show that the attitudes and behavior of the parents toward the HL have a strong impact on HL loss and maintenance in their children. Children may grow up learning their HL at home, and then when they start school, they are suddenly told to use English only. In an attempt to understand the role of sociolinguistic and attitudinal variables in HL loss and maintenance, Foley (1987) studied Spanish first- language children in Canada and substantiated that parents who had a positive attitude toward their language, who encouraged their children to use Spanish at home and who used Spanish themselves in various situations, had raised children with better HL literacy skills than those parents who did not provide them with such encouragement, who used Spanish

only to a limited extent and in limited situations. Kim (1992) also explored the importance of attitudinal factors while examining the HL maintenance of Korean-Canadian children in Toronto. He confirmed that the students' attitudes and the attitudes of their parents toward the Korean language had a direct positive relationship with their HL proficiency. He further found that their attitudes were directly related to perception of the ethnolinguistic vitality of the Korean community. Tse (2001), defines ethnolinguistic vitality as "the status and prestige of a language as seen from an individual's perspective as shaped by a host of social, political, cultural, and psychological influences" (p. 686). In other words, the attitude is not a simple reflection coming from inside but is very much affected by outside forces.

Along the same line of argument, Chumak-Horbatsch (1984) examined the HL attitudes of 10 Ukrainian families who believed in the development and maintenance of their Ukrainian language in their homes. In an examination of the linguistic interactions between children and parents, she recognized a differential language behavior and attitude when parents communicated with children on different subjects at home. For example, if a parent wanted to tell a child that dinner was ready, she might use the HL, but an algebra problem, they would figure out together in English. The results of the study led to the conclusion that different languages were used for different purposes and were assigned given values as English was the instrumental language of gaining knowledge of school and Ukrainian was the emotive language of conversation, which surely supported the development and maintenance of HL. However, the study also demonstrated that the children were aware, through their exposure to the English language at school and the larger society, that English carried a higher status than

Ukrainian. Therefore, the researcher concluded that the probability of proficiency maintenance in Ukrainian as an HL in Toronto seemed dismal.

To identify social factors that affect language choice and language use across various spaces and times, McGregor and Li (1991) conducted a research study on 150 Chinese university students. In order to ascertain the relationship between language choices and various situational factors, in particular conversational topics, physical settings, and interlocutors, they distributed questionnaires. The researchers utilized two analytic models: “Domain analysis” (Fishman, 1972) and “audience design” (Bell, 1984) and discovered that over a wide variety of topics including personal, family, entertainment, academic, political, and religious, the language of choice and frequency was Chinese. In very few cases, English was used for conversational and communicative purposes. Of course, an interesting observation was that this language choice between Chinese and English was also affected by the presence of a third party. For instance, McGregor and Li learned that when the interlocutor was a local Chinese of senior age, Chinese was the most frequent linguistic choice and when the interlocutors were not Chinese, the languages were mixed or only English was used. Therefore, the researchers concluded that the most important factors in language choice during interactions were audience factors and their identities and conversational topics and settings were subfactors of interlocutors, which is consistent with Bell's “audience design” theory.

Similarly to McGregor and Li (1991), Heller investigated the effect of identities of the audience on language choices by carrying out a study in a Toronto French-language school (1982, 1984). The goal was to discover the social factors that influence language choice and language use at school, and at the same time to discover what those

language patterns were and what they meant. The project was based on the hypothesis that language use in social interaction is a process of creating and exploiting linguistic resources in order to make sense of experience, and this includes the management of interpersonal relations and the accomplishment of tasks. What Heller observed was that students had the attitude that if a person wanted to be seen as a serious student who was willing and able to learn, one should speak English. In order to create that impression of a serious, smart learner, the students perceived the need to use English. Management of interpersonal relations with peers and accomplishment of tasks such as homework or projects also required the speaker to use English. Indeed, for this group, English was used most of the time and they found very little opportunity to use French. The students placed greater value on using English than on keeping their French, which altered their identities from HL learners to English speakers. For these reasons, language choice in interaction with peers and teachers was seen as contributing to the formation of a child's social identity.

To examine the correlation between attitudinal factors and language acquisition, Cummins, Lopes, and King (1987) conducted a large-scale study of 191 Grade 7 Portuguese-Canadian students. The results indicated that the HL, Portuguese, was used mainly in the home environment to communicate with parents and relatives, while English was used mostly for the higher-status educational and work- related activities outside the home. In other words, while knowledge and use of Portuguese was considered important for in-group activities related to home and family, English was elevated to a higher position as a language of academic, economic and social advancement in the dominant out-group world. Hornberger (1989), in her examination of language attitudes

and usage in relation to societal factors in Quechua-speaking communities and schools in Peru, concluded that the low value of Quechua and the higher status of Spanish in schools and community have great impact on HL maintenance.

For instance, Lerthirunwong-Diong (1989) conducted a study on the attitudes of Lao-speaking refugees in Canada towards HL maintenance and learning versus use of the English language. The finding was that the Lao community had a positive attitude toward the English language, which highly contributed to their high level of adjustment and learning of the language. However, the researcher also found that while the Lao community wanted to preserve their Lao identity through practice of their culture and language, and while that positive attitude and sense of Lao identity had the possibility of influencing the language shift, in practice, it did not seem to be a powerful enough factor. When juxtaposed with the power of the English language in a societal structure that was forcing them to shift, and perceiving no practical opportunity to use the HL, the low-prestige Lao language was yielding to the high-prestige English language. Lao was mainly used in religious gatherings and with family, while English was the preferred language of all other domains.

In most situations, the literature shows that a positive attitude toward one's HL is not a strong enough factor to withstand the power of a societal structure where one language has more value than the other. There are, however, some cases in the literature showing that within some communities, English might not be considered the only language of economic and social advancement. For example, while the Portuguese-Canadians in Cummins, Lopes, and King's study (1987) were working-class citizens of a low-status group in the societal structure of Canada, who had a limited choice of jobs

available to them, a different study by Cummins et al. (1997) indicated that the situation was quite different for Hong Kong immigrants in Toronto. These immigrants, who were middle-class professionals or entrepreneurs, had managed to develop a strong economy within their ethnic community. This had a great effect on their perception of their HL and their group's vitality, and led to more HL exposure and use in various contexts.

As demonstrated, the positive attitudes of learners and their parents toward a heritage language and culture will not be enough to maintain heritage languages in the face of a societal system which is predominantly monolingual with no HL support system. The majority accords little practical value to heritage languages while granting a position of superiority to the English language due to its promises of academic and economic success. In other words, even with a positive attitude toward a heritage language and culture, the practical uses of a minority language and unequal status factors with regard to language appear to create an extra edge over positive attitudes.

Integration/Identity Factors

> *Language has much more than a semiotic sense. … It has a rhetorical meaning and is capable of generating imagined communities and constructing identities. (Anderson, 1982, p. 54)*

Identity, as a socio-psychological factor, is so important that one cannot fully perform a social identity in a community without understanding its language. In order to integrate into a group and assume the intended identity, full knowledge of appropriate ways to interact through speech, behavior and even dress becomes necessary for membership in any community (Fishman, 1991).

To locate the intersection of language and identity, bicultural researchers Abu-Lughod and Kondo wrote about their experiences in Bedouin society and Japan, respectively. Initially, they were able to gain access to the communities because of their physical features that were similar to those of the target group, but later they discovered that they lacked cultural and linguistic competence necessary for integration. To emphasize the importance of thorough familiarity with a culture and language for integration, Kondo described herself as "someone who was racially Japanese but lacked cultural [and linguistic] competence" (1990, p. 11). Therefore, physical similarities, which were important at the beginning, were only a small part of identity when compared with the linguistic and cultural gaps that both researchers experienced as their studies proceeded.

In this section, I will show that an integrated identity goes far beyond the instrumental advantages of bilingualism. It involves individual and societal history; politics between the dominant and heritage groups; personal and family attitudes; and the desire and opportunity to integrate – to achieve that delicate balance that includes both the heritage and the dominant language, and blends elements of both cultures. By foregrounding integrational factors, we can now look at "the language learner as one who has a complex social history and multiple desires" and therefore "various reasons for investing or not investing in a language" (Norton, 2000, p. 10). The notion of investment into identity, which Norton defines as "a wider range of identities and an expanded set of possibilities for the future," takes it as a fact that when language learners speak, they are not only communicating with their target language speakers but also negotiating a sense of identity. A heritage language learner's investment into a language is also an

investment into identity, neither of which are fixed personality traits but constructs that capture the relationship of the learner to the larger social world that is constantly changing across time and space.

Throughout the literature, there is also extensive research documenting the importance of positive identification with the target language of a community in order to master its language (Cho, G., Cho, K.S., & Tse, L. Cho et al. 1997; Feuerverger 1991; Kondo-Brown 2000; Oketani 1997; Pao, Wong, & Teuben-Rowe 1997; Suzuki 2001; Tse 2000). To make this point, Schumann asserts that, "language learners will acquire a language only to the degree that they acculturate," adding that acculturation accounts for "the social and psychological integration of the learner with the target group (1978, p. 29). Hamers and Blanc (1989) further suggest that in order to learn the language of a community and attain fluency, one must develop a positive enough socio-cultural identity with that group. The researchers argue that the relationship between bilingualism and HL maintenance and cultural identity is reciprocal: Bilingualism and HL maintenance influences the development of cultural identity, which in turn influences the development of bilingualism and HL maintenance.

In addition, studies show that a supportive family environment for the second and subsequent generations (which may include people of mixed heritage) helps in the construction of positive attitudes toward heritage language and culture, as well as aiding in positive identification with the heritage group (Pao et al., 1997; Waters, 1999). In the study of two groups of mixed-heritage adults in the mid-Atlantic US, Pao et al. (1997) found that a family's positive or negative attitude toward the heritage language and culture had a considerable influence on bilingual students' positive or negative sense of

identity. Similarly, Waters (1999) pointed out that the ways in which second-generation individuals define themselves and their identities rest on how strongly their parents stressed their cultural heritage. According to Waters, parents who value their own language and culture tend to raise children who are proud of their heritage language and culture, which in turn, influences the children's perception of self and identity. Saville-Troike (1996) also emphasizes the importance of family attitudes toward heritage language and culture and their role in development of a positive identity in HL learners. Considering the cases of minority people who had lost their HL but had still inherited their parent' cultural heritage, Saville-Troike stated that family members' attitudes toward heritage language and culture, as well as language itself, were important in transmitting and maintaining a positive cultural identity.

However, the impact and role of attitudes of family members and the HL learners need to be examined in the context of other spaces and various power relations such as school and the larger community. Saville-Troike (1996) argues that school, as well as home, has a considerable influence on learners' socialization and sense of identity, and furthermore, schools are major socializing institutions through which students receive the values and beliefs of the sectors of society that hold power. For example, the language in which a school chooses to operate – typically Standard American English as opposed to Spanish, Creole or Korean, for example -- reflects "the power structure in the country [and] attitudes toward group identities" (p. 260).

The heritage language school can also be one of many different contexts in which an awareness of self is developed and supported (McNamara. 1997). He's (1997) study of a group of Chinese children at heritage language school shows the very example of how

an awareness of *being* Chinese is developed while learning Chinese language in the HL classroom. In his study, He conducted classroom-based research in which he investigated the process of identity construction and socialization for groups of Chinese children learning Chinese at a heritage language school. After analyzing verbal and nonverbal interactions between the students and the teachers during specific classroom activities, he concluded that the students not only learned the Chinese language but also learned "being Chinese in the classroom" (p. 218) by learning "what the teacher prefers as appropriate action, what roles are possible ... what counts as appropriate, acceptable, and legitimate classroom activity" (p. 218). For example, how to enter a room, how to address the teacher, and when to speak are all elements of classroom culture that may be different between English-language school and heritage language school. Both Schecter and Bayley's (1997) and He's (1997) studies offer good examples of how learning a HL while living in a different majority language context can influence the development and maintenance of ethnic identity for immigrant and minority children.

The contribution to the construction of identity by the larger community as a social context should not be underestimated. Lerthirunwong-Diong (1999), in her study of the Lao community, demonstrated this by measuring the desire of Laotian people to retain their unique identity through the practice of their culture and the use of their language, finding that the lack of practicality of using their language in a society pressuring them to shift to the dominant English was a decisive factor in HL maintenance and development. Her study revealed that the interplay of the two factors resulted in eventual HL loss when the need to fit in with the dominant society overbalanced the desire to preserve the heritage culture. Her findings revealed that the same also was true

for the parents, where practicality had the upper hand over identity. Children displayed an inferiority complex with regard to their ethnicity and saw little practical value of speaking Lao in society, reflecting fairly advanced stages of language shift. Believing that the attitudinal and integrational profile of the community determines the destiny of its language, the researcher concluded that Lao would fast become a dying language in Toronto unless something happened to slow the shift already in progress.

To analyze the interplay of socio-psychological factors such as attitudes and sense of identity with the socio-institutional factors of language ideology and power relations and their impact on HL maintenance, Hornberger (1989) conducted a study on Quechua-speaking communities and schools in Peru to investigate how Quechua and Spanish were used, valued, and influenced in school and community, and how they were affected by language ideologies within the structure of society reflected through its educational polices. In her study, which was both ethnographic in its approach due to its attention to language in cultural context, and at the same time, socio-linguistic in its consideration of bilingual education in the context of language planning and language maintenance, she concludes that "the things outside the schools matter even more than the things inside the schools" (1989, p. 18). She argued that Quechua language cannot be maintained in a context of historical oppression and current language polices, and concluded that there was a need for Peru's education reform and social change.

In general, self-reported data taken from HL learners show that attitudinal and identity factors are influenced by negative external factors deeply entrenched in institutions such as school, producing different power relations. These factors are reflected in the form of rejection of the heritage language and culture, and unwillingness

to use the HL (Kondo, 1999; Krashen, 1998; Tse, 2000). In this regard, identity and the context in which the identity is enacted are not two separate categories, but related. Gee (1996) points out that one's identity is enacted through a three-way simultaneous interaction among social and cultural group membership, a particular language or mixture of languages, and a particular context. Fairclough (2001, 1992) frames the use of language as an interactional relationship, involving struggle within society. Linguistic phenomena are social phenomena of a special sort, and vice versa. As such, linguistic phenomena are also reflective of power relations within a society. When individuals speak to one another, they draw upon a set of social assumptions that give meaning to the interaction. As stated by Fairclough (2001), "such assumptions are ideologies [which] are closely linked to power because the nature of ideological assumptions…depend on the power relations" (p. 2).

By moving away from the one-dimensional view of instrumental advantages of HL maintenance and by examining the intersection of socio-psychological and socio-institutional factors within the contexts of various representations and discourses, HL maintenance is understood as a dynamic condition which is reflected through different experiences of HL learners in various spaces and times, affected by the accumulated power and authority, or lack thereof, in a language. By treating language as an instrument of power in a society, rather than a neutral element to be gained for instrumental advantages, HL maintenance and the complexity of identification with a specific language and group will be shown not only as a struggle toward individual competency, but also as a matter of one's agency and attitude toward language, and responses to social and contextual demands based on the perceived value of a language community and its

members at any specific time and place. By examining and analyzing the complex interplay of various socio-psychological and socio-institutional/political factors, which affect the relationship between a majority and a minority language and culture in a geographically multilingual and multicultural setting, we can abandon the quest for an instrumental theory of language and language learning and education, and its componential analysis of language proficiency and acquisition. Instead, we may concentrate on the contexts in which a language identity is enacted.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The first section of this chapter provides a theoretical framework that relates HL loss and maintenance to the concepts of identity, performances of identity, and desire to assume an identity, together with the intersections, connections, complications, and implications of these concepts when juxtaposed with institutional discourses and representations, and power relations between minority and majority languages. The second section presents an overview of the epistemological and methodological rationale for the selection of methods to be used for the study, followed by an outline of the participants, the instruments employed for data collection, a description of the rationale for data analysis, and a discussion of the researcher's reflexivity.

Theoretical Framework

> *We would be better off if everyone was bilingual and had a multicultural consciousness; we would be better people if we had multiple perspectives and languages. (Eugene Garcia quoted in Moraes, 1996, p. 61)*

The English language has the power to be subtractive; because it is so pervasive and the societies that use it are so powerful, English language learning and use can and do take away from the practice of other languages. In the geographically multilingual and multicultural, yet ideologically monolingual and monocultural societies where it is

predominant, English has the effect of homogenizing the various peoples who learn to use it. Through the complex interplay of socio-psychological and socio-institutional/political factors, English affects HL loss and maintenance even to the extent that it fosters monolingualism. Monolingualism transforms identity, upsetting the individual's delicate balance between the world of the heritage and the world of the dominant society. In this section, I will argue that the discourses that surround individuals shape identity, including the choices they make about language use and maintenance, and that individuals actively participate in the construction of identity through its performance within institutional discourses, all of which is further defined by unequal power relations in production and reproduction of dominant discourses, and representation of the Other.

Identity, Language and Discourse

I am neither Christian nor Jew, neither Zoroastrian nor Muslim,
I am not from east or west, not from land or sea,
I am not from the world, not from beyond,
Not from heaven and not from hell.
I am not from Adam, not from Eve,
Not from paradise and not from Ridwan. [21]
My place is placeless,
My trace is traceless,
I have chased out duality, lived the two worlds as one.
One I seek, one I know, one I see, one I call.
~ Rumi, 13th century Persian poet and philosopher

Rumi here talks of being free of place, space, religion and time, integrated instead within the self. When one is suspended between two worlds, it becomes difficult, but not impossible, to negotiate a comfortable sense of identity. Uncertainty about which

[21] *Ridwan* in Arabic means *Jannah* or Paradise or the angel in charge of maintaining Paradise. The verse can be interpreted, "I am not from any origin story."

language to use and in what situations can cause great disquiet and disconnectedness for the individual, the family and the community. The harder, but worthwhile, goal to achieve is a comfortable balance between both worlds. This section examines the concept of identity as a site of strategic contestation and an important unit of analysis in HL loss and maintenance by highlighting the contextual, historical, and political aspects of identity construction and its effect on HL learners' discourses and practices.

The field of education uses two contrasting models of identity. One is based on the "Hegelian essentialist model, [adopted by the grand narratives of identity] of going forward to meet that which we always were" (Hall, 1991, p. 47), as a monolithic entity rooted in absolute essentialism, with every identity having certain "essential" elements to be detailed through common and distinct traits. This model presupposes the existence of "the idea of one, shared culture, a sort of collective 'one true self'.... reflecting common historical experiences and shared cultural codes which provide groups as 'one people,' with stable, unchanging and continuous frames of reference and meaning beneath the shifting divisions and vicissitudes of our actual history" (Hall, 1996, p. 69). The problem with this model of identity is that it not only negates the individuality of people within a group by putting them all in one category and presuming they share common desires (for instance, in the case of HL learners, the desire to learn HL in order to gain instrumental advantages), but it also fails to acknowledge the ever-changing nature of identity through the passage of time and in different contexts, histories, and politics. The Hegelian essentialist model might be good to explain the general characteristics of a community at a fixed point in time, but it cannot account for individual differences and situations across time and space, histories and politics.

The second model of identity proposed by poststructural and postcolonial theorists, conceptualizes identity as always multiple, nonlinear, flexible, relational and incomplete. Identity in this model is always already present as one term of the binary -- One superior, Other inferior -- and also constantly under erasure, in the process of disruption of the hierarchy, and hard to define by common and distinct traits (Derrida, 1974; Foucault, 1980, 1979, 1978; Grossberg, 1996). As an example, this model, which explains the identities of people in multicultural, multilingual societies, assumes that identities are no longer constructed within isolation; no longer is there a deep primordial self or one that is that is not changing, not shifting, not multiplying, multiplied and contradictory (Hall, 1991). Rather than treating identities as a collection of observable cultural and ethnic features with a foundational origin, history, and politics, identities in this model are in the process of "becoming rather than being; not who we are or where we come from, so much as what we might become, how we have been represented and how that bears on how we might represent ourselves" (Hall, 1996, p. 4).

By adopting the second model proposed by poststructural and postcolonial theorists in order to understand how the participants in the study negotiate their identities, the framework I consider relevant and the interpretations I draw upon will be informed by the concept of identity as multiple and nonunitary, changing across time and space and historical and political contexts in a dynamic process, as sites of struggle that make boundary maintenance problematic (Barth, 1969; Gee, 2001; Norton, 2000). From this standpoint, language is more than a collection of words and rules of grammar or an instrument of communication: It has great impact on peoples' identities. There is an inextricable and codependent linkage between language and identity (Fishman, 1999,

1985; Gudykunst, 1988; Kouritzin, 1999; Noels, Pon, & Clement, 1996; Norton, 2000; Wong-Fillmore, 2000, 1991). Benedict Anderson in his book, *Imagined Communities* (1982), emphasizes that language has more than a semiotic sense and is more than an identity marker. It has a rhetorical meaning, he proposes, which is capable of forming unique identities and imagined communities. From this angle, we can criticize all forms of representations, identities, and semiotics that claim transcendental and transhistorical status (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1993). The problem with the understanding of identity as an "essence" that happens "once and for all" (Hall, 1989, p. 73), neglecting social, historical, and political factors is that it allows us to assume that boundary maintenance is simple and that people live in a "world of separate people, each with their [different] culture and each organized in a society which can be legitimately isolated for description as an island to itself" (Barth, 1969, p. 11). Such an approach fails to recognize that people's identities cannot be strategically instrumentalized for the interests of certain groups. For example, when the US tries to borrow Iranians' language identities in the interest of national security, it overlooks the fact that the request affects other aspects of identity – socio-psychological aspects in particular -- regardless of whether the individual agrees to participate or rejects the offer.

With a theoretical discussion of identity as multiple and flexible, constructed across time and space, we can move away from a primordial, preconceived view of identity in which difference manifests itself not as a condition existing, but as a factor operating within the larger system of power relations. Approaching identity as a construction allows us to ask questions as to how HL learners' identities are produced and reproduced through discourse, how they are discursively positioned and who benefits

from these classifications. Fairclough (2001) defines discourse as "language as a form of social practice determined by social structures, [which] has effects upon social structures, as well as being determined by them" (p. 14). Hall (1996) accounts for discourse as a medium that represents and constructs identity through the "narrativization of the self" (p. 4), "ideologically shaped by power relations in social institutions and society as a whole" (p. 14). Each individual participates in the construction of a personal narrative, in which relations with other people and with society constantly work to build and shape identity. Gee also refers to discourse identity which neither comes naturally, nor is it enacted by institutions; rather, it is constructed actively in discourse or in dialogue with other people in societal institutions. In the process of narrativization through discursive practices, self is continuously differentiated from others through interaction with individuals and institutions. This "difference" should not be interpreted as an antonym to the word "similarity" because such interpretation assumes that "difference" precedes the formation of identity, rather than being constituted through narrative function of discourse in the context of political, historical, and power relations (Hall, 1996).

By adopting Said's as well as Bhabha's (1994) use of the term "difference," and by employing Butler's analysis of the word "difference" as being related to "subordination," it is possible to spotlight problems with the binary view of the self and the Other, in which the latter is defined by negativity. In his famous work, *Orientalism*, Said (1978) gives an in-depth analysis of how "Orient," by which he means the peoples of North Africa and the Middle East, is narrated as being different and the binary opposition to the West, or Occident. The narrative is in the form of being "different" from the superior image of the occident and seen as the occident's Other. Through

"Othering" (Grossberg, 1996), "Orient" is constituted by the West as "timeless" [having no concept of time], "strange" [odd, bizarre, weird] with no "rational normality," "feminine" [submissive] as opposed to the "masculine" West, and "degenerate" [lazy, weak, lustful, immoral] (Said, 1978). This *"Othering"* arises out of misconception and creates stereotypes and misrepresentation.

In the case of Iranian-American identity, difference does not just translate into "dissimilarity." It gets loaded with baggage that is, most of the time, too dangerous to carry; it is generated precisely in the contexts of the politics around "terrorism" and "Islamism." In opposition, surface terms such as "free," "civilized," "patriot," and "Christian values" are not neutral; In fact, they are central to the production and reproduction of hegemony and maintenance of power relations, producing an unmarked category while the Other is constructed as inferior.

Bhabha's (1990) understanding of difference is also useful in the sense that it takes subjectivity as the center of the argument, which encompasses not only the notion of "individuality" but also that of "productivity." Bhabha (1994) conceptualizes the possibility for the subject to be repositioned through a process of identification with difference rather than with lack, thus using a Derridian deconstructionist critique to disrupt the positioning of the subject always already within ideology and processes of signification. Bhabha weaves together various theories of signification, subjectivity, and ideology, returning always to pass through the same theme: The negotiation of difference can be liberating for those caught in oppressive situations. When the subject begins to embrace difference, it becomes possible to negotiate an individual identity that is not anchored to either world, and the subject triumphs over stereotype, misconception and

misrepresentation by demonstrating naturally that none of those imposed identities fits. Thus, theory of identity is taken in a way that does not privilege transcendental terms and hierarchies; rather it looks at the formation of the identity as a negotiation of difference, which refuses boundaries and classifications. Bhabha sees this as "non-Hegelian dialectic," one that does not sublate or synthesize difference into a higher term, but values difference for itself (1994, p. 126). In this negotiation, those linked to a heritage language ancestry, rather than accepting identification and classification by social and identity markers of language and culture, which in turn would put them in an unequal structure of power relations constrained by material conditions, search for identities that move them away from unequal status relations and toward their own subjective balance.

Drawing on Grossberg's logic of subjectivity (1996), contending that everyone has some degree of subjectivity and exists in the world as a subject, it is not the difference itself, but particular positions and imposed identities as lived conditions that enable or constrain the possibilities of experiences for those who occupy unequal power positions. It is through these subjectively experienced conditions that the space for articulations of cultural difference, as Bhabha calls it, the "third space" (1994, p. 36), is created. It is the "third space" because it is the combination of two or more cultures, two or more languages, and two or more belief systems. The third space is where self meets the Other, the space that is neither one, nor the Other, but somewhere in between (Bhabha, 1994). It is a personal space, which is both found and created, a space which both joins and separates through the play of difference ensuring that "the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 37). This space is "effective because it uses the subversive, messy mask of camouflage" refusing to be

subjugated in the "master/slave" binary position (Bhabha, 1994, p. 26). Third space identities have the possibility of collapsing the differences "making us aware that our political referents and priorities . . . are not there in some primordial, naturalistic sense" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 26). Grossberg (1996) uses terms such as "hybridity" and "fragmentation" to emphasize that the third space is between two or more competing identities within a person, implying "the multiplicity of identities and positions within any apparent identity" (p. 91). The unpredictability of the third space is what enables the possibility of hybridity (Bhabha, 1994; Spivak, 1990). This space is what Rumi calls a "placeless place," a "traceless trace" where there are no fixed dualities, where differences no longer only separate but also join, and where the separation between two worlds becomes blurry as though they are one.

The product of this "placeless place" is ambiguous, a hybrid, the "third space," a product of balancing and blending in between, making identity reading complicated because the subject no longer ascribes to the imposed view of a classified and divided world of binaries. On the contrary, identities are formed and performed: They are socially constructed and historically, geographically and culturally specific. Third space identities, having no fixed shapes or forms, are negotiated, translated, metamorphosed, and reproduced (Bakhtin, 1981) within and through social and historical conditions and power relations. Who and what "I" am is who and what "I" have become. In this becoming, identities are formed and performed. Third space identities defy the assumptions that come from either end of the continuum.

Identity and Performance

Given the postmodern contention of the situatedness of the self (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1993), "performances" of identities within and through multifarious, transmuting, and contradictory discourses and linguistic practices are informed by history, politics, memory, language, culture, and power relations (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1993; Bucholtz, 1995; Gee, 2001; Hooks, 1992).

This implies that those caught up in the systems of unequal identity reproductions, rather than accepting a subordinate position and the hierarchically superior position of the dominant Other, by constructing third space identities, begin to challenge the "previous state of the relations of power" (Bourdieu, 1994, p. 222). Conscious of the structural position in which HL learners' identities are located and the relation that has been ascribed to their identity where a certain language, culture, and ethnicity situates the self in an inferior position, they refuse to be recognized as one or the Other. Free from a view of language as a neutral linguistic facilitator and/or an instrument for preservation of national security, "third space" identities look at language as a racialized (Fisher, 1983), gendered (Bucholtz, 1995; Butler, 1999), and classed (Bourdieu, 1986) identity marker. Thus, for them, not only are identities reflected in languages (Pierce, 1993), but also constructed through and within them (Foucault, 1979, 1978). Language, in this sense, enters politics of identity by being a political statement in itself and an instrument of power (Bourdieu, 1986), a manifestation of a performance of an identity (Butler, 1990).

Drawing on Gee's notion of discourse (1996) as a theoretical tool to explain linguistic practices and performances and their relationship with identity, the concepts of "performance" of identities (Erickson & Shultz, 1982), multiple selves, and different

"who's" (Gee, 1996, p. 124) may be taken to represent any form of attribute in a person including race, ethnicity, social class or status, nationality, and language which, in turn, leads to the nature of performance of identity that the individual assumes or assigns to self and the Other. In other words, in each social interaction, individuals cognizantly and carefully perform every social role and assess how well they can connect to the Other through shared codes, which may include ways of speaking, behaving, dressing, and other cultural markers. As such, through linguistic identity performances, the hybrid, in-between identity disrupts the fixed, essentialist, normative, hierarchical identities and in so doing, refuses to be positioned in accordance with ethnic, cultural, and linguistic divisions, performing as expected through the codes and markers of imposed identities. Rather than allowing themselves to be reduced to an instrument in the hands of national and international conflicts, third-space subjects become highly performative. In these performative identities, individuals disrupt the accepted beliefs about self and other, demanding to remain unclassified and neutral as the Other.

Concurring with this position, HL learners, as Bourdieu (1991) contends, "in [their] cultural and linguistic practices…express [their] desires, inclinations, aspirations and yearns of who [they] want to be" (p. 203). It is from the languages that we choose to speak, how we speak and with what accent we speak that identities are constructed and negotiated (Miller, 2000), and we as social identities tell the other what to expect next (Gumperz, 1982). Different language choices in different spaces and contexts express the complexity and the inseparability of one's identity or possible identities. The mixture of languages and cultures thus can be taken as a metaphor for the self. In the process of these discursive formations, identities are constructed through a continuous process of

negotiation and reinscription. Through these linguistic performances, individuals constantly differentiate themselves from others both negatively and positively (Bhabha, 1990). By acknowledging that each of these sets of performances has particular demands and obligations in the form of norms of behavior and speech (Erickson & Shultz, 1982), which if performed "right" will result in a set of rights and privileges granted to the individual, "linguistic behavior [becomes] a series of acts [and performances] of identity for the heritage language learner, where they reveal both their personal identity and their search for social roles" (Le Page & Tabouret-Keller, 1985, p. 14).

Through this complex network, an individual's perception of self is viewed through the eyes of the "self" and the gaze of the "Other." This might range from the perception about outward appearance such as one's race, gender, ethnicity, language and culture, or even style of dress to more internal characteristics like ability, strength and weakness, and belief. The way individuals represent themselves and the identities that they will assume will be related to how they view themselves, which is intertwined with how the Other views them. The notion of multiple identities, situated and contextually defined, negotiated and contested, constructed and reconstructed by self and others, becomes the central issue for HL learners and HL learning.

Thus, the HL learner might use any identity marker, including the culture and language of the dominant group in an effort to gain an ethnically, culturally, and linguistically unmarked position, in order to avoid being marked as an outsider and enable oneself to cross the line from not belonging to belonging, from exclusion to inclusion (Rampton, 1995). Depending on which language is used and under what conditions, different, multiple, and often ambiguous identities can be constructed.

Through the use of a language or refusal to use a language, people can state their belonging to and at the same time distance themselves from certain people, ethnicities, religions, cultures, countries, and other identity markers. In this sense, language displays social identity and membership (Schiffrin, 1996) or an "identification badge" that is automatically displayed with its use (Saville-Troike, 1996, p. 201). In these representations of multiple "I's," language becomes a necessary identifier with the HL community as well as the dominant group. However, individuals may sometimes find it advantageous to purposefully avoid the performance of any practice or the use of any identifier that signals identification with one community or the other.

The highly performative construction of such identities implies that one has to enter politics of resistance through which heritage attributes (language, dress, religiosity) are kept in the domestic spaces while certain others are publicly expressed to challenge hegemonic dualities and hierarchies, refusing to be signified as "backward," "terrorist," "Islamist," or "unpatriotic." Identity is constructed through performance. Fluidity of identity allows for a contestation, which is not oppositional and at the same time is not simply a process of acculturation.

Identity and Desire

When we read identity as "a construction, a process, never completed" (Hall, 1996, 1990, p. 2), with a "temporary attachment to the subject positions" (p. 6), rather than a predetermined existence or transcendental continuity, the focus is on the multiple, complex, unstable, and fluid nature of identity and the role of desire in the process of identity construction. The concept of "desire" as it is used here is based on Jacques

Lacan's understanding of desire, the "desire of the Other," which becomes structurally tied to the signifier and whose effect can be seen in human speech and practices. We can employ both Lacan's term "the desire of the Other" and Foucault's term the "privileged Other," to signify the power of the dominant figure, the English language. "Others" desire the privilege that comes with a command of English.

In general, the concepts of sign, signifier, and signified are understood differently from various perspectives. According to such structuralist definitions as those advanced by Ferdinand de Saussure, language is a system of signs expressing ideas, and hence comparable to writing, the sign language alphabet, mathematical symbols, symbolic rites, forms of politeness, semaphore, and so on. The main assumption from this standpoint is that linguistic sign is arbitrary, consisting of signifier and signified. Arbitrary here does not imply that a signal depends on the free choice of the speaker; rather, it means that we use different words for the same concepts in each language. Signifier, according to Saussure, or the combination of sounds that represents a concept, is not fixed and is different in different languages. Yet the signified, the concept or idea, is viewed as stable, not changing, coherent in meaning. As a result, relationship between the signifier and signified is stable. This approach looks at language as signs, unitary as shell, without meaning. In other words, there is no internal connection between signifier and signified and this is evidenced by the examples between languages and within languages. From a Saussurian perspective, there is a distinction between *langue* and *parole*. *Langue* is considered as an individual act of communication, which is not a function of the speaker; it is a product that the individual passively assimilates. *Parole* or speaking, however, is an individual act, which is willful and intellectual. This view suggests that language,

unlike speaking, can be studied separately, and learning a language is possible only when other elements are excluded, meaning that one can learn a language without considering the process of social interaction (Moraes, 1996).

However, from the Lacanian perspective, the distinction is between *Parole* and *langage* and not within the Saussurian distinction between *parole* and *langue*. Lacan refers to *langue* as a specific language such as English or French but to *langage* as a system of language in general. For Lacan, *langage* is not a nomenclature but it has a symbolic dimension, structuring the social laws of exchange. Exchange of words in a social setting, rather than to be taken literally as truth, should be seen as a network of signifying elements in the symbolic dimension. According to Lacan, whereas the imaginary dimension of language is that of signifier, signification, and empty speech, the symbolic dimension of language is that of signifier and true speech. The symbolic dimension is the discourse of the Other. For example, through a Lacanian lens, despite the apparent similarities (i.e., common heritage or ethnicity or language competency) among HL learners, a researcher cannot conclude that all learners have instrumental gains in mind simply on the basis of their HL or ancestry link.

Lacan accounts for a distinction between languages and codes, believing that unlike codes, in language there is no stable relationship between sign and referent or between signifier and signified. Unlike Saussure who sees a stable relationship between signifier and signified like the two sides of a sheet of paper, Lacan argues for the instability of the relationship between signifier and signified. What we say may not be what we mean, and what we mean can be understood based on cues outside of the code of signs. For Lacan, language is not composed of signs but of signifiers; therefore, there is

no possible analysis of language without considering the process of social interaction. Language is socially constructed due to the existence of the signified prior to the existence of the signifiers. Lacan argues that words can take on new significance, threats, power, and desires for each person as they circulate. Lacan notes that while the letter never changes as it circulates, its significance changes constantly, depending on who holds it and who recognizes and can interpret its content. For example, the word (or letter) *terrorist* in the US, post-9/11, might mean someone from a Middle Eastern country, but the same word in a Middle Eastern country does not have that meaning. An *American soldier* in Iraq might be equal to a *liberator* in an American mind but the same phrase means an *occupier* in the Middle East.

Therefore to re-examine how identities are negotiated and renegotiated through linguistic exchanges and practices, an understanding of the concept of desire becomes necessary. This is because an analysis of desire reveals how individuals with a heritage language ancestry, rather than accepting placement in a normalizing and essentializing structure of ideologies that forcefully positions them as an object of sometimes national security and other times as threatening Christian unity, choose to be different from the accepted and expected norm. Also, this understanding helps us to recognize that we cannot evaluate HL loss and maintenance simply in terms of its functional and utilitarian value as cultural and linguistic transmitters, academic, economic or security providers; rather, we should analyze their interaction with socio-institutional/political factors in terms of their role and impact in making particular identities and instigating a desire to assume that identity. Looking from this angle, we can focus on aspects associated with identity formation that give attention to the importance of learners' desires to negotiate a

sense of self and identity, and their further desire to integrate into a community. For example, a heritage language learner might indicate positive attitudes toward the HL, but through a close reading, observers can establish the extent of heritage language learner's identification with the discourse of the "privileged Other" with a focus on the privileged speech act and power dynamics.

In the Lacanian sense of the "desire of the Other," which is structurally tied to the signifier, there are social and institutional norms with which learners identify, which are interpolated, transmitted, and reproduced. This is how Lacan sees the transition from the physically imposed law of the Father (proposed by Freud) specified as *autre* with lower case italicized '*a'* into the virtual symbolic order of *Autre* with upper case 'A,' which in the case of HL learners could be the internalization of societal norms. To identify with the "Big Other" one not only desires the Other but also wants to become its object of desire. Therefore it becomes necessary to know what "the Other" wants one to be. This aspect of the "Big Other" is that of the constitutive alienation of the subject in the symbolic order: The subject does not speak, he "is spoken" by the symbolic structure. "Big Other" is the name for the network of signifiers that constructs reality for everyone. It is the reality that answers questions like, "How does 'the Other' desire me to be?", "How does 'the Other' desire to see me?", or, "How should I be for 'the Other' to see me?" In other words, "How can I make my Self visible to 'the Other'?" The gaze of "the Other" makes its presence known for the subject in the form of social and institutional norms.

Thus, for my purposes, symbolic identification is identification with a normatively circumscribed way of being, speaking, acting, desired by "the Other."

Looking at languages from a Lacanian perspective, language and practices become "tools that build self in context of power, rather than as expressions of stable interpretations of world." For example, the HL learner identifies at the symbolic level with the patriarchal (i.e., colonial, imperial) way of structuring social relations between languages, understanding the power differential between languages and the expectation of the larger society, which in turn informs individual practice. That is to say, the intersections of socio-psychological and socio-institutional/political factors and their interaction through and within power relations make it necessary to ask questions as to how knowledge is created, legitimized, and mediated. It is important to determine who is able to claim what, how and when. In order to locate those intersections, we explore how the signifier constructs of, for instance, heritage language and English language are populated to create difference. We wonder, "What do we learn about ourselves from desiring the 'Big Other'?"

Discourse, Power and Representation

Lacan's theory of desire gives us a theoretical tool for understanding power discourses and how power is generated and maintained by creating a split subject who desires the Other in the symbolic order, who accepts and acquiesces to the "law of the Father" as natural and at the same time resists it. This theory of desire illuminates how for the power to be exerted, an Other needs to be created. It also helps us to understand that power is discursive and dialogic; it is a network that requires the participation of both the one wielding it and the one acquiescing to its hold. The split subject, like the discourse itself, can always be both supportive of power and desirous to become it, or it

can be resistant to power. Therefore in the symbolic order, everyone can exert power or be the point of exertion of power. We as subjects all have access to the workings of power, and can utilize our own power to resist other powers.

However, to move in the direction of social change, this theoretical framework will be adopted along with the postcolonial theory of Said discussed in his book, *Orientalism*. Said reveals how identities and cultures are constructed in the same manner as the Lacanian subject, but still allows for an understanding of unequal power. Said, like Foucault, provides a powerful conceptual tool to differentiate between powers in various discourses and narratives by looking at power of discourses as both hegemonic and symbolic. In his postcolonial theory, Said proposes that to have power over a people is to have knowledge of them, and to generate and produce knowledge of a people implies having power over them. For Said, power is generated at the same time that knowledge is generated. Said asks how a particular discourse and representation becomes socially dominant and widely desirable. It is of interest to discover how discourses and narratives such as the imaginary and symbolic binaries of "us versus them" and "Occident versus Orient" become so universal and powerful that they leave no place for the Other narratives to be heard.

From Said (1978), we learn that the knowledge and discourses produced and reproduced are not just to entertain and are not static, but are symbolically produced, for a purpose, according to a tendency, in a specific historical, intellectual, and even economic setting. "Representations – discourses -- have purposes, they are effective much of the time...[and] respond to certain cultural, professional, national, political, and economic requirements of the era" (Said, 1978, p. 273).

Said's postcolonial theory (1999) emphasizes the hegemonic and political nature of power, knowledge, and discourse shaped by certain hegemonic interests and strategies, aiming to produce an unfavorable image of the Other, producing a fear and at the same time a need for the subordination of Other people. In his argument in *Orientalism* (1978), by creating representations and discourses as traveling across genres, "from literary, historical, [and] scholarly accounts, to political," Said offers theory that can be used to emphasize the power of ethnically, culturally and linguistically stereotyped, negative images, narratives, and discourses to cast a world-as-real for the society in which those images and discourses circulate. His theory shows how a small segment of society that wields power over a people can produce knowledge that is accepted as truth.

Furthermore, Said observes that the "discursive consistency" of Orientalism and Orient "not only has history but also material and institutional presence to show for itself." For example, the institutional presence of Orientalism in the United States can be seen in its political institutions, military institutions, oil-based energy institutions, and educational institutions, as well as media institutions both print and visual, including news agencies, the movie and television industries, whose productions construct the Other as the object of different representational genres. When a set of discourses brings multiple institutions of society into cooperative alignment, from government to education to media, this set of discourses acquires the status of the "truth" in society even if that "truth" may later be disputed, overturned, or otherwise abandoned.

In seeking to unveil the interplay of various factors in HL loss and maintenance, we need to situate ourselves in a position where we can see the workings of hegemonic power and knowledge of institutional discourses in concert with the socio-psychological

environment, in a manner that challenges the process by which power comes to be seen as natural and indisputable, thus leaving room for resistance and change. By foregrounding institutional discourses, I can demonstrate that language is not a neutral element but an instrument of power, a power which is not natural but symbolic and imaginary, systematically produced and reproduced to maintain the interests of a specific group and culture.

Representation: The Story of My De-veiling

The discourses propagated and the images produced and perpetuated by various institutions, from social institutions to media giants, never challenge the hierarchical structure of power in America. To use Stuart Hall's words, "in this social institution of signifying activities and through repeated enunciative attempts to reinscribe and relocate the claim to cultural priority and hierarchy (high/low, ours/theirs, [civilized/barbarian, good/evil, us/them])," various forms of representation of the Other become tools in the hands of those in power to assist them in keeping their position in the system of hegemony and maintaining the social order in their favor. Stereotype, misconception and misrepresentation have the effect of marginalizing whole peoples within a dominant society. Iranians, in the struggle to reclaim their position and move from a marginal place to the center, are faced with multiple oppressions. Their personal life becomes political and their political life becomes personal and with all these meshing influences, the language and culture become veiled and hidden.

To reflect on my own case in the process of signifying activities, "I" get reduced to a fixed, essentialist definition of a Muslim woman, different from the stereotype of the

modern woman of the Western world; I become one who needs to be liberated. My identity becomes but a fleeting blip on society's screen, frequently and variously reminding me of my *Otherness*. As much as I try, nonetheless, it is impossible for me to distance myself from the identity that is imposed on me. I am constantly reminded of the many times that I make everyone uncomfortable, without having done anything wrong. My present identity as articulated by the power structure and the media through signification justifies discrimination against me due to the existence of an incompatible cultural and religious identity inscribed. I visibly belong to the wrong religion.

As I am writing this reflection, I am sitting in a café in Manhattan wearing what one would call a Western, modern outfit if it were not for the veil over my head. The veil, or *hijab*, is what some Muslim women wear to cover their hair. The reasoning behind wearing a veil might be different for different women, ranging from personal to religious to political. Some wear it because they are very much committed to the belief that the religion of Islam requires women to cover their hair. Others might wear it due to the demands of the society in which they live and the fact that the societal norms or laws require it. Still others might just wear it to make a political statement. Mine is a combination of all. For me, wearing the veil is a symbolic action that consists of many layers. Nevertheless, it is just a piece of clothing. For me, however, this piece of clothing has become a conversation piece from which I need to be liberated.

This piece of clothing has made me seem different from the modern American female, different not in the sense of "not similar" and not in the general notion that is encapsulated by the word "diversity" (as in race or ethnicity, for which I am not even represented as a minority on any official government forms), but only different because

of a too-visible two-foot-by-two-foot cloth banner covering my hair. I am placed in the discourse in a position, which is too visible for me to be invisible – in the eyes of the Other, I am reduced to my *hijab*. To become invisible, identified as no one in particular, and become visible as the "Other" desires, I go into the closet, remove my undesired piece of clothing there and emerge in the same café in Manhattan as a modern American woman, de-veiled, with my *hijab* removed and my hair shown. This new identification provides me with a camouflage to protect me from being rejected for every job to which I apply; it helps me steer clear of police who would continually stop me, inquiring for all forms of identification including my passport while keeping me waiting in my car for over an hour, only to learn that I was stopped to have my headlights checked or something of the sort; it relieves me from being forever "randomly" selected for "random" security searches while traveling on an airplane. This new identification gives me space to breathe in the "land of the free." It makes me invisible so that I can blend in to a crowd, and at the same time, I become visible as the Other desires.

Research Methods

This section of the methodology reflects on the theoretical foundations of conducting a qualitative research in order to analyze and describe the interplay of socio-psychological and socio-institutional/political factors in Persian language loss and maintenance among second-generation Iranian-American college students living in a major US metropolitan area with a sizable concentration of Iranian immigrants. Here, I will present a descriptive overview of the various sections, starting with a discussion of the epistemological and methodological rationale for the selection of methods I will use

for the study, followed by an outline about the participants and the instruments employed for data collection. Next, there will be a description of the rationale for data analysis. This section will conclude with a discussion of the researcher's reflexivity.

Epistemological and Methodological Rationale

The selection of an appropriate methodology as a general approach in studying research topics is essential because it helps the researcher to establish the conceptual framework concerning how to conduct a study about the problems in reality. This is the study of people, and part of the methodological problem in social and educational studies involving human beings is the complexity of the human condition and the special challenge involved in understanding human attitudes and choices. In order to understand a complex phenomenon, one requires methodological flexibility, which cannot be delivered through the sole use of scientific methods of quantitative analysis. Science and its method of quantitative analysis are specific processes that can provide a powerful tool for discovering many answers to research questions and problems by "measuring and quantifying phenomena" (Flick, 2002, p. 2). However, when it comes to the issue of human conditions, attitudes, and choices in general, and language and language attitudes and choices in particular, science can be a reductionist tool which will provide answers only at the surface level because it tends to quantify everything and, in the words of Abraham Maslow, "it is tempting, if the only tool you have is a hammer, to treat everything as if it were a nail."

At the juncture of doing this research, thus, I have made the most important and compelling decision which is to employ an interpretive method of qualitative research in

order to apply the theoretical framework in examining the interplay of socio-psychological and socio-institutional/political factors in HL loss and maintenance, and to probe deeply beneath the surface. In qualitative research, "objects are not reduced to single variables but are studied in their complexity and entirety in their everyday context" (Flick, 2002, p. 5) in order to experience and understand what exists in reality. Qualitative inquiry lets the researcher ask new questions and turn the old questions inside out. Instead of asking how many languages are lost, how many people have lost the language, how long it will take for a language to be lost, or how much of a linguistic difference is tolerable, I will ask questions that have the ability to locate where the "problem" of language loss resides and shift the attention to the participants as knowledge producers rather than problem generators. I argue that my selection of a qualitative approach, thus, gives rise to a more pluralistic, open-ended interpretive perspective in research and opens new windows and possibilities for participants and researchers, giving the participants an opportunity to communicate what exists for them in reality and the depth and meaning of their unique personal experiences and positions, which in turn helps my investigation and understanding of the underlying socio-institutional/political factors operating in linguistically dominant societies and their impact on a range of socio-psychological factors affecting HL loss and maintenance.

It is important not to underestimate the impact of interpretative methods of qualitative research in the study of social sciences. Many historians have recognized that history is based on a series of interpretations, embedded in ideological frames, rather than facts. Similarly in psychology, Freudian and Lacanian versions of psychoanalysis can be seen as interpretive in nature. This study also adopts an interpretive research approach to

qualitative methodology seeking to elicit from the second-generation Persian heritage students what they perceive to be the factors that affect their choices in maintaining and developing their HL, to explore how they perceive their linguistic and cultural reality at home, in school, and in the larger society, and to learn what possible alternatives exist in aiding the development and maintenance of heritage languages. As Maxwell (1996) proposed,

> To understand the meanings for participants in the study, of the events, situations, and actions they are involved with…accounts that they give of their lives and [linguistic experiences]…in how they make sense of these and how their understanding influences their behavior...they are part of the reality you are trying to understand.... This focus on meaning is central to what is known as the 'interpretive' approach to social science. (p. 75)

This approach can provide participants with an understanding about their role as it relates to the topic, validates their experiences, and provides an understanding of the recommendations to be considered when addressing linguistic issues.

Selection of Participants

Over a period of 1 year, I interacted with numerous social, educational and community groups of Iranian-Americans residing in New York and New Jersey. During this time, I distributed copies of the introductory letter (Appendix A) describing the research to organizers of these social and community groups, teachers and professors of educational centers, and friends and acquaintances. I asked them to provide the potential interested participants with a copy of this letter and invite them to contact me via e-mail with any questions or to indicate that they were interested to participate in the research.

The criteria for the selection of participants in this study were contingent upon "a predefined set of categories" (Johnstone, 2000, p. 92), meaning that I sought second-

generation college students of Persian ancestry who were either born in the United States or were brought to the US at an early age (before elementary school), who were 18 years of age or older at the time of the interviews, and who may or may not have communicative and literacy skills in Farsi. The age factor is important in this study because it allows for a deeper understanding as well as a more intellectual and engaging discussion of language loss and maintenance than if the subjects had been children. Though this is not the goal of this study, it might be helpful in suggestions for further research.

Through this approach, 22 Iranian-American college students who could provide rich responses to the interview questions were identified and participated in the three interviews. The selected participants received a cover letter (Appendix B) and an informed consent form (Appendix C) to sign, confirming their participation in the research and assuring them of their right to anonymity and confidentiality.

A brief overview of each participant is given in Appendix G. The proficiency in HL is based on participants' self-evaluation.

Interviews

For this study, the main instrument I employed was a series of three one-on-one semistructured, open-ended interviews probing at participants' experiences with HL loss and maintenance, heritage culture preservation and their reflections on the meaning of those experiences, both past and current (Seidman, 1998). This type of research instrument, which is also utilized in therapy sessions where the therapist investigates the meaning and impact of a common experience on a group of people for whom a cause-

and-effect or a linear explanation cannot befit, is particularly useful for Iranian-Americans. This is due to the fact that the migration experiences of Iranian-American youth and that of their parents tend to be quite complex, affected by the political and historical events of the past 30 years both in the United States and in Iran. This particular research instrument will be useful in the case of Iranian-Americans since they are prone to disclose their personal information or any account of their social or emotional difficulties in a direct survey or questionnaire. The one-on-one interview format with open-ended interview questions will not only allow the researcher to ascertain the personal and experiential perceptions and interpretations of how the participants see HL loss and maintenance, but it will also provide the participants an opportunity to be included in meaningful dialogue in a positive and safe environment, as well as to examine and share their feelings and reflections on the important issue of HL loss and maintenance.

The interview questions were designed to be open-ended and flexible enough to allow participants much freedom in expressing their positions and beliefs on the subject of HL loss and maintenance. The questions for the interviews have been developed and adjusted based on the literature review and the units of analysis as described in the theoretical framework, and also based on the my discussions with the community members after a year of immersion in the community. During the interviews, the participants responded to some general questions, followed by probing questions to overarch the four research questions. I encouraged the participants to elaborate on their responses and gave them an opportunity at the end of the interview to add other information that may not have been covered during the interview. I scheduled each

interview for an hour at a convenient time and location for the interviewee. All interviews were conducted in English in order to avoid translation and possible loss or alteration of data in translation.

At the first research interview session, I reminded each participant of the purpose of the research, stressing the issue of anonymity and confidentiality, the right of the participant to withdraw from the study at any time, the need for audio recording and transcription of the session, and the required informed consent. Following the completion of the informed consent process, I interviewed each participant for about 1 hour. In this interview session, using a questionnaire, demographic information was collected. This information included age, country of birth, length of time living in the US, primary language, reason(s) for parent's immigration, and the frequency of trips back to the country of heritage. In addition, the participant was given a chance to add whatever they felt was necessary but not included in the interview questions. (For the interview protocol, see Appendix D).

I scheduled the second interview for an hour again at a convenient time and location for the interviewee. On the second interview protocol, there is a general question followed by some probing questions which intend to explore the perceived value of a HL as a unit of analysis from the point of view of the HL learner because it provides the researcher with the data to analyze the interplay of instrumental factors of the socio-psychological environments with those of status and power relations between majority and minority languages within the socio-institutional/political environment. (For the interview protocol, see Appendix E).

Even though the interviews were conducted in English, I encouraged the participants to use Farsi at any time for any words or phrases of their choice. I then analyzed the results produced from the first and second interviews to develop further guiding questions for the third interview in order to gain a fuller representation of the participants' experiences and knowledge, as well as to provide participants with an opportunity to give input on the findings and the themes I planned to utilize in the study.

The third interview which lasted about an hour to an hour and a half explored questions about the attitude of HL learners toward heritage language and heritage community, their desire or disdain to integrate into and identify with the heritage versus dominant community, in addition to the spaces where a language can easily and practically be used and an identity can safely be played. The interview protocol also focused the experiences of the participants with regard to various representations (or misrepresentations) of Iranian identities as an object of different representational genres and how they affected the process of identity negotiation and identification with the Persian language and identity. (For the interview protocol, see Appendix F).

The three interviews focused on the above units of analysis helped to increase efficiency and power of analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994). These lines of questioning further facilitated the investigation of the underlying socio-institutional/political factors and their impact on the instrumental, attitudinal, and integrational factors of the socio-psychological environment.

Data Analysis

For the purpose of analyzing and interpreting data for this research, thematic analysis of interview narratives, which are responses to open-ended questions in the interview protocol, were employed. According to Boyatzis (1998), thematic analysis is "a process of encoding qualitative information …. to process, analyze, and/or interpret information" (p. 4). The goal is to consistently and systematically code themes and subthemes in order to analyze data (Berg, 1989; Boyatzis, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994).

For the purposes of this study, I conducted a deductive thematic analysis of coding with themes identified from *a priori,* driven by the researcher's theoretical and analytical interests in the data. Through this process, I developed themes around the units of analysis, which are "generated deductively from the theoretical framework and literature review" (Boyatzis, 1998, p. 4). The employment of a deductive thematic analysis in this kind of research is due to the fact that we cannot free ourselves from theoretical and epistemological commitments since my goal was to analyze the interplay of socio-psychological and socio-institutional/political factors as they apply to the process of HL loss and maintenance.

The process of thematic analysis and associating codes and subcodes with the text involves close reading of the text. To obtain a consistent and systematic approach, I first transcribed the audio recording of the interviews verbatim. I then coded and sub-coded the data across the interviews by categories based on the research questions and the units of analysis (Rossman & Rallis, 1998; Seidman, 1998). The units of analysis I used here are identified as 1) perceived value of a HL from the perspective of the HL learner, 2) the

attitude of heritage language learners toward heritage language and heritage community, 3) heritage language learners' desire to integrate into and identify with the heritage language and community versus the dominant language and community, and 4) choice of language in various spaces where a language can be easily and practically used and an identity can be safely assumed. Operational definitions of variables were applied to achieve consistency. This categorization helped me to summarize and systematically organize the qualitative data for further analysis and interpretation. Upon identification of the content relating to the units of analysis, the excerpt was coded with the identification code associated with each (i.e., R=Representation), along with the participant's name and the question number. This is important because the researcher needs to know the origins of the bits and pieces of data in the files in order to later reconstruct them.

To be more precise, in the process of coding, the researcher looks for specific statements, the concepts participants use to understand their world, norms, values, and relations that guide their choices and practices, the symbols and signifiers they utilize to make sense of their situation, which are all part of the process of meaning-making. For example, statements such as *"nobody speaks Persian here"* or *"we only use Persian at home"* could be coded as UV (Utility Value), which could be further subcoded with PS for Private/pubic Spaces. Other expressions regarding the desire of the participant for integration into one group or another was coded as ID (Integration into Dominant Group) or IH (Integration into HL Group). Yet another statement mentioning the way politics or the media represent Iran was subcoded as PR (political representation) or MR (media representation). The same data could also represent two or more themes. For example, *"we only use Persian at home"* could be coded as UV (Utility Value), as well as LL

(Language Learning). Each of these codes could then be subcoded. I coded all passages and chunks of data the same way, judged them and later had each participant check them to be sure they were about the same theme, subtheme, or unit of analysis. Any parts of the data that related to a specific code were coded with the appropriate code. If a theme arose from the data that did not quite fit the codes already existing, then I created a new code.

After compiling a group of themes and subthemes to best represent the participants' experiences, I reviewed and re-examined the initial expressions and themes in relation to the overall context, which played an important role in further expansion of the meaning that surrounds each theme. At this stage, after breaking down the data, I formed a cluster of themes (Boyatzis, 1998) meaning that I rearranged and grouped themes and subthemes into broader themes based on the relationship that linked them together and connected them to the overall context to examine and analyze the larger context in which that data occurred and explain the interplay and interconnections between socio-psychological and socio-institutional/political variables. The objective was to discover to what extent and in what ways the perceived value of a HL, attitude and desire to learn a HL and the choices that the participants make are affected by ideological and representational variables of the socio-institutional/political environment. The last part of the thematic analysis concerned the overall story of the analysis, reflection on this exhaustive description, and the write-up process. Throughout this process, the computer software NVivo8, a database management system for qualitative information, was used for better organization, data retrieval, and data manipulation.

Reflexivity

In an interpretative, qualitative approach to research, the researchers must possess historical, cultural, political, and contextual sensitivities, yet must be aware that a researcher's identity, history, and biography infiltrate the research process (Delgado Bernal, 1998; Fine, Weis, Weseen, & Wong, 2000; Tedlock, 2000). It is important for the researcher doing qualitative research to "understand the particular context in which the participants act and the influences this context has on them" (Maxwell, 1996, p. 75), and this familiarity could have positive advantages as well as negative drawbacks.

This brings us to the discussion of the position of the researcher and the examination of the emic versus etic distinction or the discourses of insider versus outsider positions. Emic perspective is considered to be the insider's point of view studying one's native culture and its people subjectively; etic is the outsider's perspective studying a people and a culture as objects (Spradley, 1980; Streubert Speziale & Carpenter, 2003).

On the positive side, having the emic or insider's point of view could elicit specific knowledge and understanding that would improve data collection and data analysis. Being part of the group under study and having a sensitivity and understanding toward the political and historical reality of Iranian-Americans in America and in Iran, I occupied a position in which I could better understand what mattered in the world of those being studied and how the people who lived in these worlds perceived the issues that the interview questions addressed. These important layers of understanding produced knowledge that tells us how the participants played roles as they did in their worlds. My position as an insider helped me in understanding and appreciating the important aspects of experiences that mattered for the participants and further helped in the interpretation of

meaning construction beyond the surface level for study participants in a specific contextual, political, and historical time, who struggled with questions of identity and "who am I?" or "Do I have to know Persian language to be who I am?" "How can I be an American and still feel pride in my heritage language and ethnicity?" "How can I maintain my Persian language?" There may be simple responses to these questions for first-generation Iranians, but a struggle and a search for identity for those of the second generation.

The potential drawbacks of having an inside perspective are that the researcher might produce a biased report of the participants' experiences due to social and emotional attachment to the group, or fail to capture the unique experiences and perceptions of their experiences. In an effort to overcome the problem of emic versus etic distinction and to avoid the potential negative impact of the emic approach, I, while open to competing perspective and alternate explanations, still had the analysis of data to be guided by previous theory where it was appropriate, thus maintaining self-awareness by constantly going back to the conceptual and theoretical framework and evaluating how those theories of the way social worlds work help to explain various kinds of experiences for the participants.

CHAPTER IV

CREATING AN IDENTITY

A person's identity is constantly in flux, subject to unconscious or deliberate, contradictory shifts and changes, and may embody multiple influences simultaneously (Derrida, 1974; Foucault, 1978, 1979, 1980; Grossberg, 1996). This is especially true when considering the sense of "Self," or one's perception of oneself among others as belonging, and one's perception of oneself as Other – not belonging (Hall, 1991). This self-perception is informed by numerous representations through socio-psychological and socio-institutional/political factors. The result is often a binary self-awareness, perception of oneself as both Self and Other (Grossberg, 1996). This binary speaks to the social, psychological and institutional forces of politics, history, representation, ethnicity and power relations between dominant and subordinate entities. In this chapter, I will argue that Iranian-American college students negotiate, or formulate, their identities through a struggle with the underlying socio-psychological, socio-institutional/political ideologies and practices that inform and drive the American mainstream. In using the terms "negotiation" and "negotiating an identity," I am referring to the process of identity development through the dynamic interplay between self and societal, psychological, political, institutional and educational forces. I am not suggesting that the process of identity development is fixed and has a definite end, like negotiating a contract, but rather

I mean to emphasize that it is in flux and it continues indefinitely. In other words, the various worlds that we inhabit – national, institutional, occupational, ethnic, familial, religious, cultural, political, linguistic -- all contribute to the identities we negotiate. In this study, we focus on 22 Iranian-American students who have lived in more than one world and have experienced the tensions and pulls of identity struggles. In the process of identity negotiations, they become active agents who strategically align themselves with an identity of their own choosing, organized along the line between these binary self-perceptions and affected by socio-psychological, socio-historical, socio-political and socio-institutional factors beyond their control. This process of strategic alignment is not like following the steps to solve a mathematical equation to arrive at a correct or incorrect answer; it is more like driving a car, constantly making small choices and corrections while on the move, affecting one's safety and the efficiency of the selected route. This strategic alignment is important because no other minority group has labored under this particular negative baggage which Iranian-Americans shoulder every day: The yoke of the Axis of Evil. They are perceived as evil simply because of the place from which their parents immigrated. I argue that young people who were born in America or brought here at an early age are not as comfortable using their heritage language or practicing their heritage culture as, say, Spanish or French speakers might. While every minority group in the US carries some weight of stereotype and misconception, Iranian-Americans bear an extra load of post-9/11 hate and fear which the American media and their consumers heap upon them.

Not least among the factors that influence Iranian-American identity are the choices made for oneself or on one's behalf, in childhood, whether to use or even know

one's heritage language, or to forget it. If a parent chooses not to speak Farsi with his child, it is a difficult choice based on the fact that there is limited opportunity for the child to use the HL in American society, and the parent opts instead to focus on the language an American child is certain to need, English. As an example, this is like my choice not to wear the *hijab* which signifies an Islamic Identity: I stopped wearing it and did not require my daughter to wear it because it had a negative value in the United States, attracting unwanted attention. If a child learns Farsi at home but dislikes speaking it for various socio-psychological reasons, enough to forget it by adulthood, it is not out of laziness or disrespect for the heritage culture, but more likely out of desire to fit in with White, middle-class, American society. Languages are also ascribed to a certain type of identity. For example, as stated by McKay and Hornberger (2001) quoting other authors, English or French are signifiers for modernity, sophistication, or authority (Kachura, 1978, Myers-Scotton, 1993, Pandit, 1978, Sridhar, 1978), Sanskrit is a signifier for a nationalistic and traditionalistic image of India (Kachura, 1978), and Arabic and Persian for Islamic identity (Sridhar, 1978) just to name a few. I will show in this chapter that the performance of identity, including linguistic identity, for Iranian-American youth changes from one context to another, and that various individuals are comfortable with the strategic shifts they make depending on their audience at any given time and in any given space. By "strategic shifts," I mean the small decisions and corrections that alter the course of a fluid identity from moment to moment. Most of the participants in the interview process wanted to be bilingual if at all possible. They had the desire to stay connected with family, and as young adults, they recognized that having two languages, one of which is not widely spoken in the US, could increase their value in the workforce.

However, desire in itself is not enough to guarantee the effective learning or maintenance of the HL, due to the interplay of this positive attitude with exigent external factors like ideology, history, politics and economics that work against HL maintenance.

Distinctions between insiders and outsiders of both the dominant group and the heritage group, depending on context, are produced and reproduced by these ideological, historical and political forces. These distinctions – for example, people who cover their hair out of religious modesty versus those who view modesty conventions as oppressive, and people who consider it their duty to wage holy war versus those who celebrate other religions' holy days secularly -- legitimize the creation of polar opposites where one has to choose to be one or the other. *Othering* is the process by which binary divisions are created and perpetuated (Said, 1978). It is the "the business of creating the enemy…in order that the empire might define itself by its geographical and racial others" (Spivak, 1988, pp. 171, 173). Because of these binary relationships, individuals and groups are differentiated based on their racial, geographical, ethnic, ideological, and linguistic attachments and then they are either included or excluded. The political and media institutions' production of the discourse of "good" and "evil" that includes and excludes individuals, and consumers' reproduction of that binary, leaves the participants with the option of choosing "democracy and freedom" (*our* way of life) versus "terrorism and Communist aggression" (the threat to "*our* way of life") (Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson, 1995, p.168). This binary perception of self and Other is socio-psychologically suggestive of inferiority and subordination of those labeled as Others, as also indicated through the historical distinction between Orient and Occident (Hall, 1996; Said, 1978).

Between these poles, *Othering* takes place, whether one is too American for one's Iranian relatives, or not American enough to blend into the mainstream unnoticed.

In order to live unmolested in the occidental, Western world, a person of Oriental origin must strategically align oneself to Western ways. I will argue that some people of Oriental descent, specifically Iranians, constantly find themselves explaining and defending their identities; to do this, they participate in the production and reproduction of identities according to the desires of the dominant group. Identities are produced as individuals negotiate among the various socio-psychological, socio-historic, socio-political and socio-institutional relations that affect daily choices in the context of one's inculcation; identities are reproduced in the mirror of other people's responses. Furthermore, in order to blend in to English-dominated American society, internalization of dominant ideologies (accepting the dominant ideologies as how things should be) will gradually lead to students' taking their heritage language and culture into hiding.

This analysis demonstrates how for some Iranian students at East Coast University, their sense of identity was complicated by institutional factors such as the strained relationship between the US and Iran (in particular, Americans' fear that Iran will develop nuclear weapons and use them against the Western world), American misconceptions and misinformation about Islam through manipulation of discourses by politicians, the arts and the news media, and negative media depictions of Iranians in particular and Middle Easterners in general. I will argue that these socio-institutional/political factors directly affected the identity and linguistic practices of the students. These identifications and practices, in turn, affected their HL practices and proficiency level in Farsi, which ranged among the students from wishing they knew their

HL, to being partly bilingual or even multilingual, to neglecting Farsi in favor of using English exclusively. I will argue and demonstrate that the O*thering* of Iranian-Americans occurs in the socio-political context of the stark contrast between the Americanism and dominant Christianity of the United States, versus the perceived Islamic fundamentalism and fanatical terrorism that are ascribed to Iran. As Heller (1968) quoted in Norton (2000) demonstrates, "it is through language that a person negotiates a sense of self within and across different sites at different points in time, and it is through language that a person gains, or is denied, access to powerful social networks" (Norton, B. 2000, p. 5). Those who wanted to blend in as Americans neglected their HL or strategically used it only in private; those who actively practiced Farsi were proud to wear their heritage and willing to discuss it with anyone who asked. Such topics have been primary subjects of recent social discourse, and thus are not neutral. For this reason, these themes will be the locus of this analysis, first in regards to ethnically based perceptions, then on the basis of religious faith, and finally in regard to nationalistic political microstruggles.

Deference to the Dominant Group

One aspect of most culture is the imposition of *Othering*, as described by Said, (1978), Spivak, and Grossberg (1996) which "represents a key concept of our social existence" (Bakhtin circle stated in Moraes, 1996, p. 10). This is when a dominant demographic of people distinguishes itself discursively from Others who are not perceived to possess enough characteristics of the dominant demographic. In this distinction, identities are socially constructed and are clearly informed by the polarizing and symbolically demonizing methods of paternalistic and nativist frameworks. Though

they seem innocent, these paternalistic ideologies produce and clearly define the good and the evil. However, the importance is not the simply the production of good and evil but the method through which society constructs the distinction and imposes the process of *Othering*. When society inscribes the Other/evil as one and equivalent with an already demonized religion, there is little choice for the Other but to defer. To ease the discomfort of not fitting into the dominant mainstream society and to resist being positioned in the space of Other, my deference to the dominant group took the shape of removing my *hijab*.

As a result of *Othering*, people who relate to a given culture (such as Iranians who consider themselves American) are perceived as Others by the dominant society and at the same time, perceive this *Otherness* and experience it through their everyday lives. Inevitably, just as in other instances of social distinction, stereotyping and misinformation develop among members of the dominant society and those of the minority, and this can result in precarious interpersonal situations in which a person or group could otherwise be considered out of place. As Iranian-Americans in the East Coast University study became spectators of their constructed *Otherness* and felt rejected and singled out, they struggled to invent strategies to avoid social dissonance and alienation. This could range from avoiding identifying themselves as Iranian to describing themselves using an ethnic word with less of a nationalistic negative baggage, to distancing themselves from the obvious cues that could signal their Muslimness. Muslimness is constructed in discursive and material contexts in which members of the dominant society assume there is a real substance to the concept, framing Muslims as

different, Other, terrorists, fundamentalist, and evil while representing Muslim women as those imprisoned by their husbands or fathers and in need of liberation.

Everyday politics and constant constructions of the Other make the process of identity negotiation especially complex for Iranian-Americans. The political environment of the early 21st century, when juxtaposed with the socio-institutional/political and historical ideologies of the United States, creates an atmosphere for Iranian-American students where telling the truth can be painfully alienating and even dangerous. The assumptions people make about all Iranians based on political enmity, imagined ideological superiority and the prevailing language ideology can affect individuals in numerous different ways. Telling the truth about one's identity can also include using one's heritage language; if even admitting to any connection with Iran or Islam is risky, then openly speaking Farsi is like wearing a bull's-eye on one's forehead. The truth, in such cases, can influence personal relationships and put Iranian-Americans in uncomfortable positions when their identification with their heritage – even in the most casual conversations – can literally change existing relationships. Catherine, 21, a senior with a double major in biological sciences and Middle Eastern studies, was born in the US from an Iranian mother and an Irish/English father. She had taken some Saturday Farsi schooling and 2 years of college Farsi courses. She told a story in which someone she had known for years suddenly began to perceive her differently simply because of the discovery that her family was from Iran:

> One time was actually kind of funny because it was last day of my physics class and I was just asking, "What are you doing for the summer break?" because it was really close to school ending. She said, "Oh, I'm going to go to Israel because I have a birthright program here where if you are part Jewish or full Jewish you can go to Israel for free." And I'm like, "Oh, I heard about that program, it's nice." Then, when she asked me where I was going over the summer, I was like, "Iran,"

> and it was funny, because we were friends, we had class together, and after I said "Iran," there was this pause for a like about a minute or so, and it was really awkward because Israel and Iran. Well, the first stereotypes are because of what is politically going on there, [the countries are] clashing together with a constant fear that they are going to attack each other, so it was a little awkward. I think sometimes the politics mesh into normal day lives a little bit too much, but if you consciously try to remove it, you can't because of all the news media and all these news [agencies] it sort of sticks into you. I expect someone who doesn't have the same education level as her to be, you know, disrespectful to other cultures, but that kind of scared me a lot because she said some ridiculous things.

The introduction of the new information somehow transformed the relationship where there was no prior contention. The respondent's friend experienced a sudden change in perspective due to what seem to be the ubiquitous influences of discourses propagated in the media and politics without regard for what had already been established in their personal relationship. The simple declaration of country of origin on the neutral topic of travel, without any discussion of politics or history, became the basis for instantaneous *Othering*. Catherine thought education must open people to accepting and actually welcoming difference, yet education itself, along with ideological institutions, were all complicit in historical production and reproduction of ideologies of difference and *Othering*.

Exchanges like this could be even more awkward if the student were to be observed speaking with others in Farsi, despite fluency in English. There are various levels of socio-political and socio-psychological factors at work simultaneously, producing and reproducing dominant language ideologies. This process of *Othering*, which is constantly fed by the ongoing political tension between Iran and the US, has Americans on the lookout for anyone who has the stereotyped appearance or sound of a "terrorist," so that anyone who speaks Farsi in public may feel targeted for general distrust. This is an example of the *Othering* that labels Iranian-Americans as evil, or at

least strange. “The labeling embodies a system of reason that is productive of how we think, see, act, and talk about the actions related to our ‘self’ — governing through the discursive practices what is desirable” (Popkewitz, 1998, p. 19). It is difficult to feel comfortable using one’s heritage language in public when one does feel targeted and has become the object of discourse.

In addition, a different socio-psychological factor may be important. For some Iranian-Americans, the decision not to use Farsi in public may be a simple matter of politeness: They do not want to be seen as rude for speaking a foreign language in the English-dominated public sphere. This polite stance is a particular mode of deference to the dominant group and the prevailing language ideology: A member of a minority would not like to invite the ill opinion of the majority by openly speaking in a way that marks one as Other. One study participant, Allen, 21, a senior biology major whose parents were both born in Iran, learned spoken Farsi from them and later studied reading and writing in college. Allen articulated his thought process when deferring to the dominant language ideology:

> If people know you speak Farsi, therefore, they assume you are Iranian and they might not like that… I consciously don’t use Persian probably when I am around a bunch of other American people. I don’t want them to think, “What are they talking about? Why would they not talking English? Are they talking about us?” I don’t feel comfortable too much. I don’t feel comfortable when they do it to me. If I’m out in the open talking Farsi with someone then it is fine. But if I’m in like an office or on the bus I don’t want to be that guy, I guess.

Allen was one of several students who intimated that wherever he is, he will generally speak the dominant language in order to make the most people around him feel comfortable, whether that language is English or Farsi. These students were sensitive to the various contexts in which one language or the other would be more appropriate, and

for them it was a matter of practical politeness to choose between the two. The choice is defined between the public space of the dominant society and the private space of home and family. The instrumental choice to reserve Farsi for the private spaces guaranteed that its use was safe and did not invite *Othering*, and the choice of using English in public spaces was a matter of politeness as well as an assurance that one would not get into trouble for speaking a "terrorist" language.

For some students, identifying as an Iranian is not so important in light of the fact that they live in the United States and consider themselves American as well as Iranian. Niloufar, a 19-year-old sophomore business major, was the child of parents who were both born in Iran, but her speaking skills were weak and she admitted to being illiterate in Farsi. She said, "Just because I'm Iranian doesn't mean that I'm not American. I'm just as American as anybody else, you know?" Distinguishing between being an American by nationality and an Iranian by heritage, she felt that it was acceptable to identify with both, a common vein throughout almost all of the respondents included in this study, especially those who had both languages. This is not assimilation; it is strategic alignment, an ideological and practical repositioning between various aspects of identity from one space and time to the next. The students consciously, strategically align themselves along that narrow balancing line between being Iranian and being American so that they can have the best of both worlds.

The keys for HL maintenance are practice in speaking the language, and the desire to do so. With that said, there are numerous factors working against even the person who routinely switches between the dominant and the minority language, simply because there will be more opportunities to use the former than the latter. One participant

made the point that nothing can take away either language from a person who makes use of it where appropriate. “The language, again, you’re not going to impact on that really. I’m still going to speak to my grandmother, I’m still going to speak to my grandfather, my mom, my dad, in my house. In society, I don’t encounter too many Iranians, so I’m not going to speak Farsi too much of the time, is what I mean.”

The prevalent language ideology prefers monolingualism and is not receptive of *Otherness* as a positive construct. Breaking the norms of ideological and institutional beliefs of the dominant society could result in ostracism. Ely, a 20-year-old junior majoring in biology and neuroscience, was born in Germany and immigrated to the US when he was 2 years old. He recognized this and said: “I think it [speaking Persian] is a disadvantage because it makes me seem like an outsider. Because people would know I’m an outsider, and maybe not trust me as much as they would a native.” Ely said he was never interested in learning Persian or taking classes, even though his mother tried to teach him reading and writing. This produces internal conflict that leads to strategic alignment based on which part of one’s identity is safe to show in order to be safe from *Othering* and negative signifiers.

Religious Signifiers

> *I’ll tell them I’m Iranian. And then they’ll be like, “Oh! You’re Jewish?” When they find out I’m Jewish, they’re surprised…I guess they just expect Iranians to be Muslim. But, I’m not. ~ Ely*

Whereas the previous section situates nation-state signifiers, there is more complexity to this process of identity negotiation than simple political boundaries. Here, I will make an argument that religious identification is also part of this strategic alignment.

Not only do nation state affiliations and political sensibilities of Iranian-American students get inscribed with projected meanings, but *Othering* is an inevitable production when Americans reduce the range of religious affinities that come from Iran down to one set of stereotypes. Iranian-American students are forced to strategically align themselves with one religious identity or another because in America, the emphasis on religious difference with the Middle East does not allow the students to be neutral about religion. The above comment from Niloufar draws attention to the widespread misconception that Iran is entirely a Muslim country under the strict rule of Islamic fanaticism. Immediately, recognizing that her misidentification with Islamic religion marks her as an outsider and danger among predominantly Christian or nonsectarian Americans forces her to always have to correct them and tell people that she is not Muslim but Jewish. Her religion – and the fact that it is unexpected in connection with her nationality – frees her from the negative association she would face as a Muslim among Americans.

Religion is not only a sociopolitical factor that plays a role in most matters concerning cultural definitions and the way differing cultures interact, but it is an institution to which the media and political rhetoric assign a range of preconceived notions. For some Iranian-American students, being a Muslim required a choice whether to disassociate oneself from visible signifiers of one's religion (a painful choice for some), or to be constantly on the defensive in a country where "Muslim" equals "hateful." This choice parallels the choice whether to practice Farsi in public, to take it into hiding or to abandon it like a *hijab* stuffed into a handbag. For some, it may even take the form of a conversion to a religion that is safer to claim, like Christianity or even agnosticism, in order to avoid the inscriptive forces on media and political discourse that

deny individuals the freedom to claim the Muslim signifier. Gee (1996) indicated that one's identity is applied through a three-way simultaneous interaction among social and cultural group membership, a particular language or mixture of languages, and a particular context. This notion evidences that the religion to which a person relates, and the context in which that religion is applied, are highly relevant to a person's identity. One study participant, Mike, a 20-year-old sophomore whose parents were both born in Iran, had 6 years of training with some reading and writing ability in Farsi. He told a story in which he encapsulates the conflict that affects the religious identity of Muslim Americans:

> He asked me what I was. He assumed I was a Christian, but I told him I was a Muslim. He instantly started calling me a terrorist and said that my father was a terrorist as well, and that my family had ties with terrorist backgrounds. And he also said that, I hope so that he jokingly said this, that he would kill our *type* of people if he was given the chance to…. *Most* Americans are open to all religions and races, so they don't mind being affiliated with Muslims…. One of my other friends, she is very open to all races, all religions, and she is planning on going to a mosque with our family later on in the year. Well, she was not afraid of us at all, as other people might be, because she was informed that not all Muslims are terrorists and that only a few, a fraction of them are.

The propagation of institutional discourses and representations can and usually does lead to ignorance, unless individuals get the chance to gather information that is not clouded with negative signifiers. The person who spewed hate at Mike spoke with a special brand of ignorance that comes from blind acceptance of the dominant meanings in circulation at any given time and space. He would likely not have been interested in hearing the truth, while the friend who planned to attend religious services with Mike's family was open to fresh information gathered firsthand. Had she accepted what she saw in the media about Islam and about Iran as truth, that might not have been the case.

Another example of immediate self-identification with a religion other than Islam, which carries a political baggage, is a participant who came from an interfaith marriage -- B'ahai and Christian. Commenting on the various religions' identifications and their political baggage, Ely, the same participant who previously spoke about *Othering* said that in Iran he would avoid letting people know he was B'ahai. "They know my mom's family is B'ahai, if they knew that I'm related to them…they'd know that I was *haramzadeh.*"[22] He further stated that people usually assume that he is Muslim immediately following an indication that he is Iranian. About this, he said, "People think that Muslims are all terrorists and hateful people, so when someone calls me a Muslim, I assume that they think I'm hateful." As a result, this student stated that he was quick to correct those who make this assumption. In order to cement his own identity as a B'ahai Iranian – a more acceptable designation in the US yet disdained in Iran -- this student was actively participating in the discourse of *Otherness* that marks Muslim Iranians as hateful.

On the other hand, those who stated that they were not afraid of admitting that they were Muslim if it were true, also added that they would emphasize that Islam was not their religion but their philosophy. One Muslim student, Catherine, asserted, "That's just who I am, you know? I'm not afraid [to admit that I'm Muslim] because it's my philosophy." In other words, the respondent identified her Muslim philosophy as a characteristic of herself, not a religion; she was able to comfortably accept Islam because

[22] It is interesting that this student used a Persian word to describe a negative perception among Persians. In the book *Civil Lines*, edited by Rukin Advani, Mukul Kesavan, and Ivan Hutnik, the word *haramzadeh* was translated to mean "bastard"; it is a cultural pejorative most often used to refer to those who are considered outside of the cultural context of the person saying it. In Muslim-dominated Iran, B'ahai is considered to be less than a true faith, so B'ahais' marriages with other faiths are not considered legal; if they do marry, their children are considered bastards, born out of wedlock.

religion simply frames her perspective rather than encompassing her entire persona, even though she was considered separate from other Americans as a result of her religion. Philosophy is ascribed with a more positive signifier where it is believed that it is based on logic and critical thinking whereas religion is more adherence to religious fanaticism and rituals. Accuracy of perceptions may make integration of identity easier.

Regarding the interpretations people have of his religion, since he identifies himself as Muslim, Allen observed religious stereotyping, but was inclined to be lenient about it:

> I can say the same thing about anybody's religion. But it's, like, stereotypical now, that Muslims are terrorists. Once you hear "Muslim" they are automatically extremists and Al Qaeda or whatever, "Hezbollah." All of these different, different words that come out of people's mouths. But, in reality, it's not [all] Americans, but [some] people that have been misled.

According to this student, fanaticism, not Islam, is to blame for the taint of terrorism that some have attributed to followers of the religion. By the same token, Americans are not, he argued, to blame for the misleading propaganda that tends to vilify Muslims. Conversely, his response indicates that just as Muslims are victims of stereotyping, he considered Americans to be victims as well, but of political manipulation rather than alienation. By refusing to assign blame to anyone, he remained safely an insider in both worlds. Conversely, however, even an insider is subject to stereotyping.

As a Muslim woman living in New York City after 9/11, I carried all of the imposed negative signifiers attached to immigrant identity – a stranger who speaks a foreign language and who covers her hair as part of the practice of a religion which Americans understand as one of warlike fanaticism -- a woman in need of liberation -- until I made the difficult choice to stop wearing my hijab. To use Stuart Hall's words, "in

the social institution of signifying activities and through repeated enunciative attempts to reinscribe and relocate the claim to cultural priority and hierarchy," the discourses propagated and the images and representations created and perpetuated, constructed me as the Other. I was constantly aware that I made people around me uncomfortable, without having done anything wrong. My identity, as articulated by the socio-institutional/political forces and the media through signification, led to discrimination against me. To remove myself from the negative signifiers, I had to remove myself from the *hijab*. My decision to remove the visible signifier of my religion was part of my participation in the construction of an ever-changing identity that is shaped by the dominant society in which I choose to live. Some Iranian-American students choose not to speak Farsi in public for the same reasons: They know they make people uncomfortable by using the language of the Other, and not just any Other – the scary terroristic Other, the Other that oppresses its women, the Other that threatens the world with its plans for nuclear weapons.

Whereas many participants did not find their religion to be an important determining factor as to who they were, others found it necessary to concentrate on it in molding and constructing their lives by keeping it private relative to how they relate to people of differing cultures in general.

Ora, a 20-year-old junior majoring in Civil Engineering born from two Iranian parents conceded, "When I do get married, I would like him to be Iranian and Jewish just like me. So we could raise our children how my parents did, so they will come out knowing the language, and they will teach their children the language, so they'll never forget it." As an American who could align herself with any of several aspects of identity,

Ora considered it important to know Farsi and Hebrew as well as English because, "If you ever have to travel to another country, you know how to communicate. Because language is, like, the basis of any nationality or country, so it's good to know it. I'm Jewish so I would like to know the language of Israel, which is Hebrew. I was born in America so I do know English. And I would like to know Farsi because that's my nationality." In other words, she was already true to her identity as an American, and felt it necessary to remain true to the other characteristics of her cultural makeup as well, through language. Ora placed value on all three languages because being able to choose how she or her children communicate will bring them added value in society, wherever they go.

Ethnic and National Signifiers

> *Well, one of the only disadvantages [to speaking Farsi is] that ignorant people would ask me what language I'm speaking and maybe think that I'm a terrorist.*
> *~ Nick, an 18-year-old freshman born from two Iranian parents*

Iranian-Americans must engage in a precarious balance between two worlds – the Farsi-speaking Iranian culture of their families and the English-speaking American culture of their public lives. Having left Iran behind and adopted America as their new home, they find many American doors slammed in their faces because Americans are so engaged with these meanings and *Othering* practices that many find it difficult to separate the individual Iranian from the discourse of the Axis of Evil. For Iranian-Americans, these conditions hinder the negotiation of a well-integrated identity, weighing individuals down instead with that binary sense of Self as Other. By "well-integrated identity," I mean a feeling of fluency with each aspect of one's identity – the Iranian and

the American -- so that one may live and articulate each and every facet of their identity and move away from all that limits them. At the turn of the 21st century, Du Bois made these observations about a group that remained marginalized in America after hundreds of years:

> The history of the American Negro is the history of this strife — this longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self. In this merging he wishes neither of the older selves to be lost. He does not wish to Africanize America, for America has too much to teach the world and Africa. He would not bleach his Negro blood in a flood of white Americanism, for he knows that Negro blood has a message for the world. He simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American without being cursed and spit upon by his fellows, without having the doors of opportunity closed roughly in his face. (Du Bois, 1994, p. 5)

The second-generation Iranian-American participants experience the same challenge at the beginning of the 21st century.

As Smith and Watson noted, it is possible to achieve self-actualization, or what DuBois termed self-conscious personhood, or what I call an integrated identity when one can perceive and live the self as integrated, composed of many internal components rather than specific, external aspects (Myers et al., 1991). With that achieved, individuals can "positively integrate each aspect of self, previously devalued and viewed as negative by the prevailing societal view" (Myers et al., p. 59). Overall, the negotiation of self is a state of "becoming" rather than "being" (Hall, 1996, p. 4). The ethnic-based identities developed in subcultures within American society (such as Iranian-heritage students) are largely based on a process of integration through the institutions one attends, especially school (Saville-Troike, 1996), and negative external factors influenced by the society in which one lives (Fairclough, 1992, 2001). Here, I will show that students pick up cues -- verbal and nonverbal indicators of what to expect from peers and from adults in their

lives such as teachers -- as they grow up within American institutional systems, so that they soon learn that living their heritage culture and using their HL can lead to social and sometimes even juridical trouble. Iranian-American students are isolated between two worlds: They are American and want to be treated as such, but their Iranian heritage is part of their identities also, and they find that there are many reasons to hide this aspect of themselves in public. This relates to Angela Valenzuela's (1999) concept of subtractive schooling – children learn to hide or abandon what does not serve the purposes of their American academic and social lives.

This hiding is affected by socio-psychological factors like the desire to fit in, affected in turn by socio-institutional/political factors like the sense of being judged based on popular representations of one's nationality, ethnicity and religion in the media and thereby, in society at large. Such is the case with the misnomer of Iranians as "Arabs." We must ask, what, then, *is* an "Arab?" Merriam-Webster (2009) defines "Arab" as "a member of the Semitic people of the Arabian Peninsula," and "a member of an Arabic-speaking people," both of which are inaccurate descriptions of Iranians. Indeed, Iran is north of the Arabian Peninsula, which is composed entirely of Saudi Arabia and Iraq; furthermore, Iranians, and particularly those who identify themselves as Persian, speak Farsi. "Persian" is clearly defined as, "Of or relating to Persia or Iran, or to their peoples, languages, or cultures; a native or inhabitant of Persia or Iran; any of the western Iranian dialects or languages of ancient or medieval Persia and modern Iran" (thefreedictionary.com/Persian). Most Americans are ignorant of this distinction.

Neither is the cultural or linguistic group of Persians, nor the national demographic of Iranians Arab, nor, do they prefer to be designated as such. The fact that

Iran is geographically located in a part of the world called the Middle East is immaterial – Iranians do not speak Arabic, they consider themselves separate from Arab culture and they do not wish to have an absent national identity in the world. On this subject, Melissa, a 19-year-old business and French major who had no formal training in Farsi but had a limited HL reading and writing ability, as she put it, commented, "My best friend, for example, lives in France and she is a Muslim Algerian…she always calls me an Arab since I am from Iran. I always tell her that I am not, but she refuses to listen to me. It bothers me." This may not necessarily have to do with any reservations regarding the Arabic demographic, but simply the inaccuracy of the assertion. Melissa conveyed no feelings about the Arab categorization, but simply the fact that the respondents consider themselves something else. Another student observed, "When I was in high school, they really didn't know the difference. They thought the whole Mid-East was Arab. I used to get that a lot."

Unfortunately, the overgeneralization, as per Lim's (2006) assertion, does result in stereotyping, which leads to a special challenge for an individual to integrate the two sides of a binary identity if one receives treatment that is negative based on false impressions. A clear-cut example of this problem is the way Iranian-Americans have been treated since the 9/11 attacks, being judged on news stories about the attackers who hailed from the Middle East, with the possibility of Iran's developing nuclear weapons, and with all other threats and violence that occur in the Middle East in general. Catherine said, "When 9/11 happened, I heard a lot of people say stuff like, 'You are from a terrorist country and you're going to blow us up,' and I would reply 'I'm not Arab, you know, I'm Persian; Iran had nothing to do with it.'" Although a logical fallacy can

already be identified in the designation of all Arabs as "terrorists," the assertion is even further misguided by the fact that Iranians are not Arabs. Another participant, Zara, a 22-year-old junior majoring in Architecture/Engineering, born of Iranian parents, said that when each student in her class was invited to play the music of her choice for the class, she who is a bilingual in English and Persian and can read and write Farsi perfectly well, chose a Persian language song. When the teacher played it in class, immediately she heard comments that, "Terrorist music is being played now." The situation ends up altogether difficult in that living in America, Iranians in general are isolated, suspended between two worlds. No longer exclusively of Iranian culture by means of their participation in America, they are not allowed to enter freely into the American culture because they are branded with misconceptions and stereotypes that do not even refer to the place from which they originated. They are forced to further distinguish themselves from others in the same region (Arabs) while defending themselves from distinction – *Othering* -- in the country with which they most identify, the United States. Socio-psychological and socio-institutional/political factors come into play in this context. The need to distance oneself from one group (Arabs) while trying to identify with two others (Iranians and Americans) makes walking the tightrope between two worlds more stressful due to the action of diagonal forces like misplaced stereotyping. Among themselves, those who speak Farsi are insiders and all other Americans are outsiders, but among Americans of other ethnicities, speaking Farsi marks one as an outsider who does not want in -- an outsider who wants to hold back to old ways and languages and does not appreciate the privileges of living in the US. This dichotomy is aggravated by some Americans who make the assumption that the Farsi they sometimes hear in public is

Arabic – and therefore to be feared. Demonstrating this tension among various aspects of identity, Alicia stated, "I was born in America, so I am an American, but my background is Persian. If I say Persian American, people will think I was born in Iran, which isn't true, so I say American first." Allen put the internal conflict in concrete, external terms:

> …Because of stereotyping you were automatically labeled a terrorist and you know, "Axis of Evil." Most people don't even know the history or culture of Iran so they automatically assume that everybody is the same way. Like they are bad people, they want to build bombs, do this, do that -- those are disadvantages…. I guess growing up in America, if you go around saying you're Iranian, because there [have been] over 30 years of bad relations now, I don't think it's something to be too happy about going around saying. Because there are always people are always against you. You don't want to talk to the wrong person: Something bad can happen.

This participant had experienced the stereotyping, distrust and outright hostility that some Americans perpetuate against Iranians. Decades of political tensions between Iran and the US have fed into this negative interface, to the extent that the participant was attacked with political rather than cultural stereotypes. It made the participant so uncomfortable that he considered it unsafe to claim his Iranian identity. If it is unsafe to even say one is Iranian, it is certainly unsafe to be overheard speaking Farsi – Americans within earshot might think, for instance, that the speaker was planning how to place a bomb.

Due to a myriad of socio-institutional/political influences, the demographic with which a person identifies oneself is relevant to how one is perceived by members of another nationality. Here I will argue that the sustained political tensions between the United States and members of the Middle East (which is generally considered the Arabic-speaking world) can lead Americans of Iranian descent to present themselves as "Persian," a politically neutral and contemporarily anonymous designation, rather than "Iranian," which is inevitably correlated to the distressing political issues between American and Middle Eastern governments. Once again, students are strategically

aligning themselves to the signifier that will bring them the least social trouble. For example, Allen conceded, "I guess I wouldn't have any problems saying I'm from Iran if there wasn't political tension…when I was younger, I used to say I am Iranian Persian, but now I lean more toward Persian than Iranian." This conscious abeyance from the use of the negatively constructed signifier "Iranian," which is loaded with political baggage, is due to the fact that there are no actual cultural tensions between Persians and Americans. The term "Persian" carries no political baggage, no negative associations.

Bahareh, a 19 year-old sophomore biology major, whose parents were both born in Iran, had 1 year of childhood Farsi training, followed by 2 years in college courses, and spoke and understood Farsi well but with very little reading and writing skills. She indicated, "I think Iranian is more your nationality; Persian is more culture. Same thing with being American—[it] is your nationality, but there are some people here that keep their heritage." Indeed, while the epithet "Iranian" may harbor a pejorative tint in so many daily headlines in American newspapers, "Persian" is a description rarely heard outside of historical and narrative contexts. Most Americans know very little about Persian culture, and since Americans tend to place Iranians under the large umbrella of the Arab Middle East, it is safe to say that many Americans do not even know that Persian culture exists. By designating oneself as "Persian" rather than claiming "Iranian," one maintains a modicum of ambiguity that may make it easier to function in social situations. Psychologically, it is slightly easier to cope with being *Othered* for one's culture than being vilified for one's nationality. One study participant said:

> What I'd be "okay" with would be "Persian-American"…Solely because, you think "Iran," you think, more often than not, of something negative you've seen in recent times. Or you associate it with the words that are predominant right now in the media – nuclear weapons or just stuff like that. You don't want to associate

> with that… so when you say "Persian," I think automatically, "Persian Empire." I automatically think…gold, empire, power, just positive things. The Persian Empire was a leading power, now Iran isn't necessarily a leading power; it's considered a third world nation. Which would you rather be considered a member of?

Strategic alignment with the construct of Persian-American is an example of how participants at the level of discourse distance themselves from the negative construct of "Iranian" and identify themselves as "Persian" to deflect the negative stereotyping that many Americans would automatically place against them if they identified themselves as "Iranian." It underscores the assertion that Iranians will use the term "Persian" to publicly disassociate themselves from their heritage, subordinating themselves in response to the negative opinions of the dominant American society. They take agency over the negative representation of their nationality and choose a different identity to perform. As Maz Jobrani, an Iranian-born American comedian, said, in one of his stand-up comedies that I attended as part of my observations, "We Iranians, when people ask us, 'Where are you from?' We respond, 'I am Persian, not Iranian,' but *Peeeersian*, like a Persian cat, soft, meeeoww, I am not Axis of Evil, guns, terrorist, no, no. I am Persian, like the Persian rug, beautiful; you can walk on it."

With regard to the negative baggage of national and religious signifiers, Allen indicated, "After 9/11, you don't want to go around saying too much that you're Iranian, but I feel like you would be worse to say you are Muslim…now after [Iranian President] Ahmadinejad and the news, how they are always talking about him." Other responses reflected the same perceptions, influenced by negative media representations. For example, Catherine stated:

> …because of the tensions going on between the United States and Iran, I don't want people to automatically put me into a stereotype. Most people, when I tell

> them I'm Persian, they say okay. They don't think I'm Iranian right away; they might not even know what Persian is.

Socio-psychologically, these young people knew they could play off of others' ignorance – the basic lack of verified information and their blind acceptance of the dominant discourse -- and use it to craft the identity of their choice. There was a negative relationship that the interviewees made between their adopted culture and their heritage while trying not to oppose the fact that they considered themselves American. By drawing from the dominant discourse of the American ideology (i.e., the inferior/superior assumptions with regard to difference in culture, language, religion), they distinguish the constraints of self-identification with Iran and thus make a strategic decision to align and integrate themselves in a way that is more acceptable to the American mainstream. It is not American culture, but American ignorance born out of dominant linguistic and nationalistic ideologies, which they must act against by wearing their heritage outwardly, or embrace by blending in. Farnaz, a 20-year-old junior double majoring in neuroscience and Middle Eastern studies stated, "I think that Iranians are thought of too much as Arabs. I've heard that at so many discussions and it drives me crazy when I hear it. I don't know if it's my long-lost identity screaming out, 'You are Iranian and you don't like when Iranians are called Arabs and Arabs are called Iranians.'" It is important to mention that this student has an Iranian father and an Egyptian mother, two heritage backgrounds that are not Arab.

There is a subtle disadvantage for students, however, in identifying with an ethnicity and not a nation. Some Iranians find themselves ostracized by other Middle Easterners, who do not have the luxury of being able to claim an ethnicity that takes the edge off the name of their nation. Those who are Arab cannot claim to be anything else

and must weather the abuse that comes from uninformed Americans who operate based on stereotype and misconception raised by the dominant discourse. For other Middle Easterners, there is no place to hide, and they may object to the way Iranians can strategically align themselves with the Persian or the Iranian depending on context. One could find an example of this in a situation Mike described, in which he ran into problems identifying with another Middle Easterner who questioned the salience of the Persian construct:

> I have certain friends who are Middle Eastern and I remember one time, I was telling one of them, "Yeah, I'm Persian," and he looked at me and said, "That's not -- Can you locate that on a map?" and I was like, "What do you mean?" and he said, "There's no Persian country" -- basically, he was calling me out on it -- and I said, "You know, its modern-day Iran," and he said he knows… I think maybe he felt insulted, so I'm trying not to insult anyone, I guess, by saying that. But at the same time, I feel there's more positive [associations] to "Persian" than there is to "Iranian."

The negation of the signifier of Persian for a national identity by other Middle Easterners is not uncommon. The student, as in many other instances, chose a nonconfrontational strategy of trying to be polite and inoffensive to emphasize on the civility of Iranians as opposed to the constructed signifier of aggressive, combative, holocaust denier, nuclear bomb proponent. In this process, he shows no desire to deconstruct the civilized/uncivilized dualism by taking a passive combative mode. The implication is that by being civil, he forfeits his right to perform his identity the way he chooses.

Just as many American students feel comfortable enough to remove themselves from political discourse, so it is with some Iranian-American students. They do not involve themselves in what seems too remote from their everyday lives as Americans. This is not a conscious renouncement of any connection to Iran or the Middle East, but a product of general disinterest in world politics or even world news. This is a socio-

political factor in that Iranian-American students did not identify themselves more strongly with one nation that the other; in fact, what emerged more strongly was a general lack of concern over politics. When discussing an experience that he had in Israel, one respondent illustrated just how disconnected he was from the social and political occurrences in the Middle East: "Someone drove a big construction vehicle into other people, and it happened right outside the hotel I was supposed to be staying at in Israel, so that really shocked me." Political strife and violent outbreaks have been common in recent years in both Iran and Israel, especially due to the political conflict between the two. Nonetheless, it was a disturbing incident from which the respondent felt completely separate. Regarding the degree to which he kept up with occurrences like this, he indicated, "If I watch CNN and something interesting comes up about it, I'll Google it, but otherwise, I don't really hear about attacks there that much," despite the fact that he has family who live in both Israel and Iran. However, if this student did not have family in Iran, it is unlikely that he would pursue news stories about the Middle East at all.

Desire to be Part of the Two Worlds

Negotiating an integrated identity is a challenge all second-generation Americans must face. Determining how to be part of the world of one's heritage while fitting in to that of the dominant society takes a conscious effort, and young people do think about how to achieve this balance. Desire to integrate is the urge to create Bhabha's third space that balances along the line between the two worlds, where the individual can live comfortably, without being *Othered* and without offending anyone. Since the third space seems to be unattainable for the Iranian-Americans in this study and the desire not to be

Othered often fails no matter what signifier one uses -- national, ethnic, linguistic, religious -- one is left with no option but a strategic alignment with and integration into the dominant society. There are numerous inescapable socio-psychological, socio-political, socio-historical and socio-institutional/political pressures operating against the fulfillment of this desire to be *what I am but I cannot be*.

Politics, for example, is one arena in which some Iranian-American students feel pulled in opposite directions. As Iranians, they may feel impelled to be loyal to and defensive of their homeland, even if they disagree with what is happening there, while as Americans, they may feel pressured to denounce their homeland because of what is happening there and the way American politicians vilify Iran as part of the Axis of Evil. As a strategy to avoid this, some of them turn their backs on politics altogether, but for those who do want to integrate both aspects of their identity, the issue of politics is unavoidable. For example, Bahareh made the point that she made her American political decisions with an eye on what is happening in Iran. This is a fingerprint of her identity as both an involved American and an interested Iranian descendent. Socio-politically and socio-psychologically, she exhibited an integrated blend of interests. Here, she considers how she might be able to balance between her two loyalties by advocating diplomacy between the two countries.

> A big, important part for me right now is because, you know, Iran is a big political topic is to what is their view on Iran; how do [candidates for political office] want to approach the situation? So, I think the one that is more prone to peaceful talks or negotiations has a better standing in my opinion than someone who wants to go to war and fight with war. So, I think it goes back to because I have family there, and it's like a personal issue, I'm not going to support someone that wants to go and attack this country that is so rich in culture and destroy like the way they did with Afghanistan or Iraq.

With a perception that the United States is founded on multiculturalism, Bahareh asserted that her identification with the United States will always remain the same in that she believes that her heritage and her nationalism are aspects of herself that she views separately. In this way, she does not politically choose sides; she remains true to the United States as her home country, and also true to her identity as an Iranian. She fulfills her desire to integrate by separating politics from culture, and nationality from ethnicity: Whereas one can identify with a place from which one's family originates, according to these respondents, there is a unanimous agreement that one can remain true to the government and culture of the place where they live.

The desire to integrate includes the desire to embrace diversity. One identity can encompass various cultures, including different nationalist views, different cultural practices and different languages. "Being identified just as an American or just as an Iranian means that you just possess one aspect. Being identified as an Iranian-American makes you diverse and knowledgeable towards the countries of Iran and America," said 1 respondent.

American diversity provides a medium in which students can incubate identities that allow them to blend heritage and adopted cultures in order to achieve the delicate balance between the two worlds – to find the third space. The "melting pot" they perceive does carry the risk of homogenization, but it also allows newcomers time to sort themselves out and figure out how they will perform either an integrated identity, one that assimilates them into the dominant culture, or one that embraces *Otherness*. The Iranian-American young people in this study generally had optimistic attitudes about diversity. One respondent observed:

> No matter what, I think America is always just going to be a melting pot of cultures and that's just a part of it. That's why you go to New York and there's Chinatown and Little Kabul or something, or there's, in Washington D.C. and Los Angeles, such a concentrated culture, the Persian culture. So, I think it's inevitable that even if you want to make a nation state and you want to have, like a unity, I guess, you're still going to have the individual cultures because I think that's just what America is. I don't think there's any way to make it all one unified culture. So, I think it's important for maintaining that; our individual sense of identities of the groups that are in America.

According to Bourdieu (1991), it is the way in which we choose to communicate that determines to whom we relate most. Identities are constructed through language and how we use it (Miller, 2000). In this way, one could already accept the full integration of the respondents in that they all chose to communicate, and most comfortably communicated, in English, whether or not they knew the languages that corresponded with their ethnicity or religion. To draw this one step further, these same respondents were all students of East Coast University, a commonality which relates to Saville-Troike's (1996) assertion of institutional influence. Since they were attending a multicultural university in America, it is reasonable to surmise that their views were probably different than they would have been if these students had gone back to Iran to pursue their education, or had they found themselves to be islands at universities with small or no Iranian populations. Ultimately, only the intimations of the respondents can best communicate their perspectives in regard to the nationality they choose to claim and how they perceive themselves in relation to the country in which they live.

Almost invariably, the respondents claimed to relate most to the United States. Whether they visited Iran, participated in Iranian coalitions at East Coast University, or associated with Iranian friends and family, they considered themselves Americans. Even politically, the respondents claimed that though their decisions were based on the country

of their ethnicity, they acted on the American front through the United States political process: “The Israel factor of each politician is really important to me. I voted for John McCain in the Primaries just because I learned (by reading) that he was more supportive for Israel.” These students have found a way to strategically align themselves with both nations by making their political choices in America with an eye to relations with the Middle East.

When asked to identify herself in terms of her religion, her nationality, and her ethnicity, Melissa replied, “Being Jewish is important to me because that’s my religion and that’s my identity; also being an Iranian. I’m a Jewish Iranian born in America. I would say they’re all equal.” But rather than appearing noncommittal, the respondent genuinely seemed to consider each designation component parts of the whole of her persona. Including several aspects of her identity when she describes herself is an indication that the student has fulfilled her desire to integrate because she considers all aspects to be represented equally: Jewish, Iranian and American. Hearing the different voices of various Iranian-Americans in the East Coast University study who performed different acts in different spaces and times, one can identify a common theme that appears more poignantly than any other: Whereas Iranian-Americans do not deny their religions, their background, or their political perspectives, they will not neglect their connection to and relationship with the United States. Speaking English, attending American schools, sustaining friends from other cultures, and engaging in culturally American endeavors, no matter what identity each respondent claims for him or herself, it was always concluded that he or she is an American in one way or another. In this claim to identity they showed their autonomy and agency. They showed that their personal

journey has equipped them with the tools they will use to strategically align themselves with a positive identity.

Thus we see that there are many forces at work in the process of identity formation, a process that is especially complex for young Americans whose country of origin is so very Other than the country where they live. Politically, religiously and ethnically, these young people are up against powerful forces from both worlds that make integration a special challenge. For these reasons, they find it necessary to strategically align themselves with different aspects of their identity at different times and spaces, depending on their audience and the effect they hope to achieve. In this light, it is easy to see that maintaining a heritage language is a special challenge for Iranian-American students. In the next chapter, we will see how negative representations of Iranians in the arts and media affect Iranian-American students' decisions on which aspects of their identities to perform, including whether to speak Farsi at home or in public.

CHAPTER V

TEXTUAL AND VISUAL REPRESENTATION

The power of racist and ethnocentric images, narratives, and discourses can cast a world-as-real as in the realist epistemology -- a conceived or contrived world that is presented as real -- for the society in which those images and discourses circulate, and a small segment of society that wields more power over a people can produce knowledge that is accepted as truth. That world-as-real includes the people whose ethnicity, whose nationality, whose culture and whose religion are represented or misrepresented. That world-as-real affects the process of identity formation by instilling individuals with the internal sense that they must defend themselves from being cast in a dim light, or take their ethnic, religious, nationalist and cultural identity – including their heritage language -- into hiding. The process of *Othering* that I discussed in Chapter IV takes place through the lens of the world-as-real that works in production and reproduction of ideologies which producers of the arts and news media create. In his argument in *Orientalism* (1978), Said offers a theory that we can use to emphasize how this happens through creating representations and discourses as traveling across genres, "from literary, historical, [and] scholarly accounts, to political." In the case of Iranian-American students, a contemporary Orientalism has emerged that places Middle Easterners in the position of villain, which makes it hard for them to identify with their heritage,

nationally, ethnically, religiously, and linguistically. In coining the term "contemporary Orientalism," I am referring to the occidental treatment of the Orient and its peoples that is informed by the special circumstances of the 21st century, taking Orientalism beyond anything that had been previously observed. When these Iranian-Americans do find the courage as young adults to illustrate a different representation for themselves and combat the misinformation, stereotype and misconception that result from misrepresentation, they find themselves in an unequal position on the battlefield. Even if they do arm themselves with good information, and even if they themselves present a shining example of what it means to them to be Iranian in America, the counter-representation they can present in their daily lives is like spitting into an ocean of negative images that the arts and media produce and consumers reproduce in far greater amounts. Realities that are produced as counter-representations are far from equal in status from those constructed by various social, political, and ideological institutions. Textual and visual representations then become sites of struggle (Hall, 1991). I argue that members of a subordinate culture, unable to win the battle, further reinforce their *Otherness* by censoring themselves and taking their heritage culture into hiding, in direct response to the way they perceive themselves in the mirror of the dominant culture. By hiding, I am referring to the private space – home, family and the insular Iranian community. This process is censorious as well as performative. Through these performances, many of the Iranian-American students in the East Coast University study only wore the Iranian aspect of their identity in places where and with people with whom they considered it safe to do so. Because Americans had assigned to these individuals the stereotypes and misconceptions they had gleaned from the movies and the news, many of the Iranian-

American students interviewed were not comfortable sharing their Iranian identity – including the Farsi language – in public spaces.

In this chapter, I am going to argue that contemporary Orientalism -- the way Iranians are represented in the US media and entertainment industries, among other arenas – directly influences the strategic decision of some Iranian Americans not to speak Persian or, among Muslim Iranians, not to display their Muslimness in public; however, some Iranians responded with efforts to better represent their culture among Americans, hoping in their own little ways to educate away misconceptions and stereotypes. Media representation is a major socio-institutional factor, influenced by socio-historical factors (decades of political enmity between the US and Iran) and socio-political factors (the post-9/11 vilification of the entire Middle East). To demonstrate this connectedness and the fluidity between these factors, Appadurai in his book, *Modernity at Large* (1996) introduces five dimensions of global cultural flows (a) ethnoscapes, (b) mediascapes, (c) technoscapes, (d) financescapes, and (e) ideoscapes. He explains:

> What I call mediascapes and ideoscapes are closely related landscapes of images. Mediascapes refer both to the distribution of the electronic capabilities to produce and disseminate information (newspaper, magazines, television stations, and film production studios), which are now available to a growing number of private and public interests throughout the world, and to the images of the world created by these media. These images involve many complicated inflections, depending on their mode (documentary or entertainment), their audiences (local, national, or transnational), and the interests of those who own and control them. What is important about these mediascapes is that they provide large and complex repertoires of images, narratives, and ethnoscapes to viewers throughout the world, in which the world of commodities and the world of news and politics are profoundly mixed...The lines between the realistic and the fictional landscapes they see are blurred, so that the farther away the audiences are from the direct experiences [of portrayed lives], the more likely they are to construct imagined worlds. Mediascapes, whether produced by private or state interests, tend to be image-centered, narrative-based accounts of strips of reality. (p. 35)

In this chapter, I argue that the Iranian-American students demonstrate their awareness of these mediascapes and ideoscapes misrepresenting and *Othering* them; they show their discomfort with this state of affairs and their late-blooming desire to counter those negative representations and speak of their struggle to integrate the American with the Iranian aspects of their identities – including, against the odds, Farsi.

Contemporary Orientalism in the Arts

When a set of discourses brings into cooperative alignment multiple institutions of society, including literature and media, this set of discourses acquires the status of the "truth" in society even if that "truth" may later be disputed, overturned, or otherwise abandoned. Foucault talks about truth as linked in a circular relation with systems of power that produce and sustain it: A "regime of truth." Crawford (1989, 2000) demonstrates that ideological production and reproduction of stereotype and misconception as truth and the desire to dominate and command drove many of the United States' English-only campaigns throughout its history. This includes misconceptions that develop through word of mouth and misrepresentation. In Althusserian language, if an ideology produces Others, then "concrete individuals as subjects" who are constituted as Others have no other choice but to function within that ideology (Althusser, 1970, p.171). The arts and news media help shape Americans' version of "truth" regarding Iran and its people, and even the true stories presented in news and memoirs to be misinterpreted by American audiences directly affect young Iranian-Americans' subjectivities and choices about which parts of their identities to perform and under what circumstances.

Books

> *After 9/11 there have been a lot of books and movies about [the] Middle East. Some of the books…at least show that Iranian people, with all those difficulties that face their daily lives, try to be as strong as they can and fulfill their goals and pursue a better life, even with all those obstacles that face them. Usually, those books that discover the dark side of the reality become the bestsellers, and the main reason behind it is politics. If there was no 9/11, none of these books would become as famous and popular as they are now. ~ (Rokhsareh, a 21-year-old junior majoring in Biochemistry, who was born from Iranian parents and immigrated to the US after finishing high school)*

Contemporary Orientalism is pervasive in the arts and media, not only in terms of fictional content, but also in terms of which stories are told to what audiences. Even in a society where many people no longer read for pleasure or to educate themselves, books, news magazines and newspapers can create a powerful representation of Iranians and their heritage, and authors, whether Iranian or otherwise, take the place of the contemporary Orientalist, looking at a population either from inside or outside. All of these books, through creation of *Otherness*, define and secure one's own place and representation by stigmatizing the Other. The creation of Other has the advantage that it constructs one's position as a logical and neutral observer who is looking at the Other and presenting factual information. However, for one to attain and maintain power, the Other must be constantly produced and reproduced as inferior, irrational and demonic.

This study shows that some participants believe the influence of literature in educating people about Iran and its culture may no longer be significant: Shabnam commented, "No one reads books anymore." However, Mike made a point that books are being made into movies and that is where the greatest reception and the most danger will occur. That is contemporary Orientalism at work: The West creates content across multiple media that affects audiences' general perception of Oriental people.

All of the students in the study who did read chose books in English; none discussed literature in Farsi, and some admitted to being unable to read in Farsi. This shows that literacy in the HL is already in the process of falling by the wayside. It further illustrated a greater loss -- that is the students did not even have the necessary linguistic tools to read Farsi books in the original, untranslated language. An American education, immersion in American arts and media, and the constant tide of external pressures that work against parents' best efforts to preserve the heritage language have all worked to make second-generation Iranian-Americans into literate Americans who are illiterate in their heritage language. As Heller (2001) observes, "Among the most important of the other institutions which do the work of linguistic regimentation and the reproduction of linguistic norms are the family, the media and the schools" (p.98).

When it comes to discussions of representation, it is English-language literature portraying Iran and Iranians that affects American perceptions of the demographic in general, and leads to misinformed overgeneralization. Some books definitely have their effect on American readers, such as Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis* and Betty Mahmoody's *Not Without My Daughter*, and Americans of Iranian heritage are sensitive to the various interpretations and misconceptions that can arise from uninformed reading. Again, these books are examples of contemporary Orientalism, because they take a distinctly Western perspective on things that actually happened in the Orient (Iran). "In media discourse as well as generally in writing, there is a sharp divide between producers and interpreters, or, since the media product takes on some of the nature of a commodity, between producers and consumers" (Fairclough, 2001, p. 41). The very fact that the books to be discussed below include memoirs with such different stories shows that no one story can

encompass all of Iranian culture – while a story may be true for its author and may even represent a small segment of life within a place and culture, it certainly does not represent the entire country and all its people. For example, a cowboy western novel may be authentic enough in depicting one cattle-herding family on a ranch in Colorado or Texas, but a pretzel vendor from Brooklyn or a surfer from Waikiki will likely never have ridden a horse or roped a calf, and would not know what parts of the story were accurate and what parts were conceived by the author. The participants in this study agreed that the uninformed public might see each book as an accurate and complete depiction of life in Iran – and many readers see no reason why they should question what they read. It is this natural tendency for readers to internalize the content they consume that puts Iranian-Americans on guard, expecting with reason to be lumped in with the political refugees and abused wives as though those stories applied to all Iranians.

One key example is the memoir *Persepolis*, by Marjane Satrapi, which is popular with young adult audiences because of its graphic-novel format and which was adapted as a movie in 2007. It takes place in the time of the Islamic Revolution in the 1970s and '80s, and follows the events that put Satrapi's family in jeopardy and led to her parents' sending her out of the country for her safety. We can argue that Satrapi, who lives in France and writes in English, is one Iranian who seeks to dispel myths about her country of origin by presenting a personal story that intertwines historical narrative. Conversely, readers might misconstrue Satrapi's personal narrative as representative of all Iranians during that time. By penning a memoir that places the Iranian government in the role of a personal attacker, Satrapi strategically aligns herself with the Occidental (European and US audiences) and indirectly propels contemporary Orientalism.

One study participant read *Persepolis* in high school, on a teacher's recommendation, which in and of itself is interesting because the teacher may have recommended the book to this student specifically because the student is of Iranian descent. That student, Catherine, stated:

> I went back to the teacher and said, "I've read it; you know, I can't personally relate to everything that she has said." Because I'm [not] involved actively in politics as her parents were or she was herself because I'm not Communist, and they had some sympathetic views or something, but like some other stuff I can relate maybe a little bit, like maybe that she didn't like wearing the *hijab* …I said, "You know, this is not how most Iranians think." That's her own personal experiences… [Satrapi] was just one person, this one view: It doesn't represent all the Iranians' views at all.... Then it becomes a bestseller [and] some people think, "That's it, that's the majority view." I still think it's good to see different view points because I learned something I didn't even know about…. So, it was interesting, but I had to keep telling people it's just her life, not everyone's.

Here, Catherine is trying to educate the teacher about the misinterpretation that might arise by lumping all Iranians into one category, creating knowledge as universal truth and legitimizing it through its relation with the larger society. The imposition and assumptions of a parallel existence between the author of the text and the student reinforce the teacher's position as superior and liberator of the world by constructing the Other as inferior and in need of liberation.

The students who do read and who look for books on the Middle East assert that reading with an open mind is of critical importance. This is especially true for people who have never been to the Middle East and do not know anyone who has. The participants in this study who did read appreciated the information and insights that they got from reading books. However, some were critical that memoirs and novels tend to sensationalize and generalize people, often failing to capture the complexity of a given culture. One of the themes that emerged from the study is that most of the participants

who read attempted to *verify* the information that they read in books, often from their parents who had firsthand experiences of living in Iran. Most of the time, the participants' parents would say that the depiction in the book is not completely accurate or is an exaggerated version of reality. This fact-checking can be good for second-generation students, but it is not a resource available to readers who do not have access to Iranians with firsthand experiences. Americans who cannot ask anybody about their experience are more likely to accept what they read as truth, and to over-generalize the stories they read to apply to all Iranians.

Overgeneralization awakens and politicizes the Other by constructing provisional subjectivities. Mahmoody's memoir *Not Without My Daughter*, about her escape from her husband's family in Iran that involved a hard custody battle over their daughter, was made into a movie starring Sally Field in 1991. The Iranian-American students recognized that through these books and movies, Iranians in general were being *Othered* in the US, and it made them uncomfortable whenever they encountered it. One study participant, Niloufar, discussed the veracity of the book as it may have been perceived by western audiences:

> I know that in certain books, they'll exaggerate just to sell the book, when in reality, that doesn't happen as much as you would think. People have this view of the Middle East, and I know that just because I've spoken to my parents after reading *Not Without My Daughter*, my Mom told me that yeah, that could happen, but it doesn't happen as much as Americans think because they [publish] it just to sell books. Again, I've become more tolerant and I've realized that the Middle East isn't one big desert with people walking around in chadors [a different form of *hijab* which is a long covering some Iranian women wear over their clothes instead of a long overcoat and a headscarf].

Niloufar was not the only student who would rather downplay a true story than face the possibility that these unfortunate representations might have something to do with her; like so many other Iranian-American students, she held her Iranian identity dear

and did not want it besmirched. Being able to hear firsthand that not all Iranians are like the men in *Not Without My Daughter* made it easier for Bahareh to wear her own skin. Catherine also talked about the importance of having firsthand experience of some of the things that she reads, because she can critically examine the credibility of the material. She said: "When you have inside knowledge about a culture and then you a read a book, you have a different perspective; you have a different understanding. You read under the lines."

Niloufar observed that only experience can deliver a true perspective, but most readers do not have the luxury of firsthand knowledge: "You have to experience it. If I watch a movie on Iran and if I see something that doesn't look like [it should], I know it doesn't look like that because I have been there before. If someone else watches a movie and it shows something that doesn't look like Iran, they might believe it because that's what the TV is telling them it is."

Most Americans will never go to Iran, and many do not even know any Iranian people; more importantly, many do not know to ask whether something they see is accurately represented. There have been some attempts in movies and the media to combat contemporary Orientalism by addressing misconceptions. These efforts appear in documentary form, however, and are unlikely to be consumed by general audiences, making their reach much smaller than that of the entertainment and news media representations that do embody contemporary Orientalism. One student, Nikki, 18-year-old freshman biology major, born from two Iranian parents was pleased to see anything that showed a positive view of Iran. She said:

> Actually, there was an anthropology video on TV and it was actually on this topic. This guy was tired of having people misinterpret his friends' culture and he

> actually went to Iran for two years and videotaped the actual places, and he showed that it was a beautiful place and not just camels. Everyone thinks that just because there is a desert there would be camels and everyone is in poverty.

Nikki was happy that for once she saw a representation of a 21st century Iran not a 10th century. The flip side of this is that for every documentary that rings true for Iranians in the US, there is another that, based on their own experience, appears false. The same participant added: "I saw a video and it was showing *hijab* and they said that everyone wears a chador. That's not true. It's only for the elderly. When I went, I didn't have to wear that. I just wore modest clothing with a scarf on my head. You don't have to completely cover your whole body."

It falls to those with firsthand experience to either participate in the misrepresentation of their homeland and culture by keeping their own experiences in hiding, or to combat ignorance by taking every opportunity that arises to tell – and to show -- the truth as they see it. Catherine had this comment:

> When people like my friends come and ask me questions I'll be able to tell them what wasn't, you know, what was misinterpreted and what is the actual fact. I mean there's not much you can do, but I certainly would never ignore it, because I would want to know how others are thinking and therefore if anybody asks me I'll be able to hopefully open up their minds and give them the real facts.

Another form of fact-checking is examining the credibility of the authors. This is a special challenge, because an author may have the credential of firsthand experience or extensive research but still only know her own part of the story – no author can tell the whole story of a country, a culture, a religion. Still, it is important to determine whether the author is completely making up the story with no intention of its being taken as true, or may even be writing to press a sore point (as may arguably be the case with Satrapi and Mahmoody, both of whom wrote about their negative experiences in Iran). One

participant, Rana, an 18-year-old freshman with an undeclared major born from an Iranian mother and an American father, had 3 years of Persian Studies with very little writing and reading skills. She said: "Depending on what it has to say or where it comes from is how much it affects me, because if it's from a reliable source then maybe it will affect me more than if it was to be written by somebody who is biased."

Heard it From Hollywood: How Movies Affect Perception

> *They take one specific aspect and blow it way out of proportion, but Hollywood always tends to do that just to keep the stories interesting, and not just about the Middle East, [but] about anything. ~ Rana*

Books and cinematic representations work in tandem in our culture in the inscription process of contemporary Orientalism. Films not only write Persia and her subjects in a distorted manner, but they also employ the use of HL. This is another element of contemporary Orientalism: The filmmaker uses HL to create the impression of strangeness and even scariness because American audiences experience dissonance when they do not understand what the characters are saying. Films and narratives, by how they write Farsi and its speakers, act as stories that are told to explain, legitimize, and buttress the existing regimes of truth. Farnaz observed that such stereotypes are cyclical in nature, and that Farsi can be employed to perpetuate them.

> I probably wouldn't have noticed this in high school or cared that they were using Farsi in Arabic countries or sand dunes in Tehran. Now I see that the western ideas of Iranians are skewed. By continuing to define Iranians a certain way, or Arabs or Egyptians a certain way, they are creating a very circular stereotype that just continues to self-renew.

All of this misleading or outright negative depiction had its effect on young Iranian-Americans. Since some Americans are perfectly happy to accept what they see in the

movies as truth (world-as-real) and to hold Iranian-Americans to those stereotypes, the result is discomfiture for the Iranian-American youth. It makes them unwilling to use Farsi in public because they may be negatively perceived and labeled.

Niloufar observed, "Well, in a lot of movies, people think that just because they speak Farsi in it, they're terrorists. Like there's the movie *Crash*, where there's Iranians, and in the movie *House of Sand and Fog*, they just assume that all Iranians are like that, just terrorists or Muslim. But in fact, that's not true." What Niloufar did not mention was that few Americans can tell the difference between Farsi and Arabic, further developing generalizations due to contemporary Orientalism.

A prevalent concern among study participants was the way Hollywood movies often choose to depict the isolated and rare cases, often negative, occurring in Iran or with people practicing the Islamic religion. Some participants were personally offended by American movies that attempt to depict Iran or its culture. Bahareh, for example, commented on the movie *Syriana*, which is a complicated tale about oil, money, oil traders, spies, the Persian Gulf states, Texas, bribery and betrayal.

> It just shows, again, a different side of Iran. But, at the same time it's not showing a good side of Iran. In the beginning they show how there is a party in Tehran, or whatever. They are trying to dispel some of these misconceptions, but at the same time they are not showing the cultural and historical side. I think all of these films, they just look for, maybe something that is more risqué or that just kind of has a shock value to it because I think they don't want to believe that Iran can be this nice, calm place. They just want to look for the craziness in the country, I guess.

Some Hollywood movies are being used in American schools as educational tools, a situation which Iranian-American students like Bahareh find unsettling. The fact that *Not Without My Daughter* is based on a true story, for example, does not make Iranian-American students any happier about the film. Bahareh noted that her personal

opinion about the film directly influenced a teacher's decision whether to include *Not Without My Daughter* in the curriculum. This shows that Americans only become sensible of stereotype and misconception when faced with Iranians and their responses to negative representation; otherwise, Americans are happy to accept what they see, even to the point of using it in a classroom setting. Bahareh talks about the demonization and barbaric representation of Iranian men in this movie in the following excerpt. Note how she objects to the authoritative positioning in the classroom:

> I get a little angry watching *[Not Without My Daughter]* just because they are making it seem like Iranian men are these cruel men who will come and take the daughters, and, I don't know, it just gives a bad name to the Iranian people. It just made us seem very barbaric in a way, so I didn't like it…When I was a sophomore in high school, our teacher wanted to show the film…She knew that I was Iranian and when she asked my opinion, I told her it was a horrible film, and she ended up not showing it, because I think she could sense that it is slightly offensive and having someone in the class who is Iranian, she wanted to just avoid that situation.

This is an example of a counter-representation by Bahareh's vocally standing up and resisting accepting the Oriental inscriptions propagated for Iranian men.

An interesting insight came up with the interviews. A number of participants put less significance on movies that are obviously not grounded in reality. These include comedies and fantasies. Some suggested that comedy or fantasy movies can get away with stereotypes and lopsided depictions of Iran and Muslims simply because they believe that these movies are for entertainment purposes only. Nikki said: "I know in the movie *Meet the Spartans,* they made the Persians really hairy and violent, but that was a comedy movie. I don't think they really meant it."

"A single text on its own is quite insignificant: the effects of media power are cumulative, working through the repetition of particular ways of handling causality and

agency, particular ways of positioning the reader" (Fairclough, 2001, p. 45). The truth is, even the most innocuous attempts to poke fun at Persians contribute to the vilification of all Persians in the eyes of American audiences.

The movie *300*, about a battle between a brave band of handsome, orderly Spartans and hordes of hideous Persians, elicited some strong reactions from study participants. While they all agreed that the movie was about ancient history and was obviously a fantasy, several of them, recognizing its play of contemporary Orientalism and its role in the propagation of meanings and construction of identities and subjectivities, disapproved of the racist depiction of Persians.

Ely commented, "I thought *[300]* was good cinematography but I didn't like the way it represented the Persian Empire. I think that's more examples of false representation because it shows the Persian Empire as slave-holders and evil, when in fact there were no slaves. We weren't necessarily an evil empire coming to impose our will on Greece." Note that Ely used the pronoun "we," which suggests that the element of fantasy might not be enough to make the story feel remote to him.

Once again, Bahareh pointed out that a film that negatively depicted Persians was presented in an academic setting. Bahareh did not say whether students were invited to criticize the film or examine its historical accuracy. She said:

> I think it's just fantasy and that's about the ancient times so I think that's not, I guess, as important today because it's not showing modern people so it doesn't have as great an effect as a film that shows modern times and things like that. *300* is not very relatable and there are a lot of elements of fantasy in that film. I know we watched that in school one time and a lot of the kids were like, 'Oh, it's just a fantasy movie. It's fake,' and so they don't pay attention to the story as much as the graphics and the violence and things like that.

Admittedly unable to resist and counter-represent all these various images and representations from different genres, working together in the production of contemporary Orientalism, Bahareh wished for the audience to at least be able to differentiate between reality and fantasy.

However, the participants were more critical when the movie deals with real issues. Bahareh added, "I think the element of fantasy makes *[300]* not as influential as something that does have an element of reality, like *Not Without my Daughter* or *Persepolis*. And the elements of reality will make it much more influential in society and people's opinions."

A more important, overarching concern among study participants was that people who see these movies might see them as reality, especially if their only source of information regarding Iran and Islam comes from the movies. Ely said: "All they know is what they've seen in movies…I think they readily accept it since it's the only thing they've ever heard."

Shabnam was appalled that a coworker based her entire knowledge on Iran on the movie *300*. "I was like, 'Are you serious?' I had to sit down and explain to her that *that* is not what happened, and even that you can't base anything on a Hollywood movie."

Some study participants took discussions of Hollywood depictions of Iranians as an opportunity to educate people who would not know to even doubt what they see. Maryam, an 18-year-old undecided major with Iranian parents commented, "I mean, I can't go and fix the film. But I can, if my friends do ask me, I can explain to them what I did learn and what the real information about that is, if I do know what is real."

Rokhsareh suggested that Americans might be better served by viewing the movies that are popular in Iran if they want to know more about what Iran is like, but that would involve individuals being interested and open-minded enough to seek out information beyond the entertainment they have already experienced.

News Media Fiction as Fact

The greater concern of study participants was not with movies, to which they granted some leeway for the simple fact of being fictional, but with the American news media, which often depict fiction as though it were fact. This can be particularly true in the case of declared enemies like the US and Iran. The hate and horror depicted in 21st century news media – casting Iran in its lead role among the Axis of Evil – are enough to drive nascent desires for integrated identities into hiding. It is hard to feel proud speaking Farsi or wearing a *hijab* when the milieu in which one lives identifies those signifiers as part of the Axis of Evil. Linguistic, religious and cultural differences not only make it hard to determine the truth, but make it easy to obscure it. The issues are so complex and access to information so complicated that it is almost impossible for American reporters to gather and convey an accurate and complete story. "From the Iranian hostage crisis through the Gulf War and the bombing of the World Trade Center, the American news media have portrayed 'Islam' as a monolithic entity, synonymous with terrorism and religious hysteria" (Said, 1997, p. 1). "The people and organizations that the media use as sources in news reporting do not represent equally all social groupings in the population," observes Fairclough (2001, p. 42). One study participant, Rana, commented:

> I'm not really affected by movies as much since you know movies are mainly fictional and it's just fantasies…. However, I do pay attention to the news and the

> media and that does have a great effect on what I think about…I still know that what we see in the news is not completely true either, or the focuses may be on specific parts that aren't the whole picture, and those parts of the news may focus on the worst aspects and not the best, so I'm always trying to keep an open mind about anything I hear.

Even news that has nothing to do with the Middle East can be misused in order to perpetuate negative stereotypes in casual conversation. "Your cousins landed in the Hudson River," was a joke directed at 1 study participant, Zara, after a pilot landed a disabled airplane on the Hudson in 2009, saving the lives of everyone aboard. The joke, Zara said, seemed to be that terrorists from the Middle East had somehow caused the plane to lose power. "Mass media discourse is interesting because the nature of the power relations enacted in it is often not clear and there are reasons for seeing it as involving *hidden* relations of power" (Fairclough, 2001). Because negativity toward Iranians is so deeply entrenched in the American consciousness through media exposure, it takes only a tiny hop of the imagination for some consumers to twist a heartwarming story about quick, courageous thinking and the saving of lives into the basis for an ethnic attack. Thus, the ignorant take power over the minority, and the response is either to defend oneself – still in a subordinate position – or to silently ignore the attack and hope the abuser goes away.

The predominant observation of the participants is that the news media tend to focus on the rare and isolated cases and make them seem like widespread occurrences. The media also have the tendency to aggrandize certain issues and make them seem more controversial than they actually are. An example is the February 2010 suicide bombing of an Internal Revenue Service (IRS) building in Austin, TX by one Joe Stack, an American who wrote a 3000-word manifesto detailing his grudge against the IRS before flying his

plane into the building. This attack resonates with echoes of 9/11; but it was presented in the *Christian Science Monitor*,[23] as a very American, if misguided, tax revolt. Had this attack been perpetuated by a Muslim or an Iranian, it would have been blown out of proportion as a religious and cultural terrorist attack, and all Middle Easterners would have been implicated. This is why whenever something bad happens in the news, Iranians pray that the perpetrator of the crime was not a Muslim or an Iranian. One participant said: "The media will take a story and take stuff out of context sometimes and make that the center point."

Another observation is the lack of depth in the news reports, often neglecting the deeper meaning of events. One participant complained: "The news may not have all the facts straight. Also, these people, the news, could also just blatantly say that Iran is bad, Islam is bad, that our ways are wrong."

One study participant, Mike, gave a good example of what is being done:

> There's a "60 Minutes" interview that Mike Wallace had done with [Iranian President] Ahmedinejad: I didn't see it, but I remember in the debates, McCain and Obama were both speaking about Iran and the whole thing that Ahmedinejad said about wanting to "wipe Israel off the face of the map." I was told to go check out YouTube, and there's a breakdown of the whole interview. Now, I'm not a supporter of Ahmedinejad at all, I personally don't care for the guy at all. But I noticed that in the video he wasn't saying that, it was edited to say that, like, they cut pieces out so it would come out like that…not in the translation. Whoever was doing the editing, they cut it like that. Probably all for ratings, to get more views.

Fairclough observes that the preparation of news for publication is a reflection of unequal power relations. "It is a form of hidden power, for the favored interpretations and wordings are those of the power-holders in our society, though they appear to be just those of the newspaper" (Fairclough, 1992, p. 52). Not all participants, however, blame

[23] http://www.csmonitor.com/USA/2010/0220/Joe-Stack-IRS-attack-and-the-growth-of-the-tax-resistance-movement, retrieved March 30, 2010

the news media. Some blame the viewers instead for thinking they know the whole story or worse, the whole culture of Iran, based on the news reports that they have seen. One participant said: “I think that because people don’t really understand the situations: They just read the news, like the headlines, they just draw broad generalizations about people coming from Iran and the Middle East.”

Mike, on the other hand, blamed the negative events themselves. “The media [are] not the problem, it’s the actual events that [are] going on there. The media [are] just reporting it. It might be all negative news, but that’s the way it is.”

Because of the perceived influence of the news media on public opinion and perception, some of the participants remain vigilant about the kind of coverage Iran and Islam are getting in the news reports. They have to know what is being said not only because they may have a personal interest in events, but also to brace for the next attack that may come from an outsider who treats one individual in America as responsible for the workings of power, hate and violence half a world away. One participant said: “Personally, each time the name comes up, I’m alert, I’m attentive. I’m trying to hear what’s going on.”

It is clear that Iranian-American youth are sensitive to news media depictions of Iran and Iranians because American viewers can so easily be misled and misinformed into thinking that the story is complete and accurate – and that it applies to all of Iran and its people. The study participants are so sensitive to negative representation that it is enough to make some of them want to hide the Iranian aspect of their identities. They do not have the words to describe it, but this is their reaction to contemporary Orientalism in the news media: The West demonizes the East and presents this view as true. In the next

section, I will show that some Iranian-American young people feel compelled to make personal efforts to counter media representations by presenting positive examples of Iranian culture, and by discussing media portrayals (including entertainment) with Americans who simply do not know any better.

Counter-Representation: Clearing a Good Name

> *If I was to [make] a movie about Persian culture, that would be a 15-hour movie that would make $150 at the box office. I would show everything from large skyscrapers [in Tehran], to the Persian-American kids here who are here who are kicking and screaming to not go to Persian schools, to those in Shiraz with their small houses, to those wealthy ones here who won't drive anything less than Benz or BMW, because of their idea of reputation, or those who are too ashamed to say they're Persian, or those who are so proud, like my cousin who has to have an Iranian flag anywhere and everywhere. I will let people make their own conclusions after that long, long film. ~ Mike*

To find a home in homelessness, when confronted with firsthand experiences of hearing misconceptions or misrepresentations regarding Iran and Islam, most study participants said they welcome the task of correcting the misrepresentation from popular forms of media like movies and news, usually through counter-representations such as their conversations with their friends. Counter-representation aims to write a people against the practice of essentializing differences and shows that realities are not limitless and therefore, can be contested and disputed. I will demonstrate that in terms of cultural dissemination, there are many ways in which some Iranian-Americans resist the urge to hide, and instead attempt to give other people a more positive and dynamic view of their culture and the diversity of their people. This positive attitude toward their heritage culture and the desire to share it with others shows that some members of the second generation of Iranians in America are trying to preserve their heritage and in some cases,

their language. The insular nature of their efforts, however, bodes ill for the long-term survival of Farsi and of Iranian culture in the US.

Some participants believe in the utility of having festivals celebrating the Persian culture. They do this on campus through Persian clubs. One participant commented on having celebrations at the university: "Just to allow other members of the university to see what the Persian culture is about, because like we do have the parties for Eid[24] . . . Just for them to get an experience of what our culture is like and what our people are like." This is a direct action against contemporary Orientalism, an effort to write a more complete version of Iran against all of the negative and incomplete depictions with which American audiences are familiar.

Seasonal festivals like the *Eid* party described above or *Norooz* (Persian New Year) celebrations are a strong component of counter-representing Persian culture in the US. They bring non-Iranians to events where they get the opportunity to meet Iranians, hear Farsi spoken in small groups, learn a little about an unfamiliar religion and culture and begin to break down some solidly built stereotypes. "It might be a little bit harder to preserve a culture but as long as they're practicing the different cultural experiences, like Norooz, I don't think they really need to know the language to practice the different cultural events that the Iranian culture does have," said Rana.

In terms of the use of language to promote better representations of Iran, one participant reported holding movie nights so that people could watch Iranian movies, with English subtitles on them. However, the study participants were not comfortable using Farsi in formal settings, which deprives them of the opportunity to hone their skills,

[24] *Eid* or *Eid Norooz* is the celebration of ancient Persian New Year, which falls on the spring equinox, around March 21, and is based on the revolution of Earth around the sun.

as well as reinforcing the position of their language as subordinate to English. When they hold events to which non-Iranians are invited, they usually do so in English, for a number of reasons, as Catherine described:

> First off, if people who come in who are not Persian at all, they won't be able to understand what's going on, and we think that it's not fair for them not to understand necessarily unless there was a translator. Another reason, actually it might be a bigger reason, is that some of us will joke and I know one of my friends said that his mom was like, "Oh you should go announce everything in Persian right now" and he said, "Are you crazy, Mom? Because like when I'm speaking I feel like I speak like a seventh grader in Persian." And he was a senior [in] college. Yes, we know how to speak [Farsi] to our parents or family but we don't feel that we have all of the vocabulary on our hands and that as a result, we sort of feel like our speaking is on a lower level than what it is like normally in English.

By holding these events in English, Catherine knows that the Persian club and its members lose their opportunities to participate in the language learning process, but she is comfortable with that for two main reasons. First, she knows this will be one of the few chances they have to show a counter-representation of Iran, Iranians, and the culture. Second, she knows that her own Persian speaking ability is not at the level of an educated young adult, but at a childlike level. She accepts constrained recapturing of Farsi as better than losing it altogether.

Some participants attend or even host poetry nights celebrating the Persian literary tradition. The participant said: "I know that there used to be some poetry nights too and it's just for people to learn about their culture [through literature] and to learn about another culture and just for, you know, people to get together, I would say." Another participant also said: "We also tried poetry night. We would have people read poems by Hafez." One participant, however, believed that the amount of participation to disseminate Persian culture was not sufficient to create a strong counter-representation

against so many negative forces that cloud the good name of Iran and its people. “They would have Persian speakers come in and recite poetry by Hafez, Rumi, and Saadi,” the participant said, but then asserted, “The Persian community is not that active as they could be.” The poetry nights, therefore, whether held in Persian or English, did not generate enough participation to create a strong counter-representation.

Participants generally agreed that the root of public ignorance regarding perceptions of Iran and its culture is the lack of education on the topic. Various themes emerged as to how lack of education distorts representation of Iran and its people and culture.

At East Coast University, the students who participated in this study found value in discussing their Persian culture and current events involving Iran with friends and classmates. In fact, they used class as an opportunity to arm themselves with verifiable information with which to argue against stereotypes and misconceptions. One participant, Farnaz, said:

> I think I do a lot of arguing in that class. I try my best to listen to all of them, because obviously there’s a basis for why they’re thinking a certain thing. My classmates who agree with me that some of our other classmates who speak in terms of these generalizations and who speak novelistically [sic] about Iran, we’ve agreed the only way we can work on the situation is by giving a really good presentation of what we know. We know that Iran has had a complex political situation. We can look at the history of Iran in the twentieth century and see the various and diverse political factions, what brought it to the Islamic Revolution. How you handle the situation is continually writing and talking in a group setting. You can have an open discussion and still properly arm yourself by constantly reading and seeking out writers and scholars.

Clearly, this student found it difficult to separate cultural stereotype from politics, noting that the Islamic Revolution and the alienation that developed between the US and Iran after that were direct causes of generalizations about Iranians in America. Class was an

opportunity to discuss all this in an open environment without anyone having to get personal or confrontational. In class, intense discussion is part of the learning process for everyone.

The first important factor, in the eyes of many participants, was the sources of information where most people get their information regarding Iran. One participant emphasized that the media cannot always be the best source of accurate information. The participant said: "I would say it begins with ignorance, and then having that ignorance and the only information you get is from the media, which isn't always correct."

Another participant, Shirin, agreed that it is not good if the media are the only source of information. That participant said: "If you are relying on only CNN to get your information to know what is going on, [it] is not always the best thing to do, like the only place to get information."

Word of mouth is another faulty source of information. Shirin claimed that this source of information can be treated as fact by some people, saying: "Even word of mouth. Like a friend going, 'Well, I heard that they do this.' And you go, 'Oh, really, that *must* be true.' That too. If you don't verify what that person said, that just snowballs everything."

One participant further clarified the role of information sources in getting accurate depictions of Iran. The participant explained the value of having multiple sources of information in multiple media. The problems of misinformation arise when people only get their information in one medium and ignore the others. Shahbaz said: "I don't think these people are being ignorant; it is just that these people don't have time to go around researching more into a story." This statement suggests that most people simply do not

have the luxury of time and motivation to exhaust all the necessary information needed to have a complete and accurate understanding of issues.

Another participant talked about the same thing, only with a more negative spin on the issue. The participant agreed that people do not take the time to verify the information that they have about Iran, but further implied that people have the responsibility to expose themselves to multiple sources, especially if they are going to discuss what they see and hear. The participant said:

> People don't know anything. They choose not to educate themselves. But, then, yet, they act like they do. That is what annoys me. I'd rather you admit that, "Hey, I can't really say anything, because I don't really know about this country's religions and customs." Instead of verifying what other people told you by word of mouth or what you saw on TV, you take it. I feel like it spreads around. Like, if you saw it on TV and you saw something and you are like, "Oh, this is what I heard they are like." That person says it to the next person, like a continuing cycle of ignorance, I guess.

Study participants reported that misconceptions about Iran and Iranians covered a broad range of topics. These include people thinking Iraq and Iran are the same, people automatically assuming that all Iranians are Muslims, people assuming all Iranians are terrorists, religious practices of Islam, Iranian women's roles in society, and the overall perception of the people and culture of Iran as a whole. Several study participants took it upon themselves to combat misrepresentation and misconception, one friend at a time.

"If my friends who aren't Persian ask me a question about a movie, I just tell them if it is really like that or not because you can't really trust the media anymore…. I can just show them pictures of the places that I have been to and they can see," said Hansel. This is an example of counter-representation where the student takes an active mode in combating misrepresentations.

Rana included her Muslim culture among the topics she was willing to discuss with peers. “I’ve always talked to my friends and classmates who have come up to me with questions. I don’t have a problem ever answering their questions; I actually enjoy it because I’m helping them and I’m educating them about being a Muslim and giving them an open mind and a different view.”

Melissa said she tries to work against negative stereotypes and misrepresentations by actually showing people how she and her family express their Persian culture: “Well, I invite them to my house to show them that Middle Easterners, the majority, are not like that. On the contrary, we are very open and giving people. My parents are very kind and always force feed our guests, like any typical Persian. I try to share the culture.”

Struggle for Invisibility: Blend In or Stand Out

> *If there’s a chance that the employer was a racist or just ignorant to the whole situation, I wouldn’t bring that up. If I’m just in a social setting and I really don’t have anything at stake then I would say that I am Iranian. ~ Melissa*

Part of the reason for so much effort toward counter-representation is that Iranian-American students would like to eventually be free of the need. They would like to just be part of the fabric of America. Until they can feel that secure, many of them feel the need to strategically align themselves with one aspect or another of their identity, depending on space and time, in order to be free of the constant *need* to counter-represent. In this section, I will argue that before making any strategic alignment, people carefully consider the risks involved in divulging one’s ethnicity and religion in a social setting. In this study, if participants felt that they had nothing to lose, they would be more inclined to freely offer the information regarding their religion and ethnicity.

Catherine said: “I don’t tell people in the beginning because, well, I don’t think there is a need to say everything. You know, once I’m closer to someone, then I will mention it.” Catherine was not unusual in this study in indicating that it takes a while to get comfortable with other people, and only then will participants consider telling others about their religion and ethnicity.

Melissa strategically aligned herself with no culture under normal circumstances, but consciously calculated when and whether it would be safe to claim an identity that included Persian heritage. She kept her culture in hiding until she picked up enough cues from the people around her that it was safe to come out. “I wouldn’t automatically tell my teachers I was Persian. However, they would eventually ask and if I am comfortable with them, I would tell them I was Persian, because I am proud.”

When they sense that divulging their religion or ethnicity would lead to discrimination or threaten their safety, the participants said, they would likely hide their identities. After the September 11 attacks, some of the participants also expressed the need to hide their identities at that time, mostly for their own personal safety. One participant said: “I think directly after 9/11, I’m not 100% on this, but I’m pretty sure, there was just a lot of hostility…towards people in the Middle East, that whole area. That’s directly following it. So I guess for a while, you don’t want to identify with a certain category.”

Catherine presented another scenario about personal safety that had nothing to do specifically with 9/11. She noted that relations between the US and Iran are so strained that any major news development could change public perception of Iranians, thus affecting the way she might represent herself in public. Contemporary Orientalism in the

news affects how individuals perceive themselves and how others perceive them in the general public. Catherine said, “If there is something going on in the news where Iran just got into a huge, started World War Three, I am not going to go freely into the public and say ‘Hey, I’m Iranian.’ You know? That wouldn’t be smart.”

It is important to note that the option of hiding one’s identity is reserved for Iranians who can believably conceal it. Pertinent variables include the color of their skin, accent of their speech, and the sound of their names. This is like what happened to Japanese-Americans during World War II, when many of them were interned in the desert for years solely because they had Asian eyes or Japanese names. One participant said: “It’s kind of hard to hide some stuff, you can’t hide your last name, you can’t hide your pigmentation, there’re some things you can’t hide.” The very fact that it would seem desirable to hide is evidence of the socio-psychological factors working against HL maintenance: The desire to blend in is stronger than the desire to perform an identity that is so loaded with negative political baggage that it may not be met with the most pleasant responses. This is also an individual process that may or may not be an option for some. For example, those who have a very dark skin or thickly accented English cannot indulge in the practice of hiding. Catherine talked about the obviousness of having an accent, which affects her, both in the US speaking English, and when speaking Farsi with other Iranians: “I have an accent in every language that I try to speak. I think because of that, that probably threw me off a little bit.” Regardless of how she looks, she cannot hide when she speaks. Melissa talked about the physical features of Iranians and whether a person can conceal them from other people. She said: “People usually don’t know that I am Persian the first time they see me, so it’s not really an issue. But my brother and

sister, who look more Iranian, are always confronted with remarks and have to state that they are Persian." Depending on the situation, concealment options are related to the individuals' involuntary personal characteristics.

Another form of concealment is the conscious avoidance of external items often associated with a particular ethnicity or religion. Those who can remove themselves from the signifiers of Iranianness or Muslimness will do so in order to avoid *Otherness*. Rokhsareh said: "I consciously choose not to wear *hijab* and be just a spiritual person because in this way the today's society accepts her easier." Another participant said: "I would say the way I dress and the way I keep myself doesn't really show that I am a Muslim, but there are other people that you can look at them and you can tell they're Muslim."

In relation to the concealment of one's identity, Melissa offered another perspective. Her identity as an Iranian was already concealed because she had no obvious signifiers such as an Iranian-sounding name, any physical characteristics that might mark her as coming from that part of the world, or a religious signifier like the *hijab*. Melissa claimed that it upset her when nobody seems to notice that she is Iranian; in fact, she went so far as to indicate that she was an Other among Iranians because she might not be Iranian enough. She contended:

> I want to be identified as Persian only because I get really upset, I know this sounds ridiculous, but the other night I was out with my cousin, again, and everybody asks her where she is from, but no one ever asks where I am from. They don't care to know if I am Persian or not. I think she is so lucky that people ask her that, because of her name and I don't have that, and I would like people to know that I am Persian too. I would like other Persians to relate to me, too, and not to think that I am not part of that community. I want to be part of that community.

Aside from the way she looks, one way this participant could gain notice as Iranian would be to use the language in public, if possible. Some participants, however, did not claim to even be conversant in Farsi. It might not matter how they looked or dressed if they could speak Farsi in public, but for some, that aspect of identity is already lost, never to be recaptured.

Some participants offer different perspectives regarding their identities and religious affiliations. Their decisions are not always contingent on danger anticipation or the need to blend into the mainstream. Melissa talked about public and private domains of one's identity. She said: "If I am not public about my identity and culture, I would keep the culture and heritage in private. I think in a certain way I already do this." Keeping the culture and language "in private" is tantamount to keeping it in hiding, subsumed in a conscious choice not to wear it proudly.

Shabnam, however, was more cavalier about revealing identity. She recounted how her mother usually deals with situations where people ask where she comes from: "People always ask 'Where are you from?' when she started talking. She's like, 'Where do you think I'm from?' They make one guess, and she goes, 'That's it, that's what I am.' Like a lady at a cash register, 'Yeah, that's what I am, now ring up the stuff.' Like, she doesn't like explaining sometimes. Sometimes it doesn't really matter, just tell them. I know that sometimes I will just let them guess." This is an example of passive mode of combat where she accepts whatever identity is given to her, just to avoid another conversation about how Iranians are or are not.

In this chapter, I have sought to look at the process of O*thering* through the lens of world-as-real that is constructed by contemporary Orientalism. I have shown various

approaches that students employ to combat these representations. These approaches to fight misrepresentations vary from active to passive modes of combat. Some choose to combat misrepresentation actively, at a collective level, by holding and participating in festivals, poetry and movie nights, and individually by informing the audience through showing pictures or offering information and experience. Others went into a passive mode of combat, motivated by various reasons including personal safety, the desire to avoid discrimination, and the desire to belong. While they cannot hide skin color or accent, they can choose to be identified as something else, choose not to wear ethnic or religious articles that would clearly identify them as Other, and choose not to speak a "foreign" language. By picking and choosing when to wear their ethnicity or religion in public, Iranians in America are unwittingly contributing to the production and perpetuation of misconception and stereotype, rather than presenting comfortable individual identities. From a theoretical perspective, I have argued that HL loss is likely to occur if there is a perceived risk or cost associated with maintaining one's heritage language or culture. In the next chapter, I will discuss the impact of O*thering* and misrepresentations on recapturing of HL where various relations come together to constrain recapturing.

CHAPTER VI

CONSTRAINED RECAPTURING

> *I speak two languages fluently, Farsi and English. I use English 99% of the time, in school, outside of school, at a gas station, anywhere…. So, if you run into someone who can speak Farsi…you'll engage in that language. It's kind of a treat, it's not something that's common, so you kind of get a chance to do it. It's a refresher. ~ Mike*

For second-generation Iranian-Americans, Farsi is slipping away on a tide of negative socio-psychological, socio-institutional/political elements. From the lack of opportunity to the lack of desire to use Farsi when they were young enough to become fluently bilingual, these young people have had their reasons for taking their HL into hiding, or letting it slide completely into disuse. As college students, they are inspired to recapture their HL before it is gone forever. This process of recapturing, however, not only requires rigorous individual efforts but it also involves combating various constraints that are socio-psychological as well as socio-institutional/political.

Socio-intuitional constraints exist in the sense that the academic institution does not attend or respond to the desire of students to acquire Farsi; there are not enough Farsi classes, qualified educators or HL teaching materials to teach the language. However, unlike indigenous American languages, for example, with which this problem can be solved by bringing in elders and educators who can teach the language (McCarty, 2000), in the case of Farsi and Iranian-Americans, the other socio-institutional force blocking

HL recapturing is that their whole sense of social self is under siege by socio-institutional/political forces. Second-generation Iranian-Americans have experienced a youth in which they as social subjects have always been inscribed with particular kinds of negative meanings. The political institution, the entertainment industry and the news media have managed to write a particular kind of discourse of who and what Iranians are, and to imprint the Persian language as the language of terrorism. In this process of inscription through signs, as Said (1979) and Derrida (1997) stated, people from the Orient (such as Iranian-Americans) have become fixed to some degree and find themselves constantly combating the tension between the desire to integrate and fit into the white American society, and the desire to recapture and become fluent in Farsi. The process of recapturing then becomes a constrained recapturing when one is positioned as the Other in a socio-political context. These constraints also become socio-psychological and affect the attitudes of the students because attitudes are directly tied to socio-political dynamics.

In the process of negotiating these tensions between integration and recapturing, Iranian-American students find themselves constantly combating these various constraints. I purposefully call this process "recapturing," because while it is the same as "language acquisition" as described by Stephan Krashen (1982) where it requires "meaningful interaction in the target language -- natural communication," it is, however, a conscious rather than an unconscious process in which the learner is constantly battling against various forces in order to recapture not only his/her knowledge of Persian language but also somehow to recapture the time lost in learning the language. This battle might take the form of an active mode of combat in which the students, for instance,

might offer a different representation by actually taking the time to educate an audience (a friend or co-worker, for example) by showing pictures or offering some information. Combat might also take a passive mode in which the student tries not to be rude and acts politely by not speaking Farsi where it might make people uncomfortable, even though other people actively do and say things to make *them* uncomfortable.

In this struggle to recapture the HL, students find themselves behind the learning curve for their age and they regret that they will always be immature communicators in Farsi. Today, the theory of a critical period for second language acquisition is not widely accepted, yet no one can argue that each learner needs to have opportunities to practice a target language in various spaces and times. Realizing that they cannot have high expectations from various educational institutions, they turn to the home space, employing parents and siblings, aunts and uncles, and a small circle of friends to help them in the language learning process, or engaging in arduous solitary practice of language learning.

Language recapturing from familial spaces such as parents and a small circle of friends offers a very limited social network, which cannot legitimize and provide students with enough opportunities to practice. Many participants in the East Coast University study reported that they were shy about speaking Farsi with anyone but family and close friends. The most important aspect of recapturing a heritage language is the making and taking of opportunities to practice it. If one only has a limited social space in which to speak the HL, which is the case with Farsi, one will not get to use it in practical settings: It is not possible, for example, to ask someone on the street in Farsi, *Otobus che saati mi ad?* (What time will a shuttle bus arrive?), unless one gets lucky and meets another

Iranian who has not also lost the language. Among family, it is not much easier, because ingrained habits are hard to break. One participant reported that when she decided as a young adult to speak Farsi at home when her parents and siblings are habituated to using English, she did not always get their cooperation – not because they refused to speak Farsi to her, but because they forgot. Practicing with native HL speakers, in the form of attending lectures, is also difficult because of the jargon used at those lectures and the limited communicative vocabulary available to HL speakers.

Some Iranian-American students, recognizing that home space is a very limited social network which cannot legitimize and provide them with opportunities to practice, seek classes and courses outside the home space, only to learn that there are limitations to those venues as well. Often, there are not enough students or enough trained educators at each level to hold classes so they are all packed into one group. There may also be a lack of proper curriculum planning for HL learners, so they will all be put in one class with learners who are acquiring Farsi as a foreign language.

The strongest factor in favor of recapturing seems to be desire: If one wants it badly enough, one will employ every available resource, create opportunities to practice by socializing with other Iranians, and endure the difficulties of communicating with native speakers in order to gain fluency. However, in the case of Farsi, where various discourses have inscribed the language and its people as terrorists and the Other, the language practices will be limited to private spaces where one does not have to worry about making people uncomfortable, and public spaces will be reserved for strategic integration.

Integration Versus Recapturing

Integration is a desire to incorporate into a target group and invest into an identity (Norton, 2000). HL loss and maintenance are directly affected by the desire to identify with and integrate into a target group (Cho, G., Cho, K.S., & Tse, 1997; Feuerverger, 1991; Kondo-Brown, 2000; Oketani, 1997; Pao, Wong, & Teuben-Rowe, 1997; Suzuki, 2001; Tse, 2000). As Norton argues, learners might like to learn a language but might have little investment in the language practices of a specific community that may place them in an undesired subject position. Investing or not investing in a language, and thereby investing into the possibilities or constraints that come with a mutable identity, are major factors affecting integration. When language learners speak, they are simultaneously communicating with target language speakers while negotiating a sense of identity. One may decide to acquire a second language just to expand one's horizons, as is the case with some participants who took French in high school toward additive multilingualism (adding to English and Farsi). Recapturing or constrained recapturing is different: One seeks to recapture the HL in order to integrate one's identity, bringing the heritage aspect into alignment with the dominant aspect. By seeking to become bilingual, one comes closer to integrating more fully into the heritage group. A heritage language learner's investment into a language is also an investment into identity and culture, and these constructs relate directly to ever-changing social and historical contexts.

It would be ideal to look at integration into both groups as the achievement of that blend, that third space in balance between two disparate worlds, so that an individual develops a full knowledge of both and can claim them as aspects of one multidimensional identity. Integration means that there is no longer a need to strategically align with one

aspect or another of one's identity, because both the heritage and the dominant milieus are knitted together as a personal way of living. Many of the Iranian-American students who participated in this study, however, were completely aware that this is just that—an ideal. They considered themselves fairly well integrated into both worlds, embracing both their Iranian and American cultures, but they also admitted that they kept them completely separate. For some Iranian-American students, this separateness involved natural and fluid movement between aspects, but for others, particularly those who were acquiring Farsi late, strategic alignment with one aspect of identity or the other, in one time and place or another, involved conscious effort. Their desire to integrate into both the Iranian and American communities made them eager to learn more about their heritage culture and recapture the Persian language, which is on the verge of being lost in America. The desire to integrate into White middle-class America forced them to limit their Farsi practice to private spaces of home and small circles of friends. Students, who had some Farsi when they were younger and now forgot it, were trying to recapture what they once had, but were constrained by external factors limiting their practice. Others were trying to acquire Farsi as a second language as adults, a challenge with any language, even one that the learner has heard in the background all one's life. They wanted to recapture what was slipping away between their parents' generation and their own but overwhelmingly, they said that they communicate almost exclusively in English when in the public sphere, and indicated that they only use Farsi with family and friends, and sometimes in public if they felt the situation permitted it. Tension between the desire to integrate with American friends and blend in among White Americans versus the desire to acquire or recapture linguistic skills in Farsi created a situation where they had

to be cognizant of the times and spaces where they would use Persian. Most study participants said they used Farsi at home with family, or to speak privately in public; a few said they spoke Farsi with Iranian friends, but declined to do so in front of friends who did not speak Farsi. This takes the process of recapturing to another level where Iranian-Americans, while aware of the advantages of bilingualism and the knowledge of Farsi, must always be aware of the social and practical constraints on the acquisition or recapturing process, and be ready to combat the socio-institutional/political elements by making opportunities to practice Farsi wherever and with whomever possible.

Some students do make the opportunity to take their Farsi outside the home, in very small and careful ways. Because they are so careful about picking and choosing the time and space in which it will be safe to use Farsi, the language is still in hiding, but the learner is making some effort to use it despite all of the external factors working against it.

Maryam said she uses Farsi at home, and wherever she thinks it may be accepted, even among non-Farsi speakers. She said she uses Farsi, "to communicate with my mom and my dad so they will understand it easier [since it is their main language]. And I use it at school sometimes because my friends think it is interesting." She strategically aligns herself with one language or the other after checking the verbal and nonverbal cues from her audience whether it will be acceptable to use Farsi or preferable to use English. This suggests that her HL has value in the private sphere, but its chief contribution to her public life is the entertainment value in its foreignness. While Maryam appears to be comfortable claiming her HL in public where acceptable, she does not find much opportunity to use it seriously. Her willingness to entertain her friends with her Farsi

may, however, be an effort toward counter-representation in the mode of active combat, familiarizing her friends with an unfamiliar language.

Niloufar treated English as an everyday tool for public use, but placed a special value on being able to use Farsi among family. It provided her with a sense of comfort and intimacy, even in public, where she and her family might be seen as Other because they use a language other than the dominant English. Her desires to learn more about her HL and to integrate her two cultures through bilingualism are strong. By using Farsi in public, even though her only opportunity to do so is with family, she actively resists the fixed Oriental inscriptions on her Iranian identity.

> I mostly speak English when I'm with people, because I mostly have friends who speak English. But when I go out with my family and parents to the mall or something, we do speak Farsi. Because that's the language I'm most comfortable with, that's the language they were brought up with, and that's the language I want to learn more about. Like, English, I could speak that with my friends, but I like speaking Farsi when I'm with someone who knows it. That way, I'll never forget it. The more you practice it, the better it is.

This is an example of an awareness of the limited opportunities Niloufar has to practice her Farsi, so she takes advantage of every opportunity that arises, even if it is in a public space.

Even among students who considered themselves bilingual, the pattern that appeared was a lack of confidence in their Farsi speaking abilities and the desire to keep it for private spaces where they did not make people feel uncomfortable. The familial private space of home and certain social spaces with friends provided them with limited use of Farsi in the informal private environment, without the opportunity to engage in formal discourse in Farsi; therefore, many of the students admitted that they did not feel equal to the task. An officer of the Persian club at East Coast University, Catherine

admitted that she would feel intimidated if called upon to address a group in Farsi, but among family and friends, her anxiety about speaking her HL was mitigated:

> When I go home, you feel closer so if you a make a mistake, for instance, in a sentence, even if it's like a simple grammar mistake, you know you don't feel as bad because…we feel comfortable, it's okay, we're not going to be upset or anything. So it feels more comfortable there 'cause sometimes I feel like my Persian might be a little bit more childish at times…So, I feel a little weirder when I want to say it to adults, but when we go to *mehmooni* [large social gathering] and stuff, I'll usually speak in Persian because I know the people and everything. I mean I sometimes use it here, alone with friends.

Clearly, Catherine feels comfortable using Farsi language at home because, not only is it safe if she makes a mistake, but also, it is safe to use the language at all. At home, she is among people who do not see her differently because she speaks a language other than the dominant English.

The Process of Recapturing and Attaining Proficiency

Study participants reported varying levels of proficiency in Farsi, ranging from childlike to fluent; some could understand but not speak well; others spoke fluently but could not read or write in Farsi -- but they all indicated a desire to learn more. A theme that emerged was that some young people did not care much about preserving their HL while growing up due to a desire to fit and integrate into White middle-class society and an inarticulate desire to resist the position of the Oriental Other. At the young adult stage of their lives, they were now interested in acquiring or recapturing Farsi before it was gone forever. This means either picking up Farsi the same way they would any other foreign language, through the few formal classes available, or picking the brains of family members. For those who did have early training in Farsi, it means picking up where they left off, at a childlike level of proficiency that will likely always mark them as

inadequate communicators in their HL. Being inadequate communicators in Farsi may cause them to be *Othered* among relatives or when they visit Iran, and it will certainly not help them to tap into the instrumental advantages of additive bilingualism including greater facility learning subsequent languages, increased general learning ability in other subjects, and increased marketability in the work force.

Most of the study participants perceived that literacy in Farsi would help them to become more fluent speakers, but even if they did speak Farsi well, few claimed literacy. Allen, for example, knew his limitations in Farsi.

> I think that what I speak is good enough to live in America, but I think it would be better to know how to read or write, because then I would maybe pronounce words better if I knew more words. Just like in English, someone who reads more books knows more vocabulary than someone who doesn't.

His description, "good enough to live in America," implies that his Farsi might not be good enough to communicate in Iran, or with Iranians who do not speak English.

Niloufar admitted that her command of Farsi was not where she wanted it to be, but she indicated a strong desire to build on what she did know. Not only was she inspired to hone her speaking skills, but as a young adult, she had a burst of ambition to work toward literacy and to better understand her ancestral land. Her goal was to achieve literacy at a level beyond spoken conversation. Her idea was either to take formal classes or to tap the resource of a parent (several study participants said they worked on their Farsi in this way). It did not fall into the scope of this study to determine whether she followed through with her nascent plan.

> Speaking it, I would say about a 7 [out of 10] because some of the words I can't enunciate well, but I do understand it well. But I can't write Farsi at all, and I can't read at all, but I would like to learn it. Hopefully, during the summer I'll take a class, I'll find where they teach it, or I can ask my mother to teach me how to write and read it, so I can expand on the language. I would like to find a class

> that would teach Farsi and the culture, and what's going on in Iran now, and the history of Iran.

While Niloufar wanted to take a formal class, Maryam found her language-building resource at home, although it required special effort from her family. Whether it was lack of interest on her part or lack of time or confidence on her parents' part, it was not until Maryam was a young adult that she attempted to take advantage of that resource in an effort to become literate in Farsi. Even when she did make the effort, her family's efforts to teach her were limited. She did not say whether it was time or desire that prevented them from accomplishing more, but she was also not the only participant who indicated that this approach yielded minimal results. "In the summer…my mom actually taught me a little bit of writing and a little bit of reading. And also my aunts, my family has taught me. So I'm getting better because I didn't know any before but now I know a couple [of Farsi letters]."

Individual disinterest in teaching and learning HL during the formative years is well documented (Chumak-Horbatsch, 1994; Cummins, Lopes, & King, 1987; Heller, 1984; Lerthirunwong-Diong, 1989) and does not augur well for future fluency; even less so in subsequent generations. That Farsi is generally not available as a foreign language in school until college, and then only at a large, diverse institution like East Coast University, does not help learners.

Second-generation Iranian-Americans who participated in this study, who were positioned from childhood in situations where public use of their HL puts them in undesired spaces and writes their identity as undesired immigrants, chose at a young age not to practice Farsi and focused instead on the dominant English language. These inscriptions affect their attitudes because socio-political and socio-psychological factors

are closely intertwined and thus, whichever culture and language earns the individual's negative attitude, that language or culture will fail to thrive (Landry, Allard, & Théberge, 1992). Gardner and Lambert (1972), as well as McKay and Wong (1996), affirmed that learners' perception of the target language and the target language group will be important in the choice of which to identify with -- the dominant group or the heritage group – and which set of linguistic skills to adopt. None of the study participants evinced a negative attitude toward their Persian culture or its language; the closest some of them came was to remember griping at their parents about taking weekend Persian classes as children. Their parents' effort to recapture what was slipping away in a society that was pressuring the second generation to relinquish its command of Farsi did not make the students happy at the time, but in some cases and for the time being, that effort may have been successful. Study participant Mike explained how social pressures made him resistant, but his parents were insistent, and as a young adult, he felt he had benefited.

> At the time, it was kind of a nuisance. I didn't want to go. I didn't want to wake up on Saturdays. I wanted to sit home, watch *Pokemon*, or just hang out…but fifteen years later, I'm glad they took me. I'm glad I missed *Pokemon*, I'm glad that we had the fights…. I'm glad they still took me, forced me, and paid for it.

Mike understood clearly that without the family pressure and support he would not have been able to maintain his Farsi at the level he had, and he admitted that he could rely on no other institution to preserve his HL but that of home and community schooling. However, he later admitted that his language learning terminated when he got to the sixth grade, when there were no more students at his level and no available curriculum for HL teaching.

One among many study participants whose families blend English and Farsi at home, Allen, who also discussed his own need for help with his Farsi, was trying to keep

Farsi strong among family without formal classes, but within his own generation of Young Iranian-American college students, his own private space with family, he was seeing the deterioration of Farsi. In his own small way, he was trying to recapture what was lost somewhere between his parents' arrival in the United States and his own coming of age. In particular, he was bothered that his sister was not even using Farsi in the safe private space of home and family.

> I know a lot of my friends speak English to their brothers and sisters. I only speak Farsi with my parents and sister. I actually yell at my sister sometimes -- *Chera Ingilisie harf meezanee?* [Why do you speak English?] I want to keep [the language] going because her Farsi isn't as good as mine and I don't want her to not know [how to speak] so our kids will be able to talk another language with her. So I want to keep it going at least a little bit.

Study participant Rokhsareh was doubtful that acquisition or recapturing could really take place at this late date. She was adamant that only experience of Iran and its culture could help the second generation to learn and retain the Persian language; but she was not very optimistic that adult learners could really achieve any degree of proficiency only in formal classes.

> Taking Persian classes at the age of 18 or older with not having the essential and basic understanding of Persian language and culture is not very useful for the second-generation Iranian-Americans. Lack of opportunities to practice Persian is another reason that the second generation cannot keep the Persian heritage. The second generation, who take the Iranian classes with not having a good amount of information and background about the language and culture, cannot gain a lot of knowledge that they need in a three-credit course. Even just describing Iran to those people who have not been to Iran before does not help a lot. They should go to Iran and experience and discover both the positive and negative sides of it to get the real idea about the country and their heredity.

Rokhsareh's opinion underscores my overarching argument: Desire to learn and maintain HL is not enough to preserve the HL, especially when a person has not been taught and inculcated from childhood. Formal classes and home instruction are helpful, but a learner

should be raised with both the heritage language and culture and the language of the dominant culture if any degree of fluency is to develop.

Social contexts are not the only deciding factor about the choice between HL loss or maintenance; rather, the histories and politics of given language communities also help to determine learners' attitudes by affecting their sense of which discourse carries more power: full assimilation into the dominant group, preference for the heritage group, or integration of both.

For example, a small number of study participants said they would like to see Farsi offered as a foreign language at the high school level, but Melissa implied that the politics and history between the US and Iran make that seem like a distant dream: "I don't think that our school system is ready to teach Farsi in the system. I would love it, but I don't think that it is ready. I can't picture it in the society that I live," she said. In post-9/11, Axis of Evil-era America, it is highly unlikely that public schools would add Farsi to their list of available languages, despite the government's designation of it as a critical language. Melissa did think that a predominantly Persian community might be able to lobby for Persian language courses. "I guess I could see it happening in New York. I think that certain areas where there is a larger population of Persians…. This is a difficult question." As soon as she said it, Melissa was seized with doubt so that she could not even finish her thought. In all honesty, Melissa's wistful musing about Farsi classes in the public high schools has more to do with her desire to recapture what she herself missed than with any serious notions about foreign language education for non-native speakers.

Institutions' Impact on HL Loss and Recapturing

Saville-Troike (1996) argued that school, as well as home, has a considerable influence on learners' socialization and sense of identity, and further indicates that schools are major socializing institutions through which the values and beliefs of those in power are transmitted. Depending on how they are treated when practicing their heritage language and culture in school, students will either take pride in it or let it slide – they will choose it or lose it. American public schools, as Valenzuela (1999) stated, tend to be subtractive. This means that any knowledge students may have outside of the classroom that is not part of the curriculum is discounted as not worth knowing. Not only do schools fail to make any investment to maintain and develop the social capital of various languages that students bring to school, but they also create an environment where speaking another language is a sign of *Otherness,* immigrant status, or in the case of Iranians, part of a negative movie and media representation. Only when students are old enough to feel the loss of their heritage language and culture will some of them try to recapture it. Without sufficient opportunity to practice it, and with so many constraints operating against them, even if they do make the effort to seek formal or informal training, learners will face a constant struggle to reclaim that part of their identities. In most cases, it will be too late.

While they may have encountered some flak for their ethnicity, heritage language or culture while growing up – being stereotyped as terrorists, for example -- some participants took the opportunity of attending a more diverse postsecondary institution to practice their HL in college, not only with their friends, but with some of their professors. The participants in this study were fortunate in that East Coast University offered classes

in Persian, and some of them found time in their packed schedules to take those classes in order to recapture what was lost.

"I'm taking classes here at East Coast University so my reading and writing is getting better, but up until before last year I couldn't read or write, so I'm not that high up yet," said Ely, who admitted that separate school for Farsi did not interest him when he was younger. "My mom tried to teach me Farsi reading and writing and we did that for a while, and then we just stopped." He did not say why he and his mother stopped their tutoring sessions, but the fact that they could not sustain the effort suggests that outside pressures were closing in on the family and preventing them from making the time or putting forth the energy.

Some students did see their effort paying off, especially taking formal classes, but they faced a long uphill battle if they ever hoped to be proficient enough to pass the language on to their own children. To pass a language on to one's children, one must be able to fluently communicate at an adult level, with a broad vocabulary and complex, accurate grammar; ideally, to pass the whole language on to children, one should be literate in it as well as able to speak. It is often difficult to maintain individual bilingualism across generations (Valdés, G., 2000). Even in the case of Spanish speakers, who have ample exposure and opportunity to practice in public and who do not bear the stigma associated with the Middle East, as Hernández-Chávez (1993) carefully documented, we know that individual language shift is rapid and ongoing. The formal classes do help, especially if Farsi is in use at home, but in America, even the most conscientious student of Farsi is still far behind native speakers. "Definitely at home and at my other friends' houses, [when I] talk to my parents on the phone, to my family I

definitely use Farsi. In the classroom, I tried to use Farsi so the teacher can help correct me," said Allen, another of the students who took advantage of Persian classes at East Coast University. This is the same participant who said he yelled at his sister for speaking English at home. While he considered himself fluent in spoken Farsi, he admitted to being illiterate in his HL, a common condition among study participants. When finally presented with an opportunity to seriously study Farsi, he blossomed, although into his 3rd year studying Farsi, he was still functioning at a much lower level than he would have if he had been raised reading and writing Farsi. "Basically I learned how to read and write the first two years. We read parts of the book, parts of poems, everyday vocabulary words like 'pencil' and 'pen.' Now we are doing newspaper articles from Iran; they are pretty tough…. They have really hard words, words I never heard before like political terms. We're learning all that stuff now so it's interesting." For him to have progressed so far in 3 years is evidence of his commitment, but the fact that newspaper articles were still hard to read after 3 years is evidence that the process of recapturing a heritage language involves a steep learning curve and a great deal of effort.

Even with a few years of Persian school under their belts, young adults who have had no practice with Farsi outside of home and family grow up unprepared for adult communication and require support from more experienced speakers to build their confidence. Study participant Shahbaz, a 21-year-old senior majoring in Middle Eastern studies, had 2 years of Saturday school and 3 years of Farsi in college. He spoke and comprehended Farsi well, and had average reading and writing skills. Shahbaz described a common experience when he said he had had some Persian school in the past, but at East Coast University, he took advantage of his professors for practice: "It was an

elementary school in Lyndhurst that they rented out for the Saturday; there were five grade levels. I started with the first grade level…then after eighth grade I didn't take any Farsi until I came to college," Shahbaz said. He was trying to use his Farsi when possible, but his opportunities were limited to family and a couple of hours in the classroom each week. This is an example of constrained recapturing. "When I am at home, [or] if I am around some of my Persian friends here and if they speak Farsi I will speak Farsi with them – also, with my Farsi speaking professors at the Middle East department," he said.

Study participants reported varying levels of education in Farsi, and had acquired what they did know in a pastiche of different ways: some were raised with it as their mother tongue; others attended "Saturday school" as children to try to preserve their HL and learn about their Iranian culture, but this option was not available to all of them. Some had forgotten Farsi once they started using English. Not only was there no curriculum or instruction in Farsi in American schools, but subtractive schooling (Lambert, 1975; Valenzuela, 1999) conditioned these students to believe there was something wrong with them or with their language because it had no place in their academic life. These factors become constraints on a formal learning process.

Rana said she went to Persian class for 3 years, but currently was just trying to read in Farsi to keep the language in her mind. It means she did not have much opportunity to practice out loud, but was trying to keep at least her literacy skills sharp. This is the sort of solitary practice that may be helpful in recapturing what might otherwise be lost. Nevertheless, the individual must expend conscious effort to recapture the language for herself, so the effort necessary to preserve it and pass it on to her children in the future will be that much greater than if she were fully bilingual from

childhood. “I think that if there are more classes available to learn the Persian language and if there are more books available in bookstores that can teach some of the Persian language, it’d be easier for me to maintain knowing the language,” Rana said. Her desire for more material underscores the difficulty of practicing HL in a country where that language is not accepted and other language instruction is not available. An additional constraint here is that solitary practice does not afford the learner an opportunity to practice conversation.

Catherine and her sisters had the opportunity, and the desire, to keep their Farsi functional. Because there was a family friend who could formally teach them in a group, and because they had family who would speak Farsi with them, they had the opportunity not only to study, but to practice the language in spoken and written form. Also because they had family with whom they wished to communicate, and because they visited Iran and needed to communicate there, they had the desire to put forth the effort. Catherine explained: “My mom’s friend used to be a professor in Iran and…he would open up Sunday schools for Farsi and took a bunch of other kids, and this is how I started to learn to read and write it because when I would always go back to Iran, we want to learn.” She was not unique in saying that the desire to be able to communicate with family in Iran was a major motivating factor, but she was unique in that she had the opportunity to do so; not only did she get to communicate with family in Iran, but she took summer courses. My own children had similar advantages. We visited family in Iran for several years running, during which time they actually went to school and learned Farsi in Iranian schools. The result is that they are thoroughly bilingual.

Bolstered by supportive family, a few students made the most of their Persian school experience, and considered themselves fully bilingual as young adults. Mike not only made a strong case for his own experience in Persian school, but vowed that his own future children will go to Persian school, "kicking and screaming…for sixteen years." Mike said he started with the fundamentals and worked his way up until there were no more classes to take. "My teachers were able to speak both languages, and being in that building for however many hours was helpful…. It's a school, go to an institution to learn, it was a great tool and it worked. I picked up the language, I was able to read, write, learned so much about the culture, I was *peesh-namaz* [prayer leader]." While Mike had already admitted that he did not have the desire to learn as a youngster, he made it clear that his parents had that desire for him, and so they made sure he had the opportunity to study and to practice Farsi and the culture it expresses.

Advantages to Heritage Language Maintenance

Learners are bearing out the research findings that there are academic, social, and economic advantages to HL maintenance (Cummins, 1989; Krashen 1996; Lambert & Tucker, 1972; Willig, 1985). These include increased facility in learning other languages. Several students pointed out that they had taken years of instruction in other languages – Spanish, French, Italian or German – because that was what was available in high school, and they either found it easier to learn because they had Farsi, or were finding it easier to learn Farsi because they had the other languages. Several students reported taking years of Spanish or French, and finding that there were connections between the much older Persian language and the Romance languages they took in

school. Taking on a third language is always easier when one has two bases of grammar, vocabulary and literacy from which to draw (Krashen, 1998).

This study also found that Iranian-American students consider language to be a tool that may lead not only to greater success in school, but also in the job market. Someone who speaks only the HL fluently or becomes monolingual in the dominant language by forgetting the HL will not enjoy the same advantages in the US and global job market as one who is proficient in both the HL and the dominant language. The study participants believed that knowledge of English is important because "English is not merely an instrument for communication, it is a value one identifies with for the social functions the language is seen as serving, its utility in the linguistic market" (Phillipson, 2008, p. 5). They were also completely aware of the fact that proficiency in HL as well as the dominant language of a society and having achieved what Lambert (1975) calls "additive bilingualism"-- a form of bilingualism that adds a second language to the learner's first language without compromising either -- will bring them educational, cognitive, socio-cultural, economic, and "cultural capital" that come to an individual (Bialystock & Hakuta, 1994; Cummins, 1983; Fantini, 1985; Hakuta, 1986; Zentella, 1997).

The study participants were in agreement with Carreira (2003), who illustrated the importance of bilingual and biliterate skills in her studies of American Spanish speakers and concluded that, "The most lucrative and prestigious professional opportunities available [in heritage languages] in the US require highly developed literacy skills in this language" (p. 70). Even most of the participants in the East Coast University study who considered themselves bilingual admitted to deficient literacy; this will surely limit their

ability to tap into that cultural capital because both speech and literacy are critical if one hopes to claim bilingualism for academic and career success.

Several study participants perceived that having a strong verbal command of both Farsi and English would offer them advantages in the workforce. While few of them could think beyond the idea of being translators, some understood that having any second language would benefit them in their careers, particularly if they could tailor their services to the Iranian community.

In order to be able to use both languages for work, it is critical to be able to speak, read and write fluently, particularly if one hopes to utilize these skills outside of the United States. "Reading and writing [in both languages] is important because I want to do international business. And I think that right now, especially, it is so important to know this language," said Melissa, who indicated interest in taking Persian class. This is the same student who wished she could have taken Farsi at the high school level. Clearly, she placed a great deal of value on formal training because she wanted to be able to use Farsi in a formal environment.

Allen thought his Farsi would be useful in his career plans, especially if he were to take his future medical practice to a predominantly Persian community. The kind of communication he describes is less formal than what Melissa had in mind. "I would say maybe not in this area, but…if I go into the medical field and I get a job in LA there might be people who just immigrated and don't know English too well. [I would be able to] talk to them in Farsi. [There] would be an advantage to help you get a job and communicate with people." While as a doctor, he must be able to speak in a professional manner, a Farsi-speaking clientele might be more forgiving of any mistakes than would

international business associates. As for becoming a doctor and serving Farsi-speaking families, Bahareh had similar plans, and echoed Allen's sentiments almost verbatim.

However, in the northeast, other languages were more useful in the work world. A language like Farsi is in greater danger of being lost in the second and subsequent generations because it represents a smaller minority and therefore, society presents fewer economic opportunities for its use. Allen said, "I applied to many jobs and they never asked me 'Do you speak Persian?' It's 'Do you know Spanish?'...[Farsi might be useful] if you want to get an international job with the Middle East or something. I know the FBI requires a lot of languages. If you want to get a good, heavy, rare job, then yeah, it would really help."

Rana believed that being bilingual in Farsi would make her generally more valuable on the job market. Like Allen, she could not think beyond becoming an interpreter, serving as a conduit between English and Farsi speakers in international business or politics, or helping non-English-speaking Iranians to accomplish tasks in America. She said:

> I believe that there are many jobs available for people who know the Persian language. Depending on their job, maybe they will get a raised salary, for if they need to interact with different countries or different people they might come across someone who is Persian and does not know the English language; therefore they may use their advantage of knowing the Persian language to communicate with that person…Now there seems to be a growing interest in the Middle East and there may be some jobs even out there for interpreters.

The students knew there were ways to make money using their Farsi, but the fact that they immediately thought of the FBI and other government translating jobs, but not any other way they might use Farsi, underscores the position of Farsi in the US as the

language of terrorists, one of the critical languages in which the government needs to communicate for the sake of national security.

Effects of Attitude on Language Recapturing

The sense of being an accepted member of the dominant group, an accepted member of the heritage group, or fully integrated and able to occupy the third space, to switch and balance between both languages and cultures, as well as "the status and prestige of a language as seen from an individual's perspective as shaped by a host of social, political, cultural, and psychological influences" (Tse, 2001, p. 686) are major socio-institutional characteristics and power relations that affect the processes of language loss, development, and maintenance (Clément, 1980; Giles, Bourhis & Taylor, 1977; Lambert & Freed, 1982). Studies have confirmed the valuable cognitive effects of integrating a well-developed heritage language and English language development, and ultimate production of bilingual literacy (Cummins, 1983; Cummins & Mulcahy, 1978; Lambert & Tucker, 1972; Wells, 1981; Yeung, Marsh, & Suliman, 2000).

Oh and Au's 2005 study showed that a positive attitude toward their HL, and its routine use, directly affected the subjects' pronunciation and grammar in the HL. Shum (2001) found that subjects who were interested in developing a cross-cultural identity with the heritage and dominant groups were more interested in maintaining their heritage language and culture than in forgetting it, and showed a stronger HL proficiency (maintaining native-level pronunciation and grammar) than those who did not care to preserve their heritage culture, but chose to fully assimilate into the dominant group.

Kim (1992) also explored the importance of attitudinal factors while examining HL maintenance, and found that attitudes of the students and parents he studied toward their HL had a direct correlation with their HL proficiency. Kim further found that attitude was directly related to perception of the heritage language's ethnolinguistic vitality -- "the status and prestige of a language as seen from an individual's perspective as shaped by a host of social, political, cultural, and psychological influences" (Tse, 2001, p. 686). If a person feels proud of his HL and sees practical value in it, he will be more likely to practice and use it; however, if a person sees his HL only as a marker of *Otherness* in America, he will let it slip away.

HL learners who practice their culture as well as their language exhibit positive attitudes and are eager to succeed in recapturing the language. While Bahareh admitted to limited proficiency as a reader and writer of Farsi, she indicated interest in learning to be literate. She also lived her Persian culture naturally and wholeheartedly, which meant she would have more opportunity to practice her Farsi, and more desire to do so than if she practiced the language in a vacuum, like acquiring a foreign language.

> I use Persian in my home, when I talk to my parents on a daily basis, when I talk to my family in Iran. When I go to Iran obviously it's what I use, and also just, I listen to Iranian music almost on a daily basis, so that would be understanding [and] comprehension. Or, we have the Iranian satellite on in the house all of the time with the TV shows. So, I'm constantly just using it in everyday life.

Bahareh described in just a few sentences all that is needed to speak a heritage language well: the use of it at home with family; experience of the heritage country; routine consumption of the arts and media in the HL. All of this spoken Farsi is highly beneficial, but Bahareh missed the opportunity to learn to read and write in Farsi, which closed to

her a great wealth of literary heritage, as well as limiting her opportunities to experience modern literature.

Niloufar's experiences were similar, but as with so many others of this cohort, her exposure to Farsi was limited to home and familial spaces. While the practice of her culture would be an advantage to HL learning, the insular nature of her practice would arrest her development at an early stage. "At home, I speak Farsi with my mother and my father. And I, of course, eat Persian food that my mother makes and sometimes my father," Niloufar said. "A lot of times, we have social gatherings with family friends who are also Iranian and there, we speak the Persian language to each other, and the adults discuss about their past and what they did in Iran."

Studies have examined the role of family language practices in sustaining HL learning. Chumak-Horbatsch (1984) examined the HL attitudes of Ukrainian families who believed in the development and maintenance of their HL at home. The conclusion was that different languages were used for different purposes and were assigned given values: English was the instrumental language of gaining knowledge and of school, and the HL was the emotive language of conversation, facilitating the development and maintenance of the HL. However, Chumak-Horbatsch also found that the children perceived a status differential between English and their HL through their exposure to the English language at school and in public. Therefore, the researcher concluded that the maintenance of proficiency in the HL in that community was unlikely in the long run.

Despite their interest in their Persian language and culture, several study participants indicated that the main reason they would use Farsi in public would be to keep their conversation secret, which suggests that they assume that few people around

them would be Farsi speakers, or that any Farsi speakers in the area would accept what they were saying if they overheard it. This suggests that the study participants seemed to perceive that their language was of lower status than English because it only had that much value for public use. We can interpret this as a negative attitude because HL was only good enough to preserve the speakers' foreignness – by using Farsi only to prevent English speakers from understanding what they were saying, the students implied that it was not worth using for any other purpose in public. In this manner, the participants who used Farsi this way strategically aligned themselves with neither the heritage group nor the dominant group: Instead, they devalued the HL by using it to hide in public view, and at the same time, they O*thered* themselves by the very act of hiding in public view. Allen explained:

> The funny thing is I only speak English with my other Persian friends. We speak Farsi when we don't want anyone to know what's going on or what we are talking about…. The fact that you know another language, being able to say something to my parents that I don't want anyone else to know. Like to make fun of someone, or to say something we don't want anyone else to know. Like, "Hide that shirt so nobody can find it" -- probably something like that -- I guess it's more for confidentiality. It is always good to know more languages.

The use of a minority language does provide a modicum of privacy that would not be possible in English, thus allowing the speakers to take some power away from the dominant group and claim it for themselves by shutting the dominant group out; it also puts them at risk for *Othering*, as the dominant group will treat them like foreigners, or even like terrorists. This is where that negative attitude manifests itself.

Catherine made a similar comment:

> Yeah, just I hate to say this but like when we want to talk about someone who's right there, we have some language to cover it up with… because you really can't translate slang either sometimes. I don't even think about it, I just do it. I mean,

> sometimes we would consciously change to Persian if we want to talk something secretly amongst ourselves.

Interestingly, Catherine was not the only person who referred to being able to use each language to express slang not available in the other, which is a positive factor for bilingualism. Still, being bilingual just to have access to more slang or to hide what one is saying keeps the HL subordinate to the dominant language. The HL stays in hiding, even in public.

Melissa also said that she and family members speak Farsi among themselves in public in order to withhold information from the public. She said, "If I am ever in the situation, trying to tell someone something as a secret, that would help. But I can't really speak very fluently, and it takes time for me to think of the words to use." This one opportunity for use of Farsi is not enough, however, for her to practice the language and gain fluency. Just chatting with family members will never prepare her for adult conversation in Farsi, and for that reason, she may never tap into the academic, social and economic advantages of bilingualism.

The use of HL primarily among family means that an individual's positive attitude will not win out over negative socio-psychological, socio-political, socio-historic and socio-institutional factors such as being labeled as terrorists, or the simple minority status that makes it hard to use the HL. A study of Indochinese refugees by Lerthirunwong-Diong (1989) found that the heritage community she examined had a positive attitude toward the English language, which contributed to their high level of adjustment and learning of the language, but despite the ethnic community's positive attitude toward maintenance of their HL and identity through private practice of their culture and language, in actuality, use of HL was too impractical in an English-language

society and therefore difficult to maintain. Their low-prestige language yielded to the high-prestige English language, with HL primarily used in religious gatherings and with parents while English was the public language. There are limits to how much of the HL can really be recaptured.

A similar pattern was found among the Iranian-American students who participated in this study. Many participants specifically demurred from speaking Farsi in public out of consideration for the majority who do not speak Farsi, and out of concern that their use of an unfamiliar language might cause trouble. They strategically aligned themselves with the dominant language in order to fit in the public sphere. The dominant, White, middle-class American public speaks English, and frowns on people who speak any other language in public spaces – but especially on Middle Easterners. Failure to fit in can be dangerous, as Mike explained:

> I mean, if it's a crowded place, it's public, then, I find myself not speaking Farsi too often, with one of my friends who speak Farsi, or my family who speak Farsi or something. Because it attracts attention that you might not want, you don't want people thinking are you talking behind their back. I mean, if we're in our dorms or something we even sometimes speak Farsi, we sometimes don't. If my roommate is there, for instance, then we'll try not to be rude or disrespectful to him so he doesn't think we're speaking about him behind his back. So I guess in those moments you'll refrain, so it doesn't come off confrontational.

Fear of appearing confrontational was enough for Mike to take his language into hiding, because using it in public might be misconstrued. His wish not to attract attention is significant because Americans might misconstrue the use of Farsi in public, since there are so many negative stereotypes of people from the Middle East, born of a long history of political tensions and the resulting negative representations in the arts and the media.

Bahareh made a similar point: Among Americans, it would be rude to use Farsi. This does not indicate a negative attitude toward Farsi, only that Farsi speakers know they could be misinterpreted among the larger English-speaking community. She said:

> Well, I mean sometimes if we are in, I guess, a group of all Americans, sometimes I won't…If we are at a neighbor's house, at a party, sometimes I will consciously not want to speak to my parents in Farsi just so that [people] don't think we are talking about them…those are the only types of situations that I will consciously not, just because I don't want someone to get the wrong impression.

The idea that it might be all right to go back and forth between two languages in public was alien to these students; they felt it necessary to choose one or the other depending on who might be overhearing. The socio-institutional/political position of Farsi as the language of terrorists makes them uncomfortable using it in public; they fear leaving the wrong impression and being inscribed in an undesirable way, so they constrain themselves and limit their use of Farsi to the private space.

Shahbaz noted that in his mixed group of friends, which includes Iranians with varying degrees of proficiency in Farsi (some have kept or recaptured their language while others have not succeeded or have not even bothered to try), it was not always possible or advisable to use Farsi, if everyone wanted to participate and get along.

> Over here there's a mix of different kinds of Iranians here. There are some that just speak Farsi with each other and then there's other groups who are very Americanized who don't speak Farsi, and then there are people like me who are in the middle. If I wanted to, I [could] hold conversations with my fellow Iranian friends, but just like the atmosphere we're in with all our Americans friends, we don't speak Farsi. We don't want to upset our American friends by speaking Farsi in front of them. But if I was in a group of Iranian kids we would speak Farsi.

This is significant because even among Iranians, there is a degree of deference. Shahbaz did not usually use Farsi for fear of offending someone with a lesser degree of

proficiency (or perhaps just an Iranian who was unwilling to use Farsi). The lower-status Farsi yields to the higher-status English, even among peers of the same ethnicity.

While practicality is important, the desire – or lack of desire -- of individuals and ethnic communities to integrate into a culture also has a strong effect on language learning and maintenance. Language learners have various reasons for investing or not investing in a language, a wider range of identities and an expanded set of possibilities for the future (Norton, 2000). When language learners use the dominant language, it is for communication on the surface, but also constitutes the negotiation of identity. Neither language nor identity is a fixed personality trait, but they are constructs that involve the learner in a constantly changing public sphere. The decision of whether or not to speak Farsi is a strategic alignment with one culture or the other, depending on the atmosphere and the audience. The speaker picks up verbal and nonverbal cues from her interlocutor and constantly negotiate internally which language to use in a given space and time.

Throughout the literature, there is also extensive research documenting the importance of positive identification with the target language of a community in order to master its language (Cho, G., Cho, K.S., & Tse, L. Cho et al. 1997; Feuerverger 1991; Kondo-Brown 2000; Oketani 1997; Pao, Wong, & Teuben-Rowe 1997; Suzuki 2001; Tse 2000). To make this point, Schumann (1978) asserts that, "language learners will acquire a language only to the degree that they acculturate," adding that acculturation accounts for "the social and psychological integration of the learner with the target group" (p. 29). Hamers and Blanc (1989) further suggest that in order to learn the language of a community and attain native-like abilities, one must develop a positive enough social and cultural identity with that group. Bilingualism and HL maintenance influence the

development of cultural identity, and vice versa. Pride in one's heritage culture makes one eager to learn and practice the HL, despite the external factors that continue to operate against this process. "Learning Farsi is very important to me because it's where I'm from, and I feel like when I'm around [Persian culture] that I just become better and better at it, and it makes me proud because when I become better at it, it just makes me happy," said Maryam, one of many study participants who identified strongly with their heritage language and culture.

Lerthirunwong-Diong (1999) demonstrated that the desire of an ethnic community to retain its identity through the practice of its language and culture versus the practicality of developing the dominant language of English put the community in a double bind: In order to save their (lower-status) language and culture, they risked failure to integrate into the (higher-status) larger society, but concentrating on the dominant language resulted in gradual HL loss. Clearly, the study participants at East Coast University generally considered themselves American and fully integrated into the larger society, and the double bind for them was that in order to integrate into the (higher-status) larger society, they risked the loss of their (lower-status) language and culture, but concentrating on HL resulted in O*thering*.

Melissa seemed to know that without the lack of institutional support, HL preservation requires more than just one set of parents struggling against a tide of conflicting culture; it involves an extended family effort.

> I just think that the Persian language is very important. I want to learn it, but you know, it's just tough.... I would like to go to my relatives and let them teach me the language. I try to, but I always don't succeed at that. I tell my parents sometimes, "just speak to me in Farsi," and they would do that for maybe a minute or so, but then they would forget about it and then it is lost.

It is important to recognize that parents are in the same socio-psychological milieu as their children, faced with the same negative representations, racist and ethnocentric stereotyping and *Othering*. The fact that Melissa's parents "forget" to speak to her in Farsi indicates that they have yielded to the higher-status, dominant English language and allowed their daughter to lose her Farsi, so that even as she begins to ask for help recapturing it, the parents cannot break the habit of using English with her.

Nevertheless, students who feel immersed in Persian from childhood tend to have a better attitude about pursuing it once they are older. Catherine explained that she and her sisters had been to Iran several times and had been inculcated with both cultures, "so we can pick and choose our favorite parts of each and mesh them into our lives." That is integration in the proverbial nutshell. Having gone through Persian school and been raised naturally with the culture, rather than feeling pressured as they got older, the sisters found themselves eager for more, and turned to their mother for guidance.

> Once we reached teenager age we still wanted to learn. We were pushing our mom to teach us reading and writing, which she didn't want to in the beginning…. She was like, "I'm not a teacher.… I don't know how to teach you"…so at that point we wanted to learn from someone else. Some of our friends at that point didn't want to learn because they thought it was not cool…. I felt like that at [that] point their parents were pushing them more and more, whereas my mom was kind of, "Oh, you know, I'll teach you, I'll find you a teacher" but she was kind of…laid back about it that we wanted to learn more.

This is significant because once again, we see a parent yielding to outside pressures, finding it difficult to make the time or even to know where to begin to share the HL with her children. Clearly, desire is not enough, and formal classes are not enough, to build confidence in the HL learner – Catherine had plenty of both. What she wanted was a family connection that had begun slipping away when her parents allowed English to become the language of the household, so that special effort was necessary to learn Farsi.

When parents cannot even figure out how to share their language with their children, it makes it almost impossible to hope that the language can survive into the third generation.

Entrenched negative external factors in societal institutions with different power relations manifest themselves in rejection of the heritage language and culture in the second generation, and inability to recover them in subsequent generations (Kondo, 1999; Krashen, 1998; Tse, 1998a, 1998b). The development and enacting of identity are intertwined with the contexts of school, work and home. Individual identity is enacted through a three-way simultaneous interaction among social and cultural group membership, a particular language or mixture of languages, and a particular context (Gee, 1996). The use of a particular language involves a power struggle within society (Fairclough, 2001, 1992). Because linguistic and social phenomena are so closely related, language use or loss reflects societal dominance or subordination.

The individuals in this study group, with all their various ways of going about it, seemed united on one point: Preserving Persian language and culture was worth the effort. Many of them, through the interview process, got to thinking about how they will pass on Farsi to their own future children. They sensed, however, that they could not pass Farsi on by themselves: They knew they would need help because their own Farsi was limited. “The biggest support that I think the third generation would need is from a second generation, from their parents, and after they’ve been supported by their parents, I think they need more support by the schools, and the classes available for them to take so that they may learn and understand the Persian language,” said Rana.

Shahbaz talked of sending his future children to Iran every summer to pick up the language and culture, but he also knew that that would not be enough for him to raise American children with a strong sense of their heritage. “If it’s Farsi and I’m living here, the only way would be weekend schools. I think it is important. By them going to Saturday school they are interacting with other kids; they’ll make friends and they will also learn to read and write. I don’t think that is enough, just one day a week, but it’s better than nothing.”

Allen said that as a parent, he would raise his children from the start, bilingual and with a strong sense of Persian culture.

> Well, first, I would teach them Farsi and English when they are beginning to speak so they get used to both tongues, and pretty much raise them the way that I was raised, trying to not get them too westernized. Talk to them in Farsi, teach them the culture and if it’s possible, [they should] go to a school or a class. Because if you don’t, then it is going to die out and that’s not good, because I am going to be the only one who knows the culture and stuff and if I have to explain to my kids, “No, that’s wrong,” they might not understand. Why? Because they don’t know the culture…. I think it is important because if you don’t really interact with anyone, you will kind of forget about the language and think that it’s not important, because you don’t use it except for your house. But if you use it outside of your household and in your community, it feels important and you all feel something special.

Indubitably, Iranians in America face serious socio-psychological and socio-institutional challenges that could easily wipe out their culture and language in the western hemisphere and cut their progeny off from their counterparts in Iran. Far from the bedrock of Iran and backed up against the “terrorist” treatment, wild assumptions about religion and the constant struggle to preserve stateside a language with a distinct alphabet and a load of negative baggage, Iranian Americans have plenty of reasons to just give up and blend in. At least among the two dozen students interviewed at East Coast University, Persian language and culture are a protected flame; the desire to build on

what they know may stave off the damage for awhile, but with so many outside pressures exerting themselves against the heritage language and culture, the effort necessary to maintain them may lead ultimately to the burnout of Persian among Americans of Iranian descent.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Unveiling the Veiled

I came to the United States from Iran in 1979, a Muslim woman who wore the *hijab* – a veil to cover my hair out of feminine modesty. The veil always attracted unwanted attention: daily stares, questions, suspicions and a little extra scrutiny almost everywhere. I was aware that I made many Americans around me uncomfortable, without having done anything offensive. I perfected my English, attended school, worked and raised two children here in the US. In short, I became an American; yet, I was always reminded of my *Otherness* by people's reactions to my existence.

In 1989, my husband, also from Iran, and I decided to take our children back to Iran so that they could get to know their Iranian relatives, go to school there, and strengthen the Farsi we spoke at home. We knew that without spending significant time in Iran, our children would lose Farsi, and the Iranian culture we wanted them to remember would be completely supplanted by the English language and American culture. We were gone for 10 years. Of course, it was lovely to be back in Iran, surrounded by family, and to see our children thrive in school there, but we did it at serious personal cost. The long absence put great breaks in our resumes, because while we were gainfully employed in Iran, American employers cared only that we were not

working in the US. The process of my education was also interrupted, so that I am completing my doctoral studies as I approach the age of 50. When my family returned from Iran, we were, for all intents and purposes, immigrants yet again.

In 2008, after facing the anti-Iranian backlash following 9/11 and the War on Terror, I felt like I had been labeled a personal representative of the Axis of Evil, and my *hijab* was the banner I carried identifying myself as such. One day, I had had enough. I ducked into the ladies' room in a café, removed the *hijab*, fixed my hair and returned to public life as a woman with a new measure of privacy. Nobody noticed me once I took off the veil; I was invisible and I was free to drink my coffee and work in peace.

I also did not require my daughter to wear the *hijab*. She is an American of Iranian descent, and she is just as much a Muslim without the *hijab* as with it. Had she chosen to wear it, I would have been happy and supportive, but I knew that it was imperative that she fit in among Americans at this particular place and time, and that she would always stand out and be treated as Other if she covered her hair. The benefits of unveiling, or invisibility, outweighed the benefits of wearing an outward signifier of Muslimness. In a black and white world where Contemporary Orientalist narratives and images come hand in hand with the underlying ideologies of a nation, and produce particular discourse and representation that become socially dominant and widely desirable (Said, 1978), a veiled woman is the ultimate symbol of oppression and at the same time the scary face of terrorism. She is reduced to a backward, male dominated woman, incapable of assimilating and becoming free. Beyond abstract ideology, unveiling becomes the venue for integrating into a society that calls itself a democracy but central to its existence is the production and reproduction of either/or category; either

you belong to the unmarked category or if you do not perfectly fit into it, you will be put in the Other. This speaks to the challenges one faces in this binary relationship of Self and belonging versus Other and not belonging, which we discussed in Chapter IV (Hall, 1991). If one is uncomfortable with the Self and feels excluded from either the heritage land or the adopted land, one cannot hope to achieve an integrated identity. If one does not achieve integration, one will always be Other. In giving up the *hijab*, making a concession to our Americanness, my daughter and I found a way to keep other aspects of our Iranian identity that were important – like Farsi.

While my daughter and I abandoned the *hijab*, one thing that has always tied our family together is Farsi. My children are completely bilingual, but many Iranian-Americans are not. It will be so easy for even my bilingual children to lose their Farsi through simple disuse. Preserving it requires constant vigilance and practice, which can only really be accomplished among family and close friends, as was demonstrated in this study. One does not meet a Farsi-speaking Iranian every day on the street. I recognize that we were among the fortunate ones who had the opportunity to return to Iran and give our children that experience of immersion in Farsi and in Iranian culture. Many Iranian-Americans, for a variety of reasons, cannot.

Those young Americans whose parents cannot take them to Iran for extended periods have already lost their Farsi to some degree. Among the 22 East Coast University students I interviewed for this study, all were functionally illiterate in Farsi. Many could speak the language at only the most childlike degree of polite proficiency, but would never be able to communicate as adults. A few had no Farsi at all, but only held onto the wish that they could speak it. For young adults aged 18 to 23, it is too late to start anew

and expect to ever catch up with one's contemporaries. Worse, there are so many external factors operating against their ever learning or using Farsi. For most, Farsi was the language of home and family, a language blended with English into a personal shorthand, but rarely if ever used outside of the house, and certainly not in formal situations. Farsi had become a language in hiding – a veiled language. The second generation in America does not need to speak Farsi to be Iranian, but the language is clearly a major connection to Iran and its culture, which if lost, produces a deep, wide gap in identity. Without HL knowledge, much wisdom that could come from parents and grandparents is lost. The rich Persian literature has to be translated to English in order to be comprehensible. Even the movies, newspapers, poetry, and music would have to be translated. One is left with a trace of Iranianness after a few generations. Interestingly, none of the young women in the study veiled their hair – that outward signifier of Muslimness had been unveiled, folded up in drawers. A complete inversion had taken place. All of this signifies another binary relationship: the public versus the private. If one wishes to integrate one's identity, one must constantly figure out which aspects of that identity are safe to perform in public, and which belong to the private sphere.

Veiling the Unveiled

A veiled woman in the United States is a symbol for HL speakers and learners. Without speaking, she makes a public statement that her femininity is a private matter reserved for close family and women friends. In America, this public statement attracts a great deal of unwanted attention, reversing the privacy it is intended to provide. HL learners, if they speak Farsi in public, risk attracting unwanted attention as well, and may

therefore opt not to communicate in the HL in public. By silencing the HL, they make the statement that their HL – and by extension, their heritage culture – is a private matter to be veiled in public, reserved for close family and friends who are members of the same community. Interestingly, several of the study participants said that when they do use Farsi in public, it is so that they can create a bubble of privacy in which to say whatever they want about the people around them.

A veiled woman does not expect American society to understand why she covers her hair; indeed, she endures society's misguided assumptions about herself and her people every time she leaves the house. HL learners do not expect Americans to understand their culture, and if they are audacious enough to use the HL in public, they know they will be judged according to a set of assumptions that put them at risk of being rejected or even targeted for hate. At the same time, they cannot combat these assumptions and representations because they are not born out of ignorance so that they can be healed by knowledge and awareness. These assumptions are rooted in hidden ideologies wherein different groups, cultures and languages are always demonized. To combat an ideology, we, as researchers, educators, parents, and students, must make an effort to understand how these ideologies work; we must make an attempt to become conscious that terms such as terrorist, Middle Easterner, barbarian, and backward do not have their meanings embedded in them but are constructed through political and institutional discourse, and they work to produce and reproduce dominant/subordinate relations. This speaks to the connection between the socio-political and historical factors and how they pertain to language loss, which affects both women and men to a great extent.

A veiled woman knows that people are judging the men in her life at the sight of her: She must be in need of liberation from domineering men who force her to hide her femininity or earn the displeasure of the Iranian community. It follows that a man who hides his HL is emasculated, forced to veil an aspect of his identity that should belong to the public sphere as much as the private. In order for Iranian-American males to feel comfortable communicating in Farsi in public, they must be raised in an environment where they can be secure in that they will be allowed to express themselves freely in whichever language they choose. Such freedom is a marker of masculinity: A free man can say what he will and only be responsible for the content, not the method of delivery. Iranian-American boys grow up thinking there is something wrong with them if they speak Farsi – they must be terrorists, barbarians or haters. The way peers, teachers and strangers treat them if they speak Farsi in public – as subordinate, diminished and even valueless – creates a dissonance that makes them uncomfortable performing the Iranian aspect of their identity in public. This dissonance is exacerbated by the public perception of their relationship with women. In America, women who wear the veil – the *hijab* – for privacy and modesty become public icons of misconception, stereotype and outright hate. In a country where women not only keep their heads bare but are expected to cultivate and are judged upon their luxuriant tresses, a woman who covers her hair becomes too visible – she loses her privacy in the very act of protecting it. Not only is her own privacy compromised, but that of her men – no husband, father or son can walk American streets with a woman in a *hijab* without being judged as a woman-hater. Here is another binary relationship: the masculine versus the feminine. As discussed in Chapter V, the West is represented as healthy and masculine while the East is represented in America as

perverted and feminine (Said, 1978). In order to preserve his American masculinity, an Iranian-American male must wear the symbolic veil of silence.

In America, the dominant majority speaks English and English is the dominant, powerful language that gives one an edge in the shrunken, globalized world (Appadurai, 1996). It is the language of upward mobility and success. All public business is done in English. Public education is carried out in English, with very limited value placed on the acquisition of "foreign" languages. In this way, English language is constructed as a symbol of identification with the strong, which produces a false consciousness. In order to achieve self-empowerment, the Persian HL community internalizes this false consciousness and avoids the language that is marked as traditional, backward, unnecessary, and even harmful and a threat to society. For any HL community, English as a symbol of identification with the strong, modern, and successful becomes a significant part of fitting in to the mainstream. The embedded language ideologies and their unfathomable effect on socio-institutional and socio-psychological factors cannot be overlooked, and educators and researchers must investigate and reveal their role and impact. As Gonzalez and Aront-Hopffer (2003) suggest, language ideologies both constitute and are embedded in social practices. As discussed in Chapter II, although America has always been a place of immigrants, a place of many languages, the dominant English-speaking society has always looked upon other languages and the people who use them as Other – inferior and even dangerous. There have always been xenophobic campaigns to establish English as the only language of the US, and many studies have proven that within a generation or two of immigration, those campaigns are successful: The children of immigrants are fluent in English, and the grandchildren generally know

little if any of the heritage language (Veltman, 2000). This ideology of monolingualism as a form of patriotism – one is not an American unless one not only speaks English, but forgets the HL -- has effectively annihilated heritage languages spoken by even the largest minority populations in America, and threatens every new group that arrives here. By studying, documenting and analyzing the effects of these ideologies on the actual life experiences and practices of the HL learners, educators, researchers, parents and even the government can work toward the integration of identities in new Americans by encouraging them to preserve their heritage languages and cultures. It may be too late for the second generation of Iranian-Americans, but if we look at this example and develop additive programs to teach English while preserving HL, we may prevent the tragic loss of HL for future immigrants.

The people who value the *hijab* as a device of feminine modesty generally speak one of two languages: Arabic or Farsi. Farsi is the language of Iran, a long-standing, mortal enemy of the United States, a country branded as a hotbed of terrorism and bellicosity. Iran has a large Muslim population (and to many Americans, all Iranians are Muslims and all Muslims are terrorists), and so many Iranian-American women still wear the *hijab*. In the last third of the 20th century, there was a wave of migration from Iran to the US, but Iranians are still very much a minority in America. Still, between the *hijab* and Farsi, Iranians attract a great deal more negative attention than positive, and this small minority carries the weight of a world divided. When Americans hear Farsi, it strikes a fearful chord: Farsi is perceived as a language of the strange, the scary, and the hateful. When Iranians speak Farsi on American streets, whether or not they wear the *hijab*, they attract the fearful ear of English-speaking society: *What are they talking about*

that they can't say it in English? Don't they love this country enough to speak its language? Why do these immigrants come to this country, use our services, take our jobs and refuse to learn our language? People who speak Farsi in America labor under this load every day. Here is another binary relationship: the patriot versus the terrorist. In order to be an American patriot, one must speak Standard American English exclusively. If one speaks Farsi in America, one must surely be a terrorist. For these reasons, just as an Iranian woman might give in and stop wearing the *hijab* – as I did – so an Iranian of either sex might earn the right to walk unmolested through an American crowd by keeping Farsi for the home front only, and silencing it in public. To reiterate, this silencing of the language and removal of the veil detracts from the femininity of Muslim Iranian women while the imposition of the veil of silence detracts from the masculine freedom of Iranian men by forcing them to squash a key aspect of their identity.

Supporting Parents for Heritage Language Maintenance

With these risks and rewards at stake, it is no surprise that the second-generation Iranian-Americans who participated in the East Coast University study were overwhelmingly in a state of advanced HL loss. They all used English routinely, and Farsi only when the opportunity arose, such as with family and Iranian friends. Very few – those who had arrived in the US recently -- could have conducted the interviews for the study in Farsi. The majority admitted to being able to speak Farsi only in the informal home-and-friends environment. Most were illiterate in Farsi.

When they were children and could have learned Farsi from their parents, either they chose or their parents chose for them to focus on English. The reasons for this

ranged from fear of being ridiculed or even harassed and identified with the enemy, to wanting to fit in with English-speaking American friends and wanting academic success in English-only American schools, to simply not having the opportunity to practice their Farsi with anyone but immediate family. According to the study participants, a few of their parents thought that they would do poorly in American society if they spoke Farsi, so they abandoned Farsi even in the home space. Some parents, seeking to counter the powerful force of the dominant English language and American culture, insisted that the children take formal instruction in Farsi on weekends during elementary school, but this instruction was only available until a certain age. Several of the study participants admitted to attending Farsi school only under duress; others said they were hungry for more but had no further sources from which to study.

Most of the East Coast University study participants realized too late that there were social and instrumental advantages to be gained if they spoke and became literate in Farsi. They could connect more closely with family, especially relatives in Iran who did not speak English at all. Nevertheless, those who did have some Farsi and tried to communicate with Farsi-speaking relatives found that they had developed "American accents" and that their best efforts yielded only broken communication. If they spoke both English and Farsi well, they could pick up subsequent languages more easily if they were bilingual (Krashen, 1998). They could experience the rich literature and arts of Iran in the original language. They could be more valuable on the job market, partly because Farsi has been named one of the "critical" languages in which the US government needs fluent communicators, and partly because they realized there would be a unique Farsi-speaking market for them if they chose to serve the Iranian community in their future

careers. As young adults, many of the study participants were inspired to try, through formal classroom training or informal grilling of their parents, to recapture the language that slipped away when they were young enough to have become bilingual, but did not due to irresistible outside forces operating against bilingualism.

The outside forces operating against young Iranian-Americans who may want to recapture Farsi are complex and difficult to perceive in operation unless one is actively and objectively studying them from a distance. One of the most important is contemporary orientalism, part of the binary relationship between the occidental (civilized, rational, forward-thinking) West – Europe and North America – and the oriental (savage, mystical, old-fashioned) East, including the Middle East in general and Iran in particular. Contemporary orientalism is a socio-psychological and socio-political factor against young American Farsi learners and speakers. If their schools do not support their proud use of their heritage language and culture, if they are constantly represented and treated as foreign and untrustworthy, they will give up and choose the dominant language and culture. By understanding how language ideologies work, we hope to be able to transform these subtractive, racist ideologies so that institutions feel obligated to embrace all languages and HL learners feel proud to keep their languages alive.

Socio-political and socio-historical factors are at work here. Many of the parents and grandparents of the study participants came to the United States to escape the turmoil that followed the Islamic Revolution of 1979. My husband and I were among this wave of immigrants. A chain of destructive events, including the Iran hostage crisis (November 4th 1979 to January 20th 1981) and the Iran-Contra weapons affair of the early 1980s, in which Iran positioned itself as anathema to the United States, brought unwanted attention

to these families. Many of the parents made the painful choice not to use Farsi outside of the home before the study participants were born in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The strained political situation has prevailed between Iran and the United States since long before these young people were born, and has gotten worse since the 9/11 attacks of 2001 and subsequent War on Terror that began when the study participants were children. After 9/11, Americans perceived all Middle Easterners, and especially all Muslims, as terrorist sympathizers. News surfaced that Iran was working on developing nuclear capabilities, which Americans deduced must be part of a long-term plan to attack Israel or the United States. Then-President George W. Bush branded Iran as part of the "Axis of Evil," and while these young people considered themselves Americans, their classmates and society at large treated them as extensions of that axis. Academic research for populations positioned as dangerous to the state, such as Iranians, and not only as a pariah like Mexicans, requires special consideration in terms of how to approach individuals and families who feel so forcefully ostracized and targeted for outright hate. In order to get honest and complete responses, a researcher must gain the trust of the community by stating a positive objective – not just "to know more about you," which might be perceived as intelligence-gathering for security purposes rather than academic effort to understand phenomena affecting a specific, over-represented but under-studied group -- but "to determine how to support you in your efforts to preserve your language and culture."

Socio-institutional factors are also in operation. As scholars interested in language maintenance, we need to include fear in our analysis: We must try to understand how institutions can counter fear among immigrant groups who have been targeted for

negativity by the dominant society. While many minority populations are alienated and may feel oppressed or ostracized, few live in outright fear of being victimized for their origins. American schools have always engaged in "subtractive" education, which treats any information not considered germane to the delivery of Standard English curriculum – such as the languages and cultures which immigrant families bring when they arrive here – as superfluous and even detrimental to an American education. The American school culture does not encourage the use of multiple languages in the hallways. Nevertheless, where students who speak Spanish or French can walk down the hallway chattering away in their HL and nobody will give it a second thought, a group of veiled young women or a group of Iranian-American young men walking the same hallway speaking Farsi will become the targets of suspicion. Many high schools have ethnic clubs – Latino clubs, for example – in which students can practice their heritage language and culture. Farsi-speaking students are such a minority – and a misunderstood one at that -- that they cannot form Persian clubs at the high school level. Even in an area with a strong Persian population, it is safe to say that Iranian-American students might not feel safe organizing. In an American public high school, a Persian club could be easily misconstrued as a terrorist cell, a mini Al Qaida. Teachers should, but do not, feel comfortable discussing ethnic origins and religious differences -- not as a way of offending people, but as a way to unite students of similar background and to encourage learning about one another, the better to dispel stereotypes and misconceptions. By the time they get to the college level, where there may be more Iranians with whom to organize, students feel behind the learning curve and do not want to devote the time to ethnic clubs, or even to formal Farsi language classes. Those students who do participate in Persian clubs or Farsi classes do

so in English and operate against a wall of apathy or even antipathy from the larger community. Some study participants said their parents were uncomfortable spending money for their children to take courses in their HL when they ought to be able to learn it at home. Certainly, among students who are trying to recapture their language, opportunities to practice are few – the students generally move in mixed-ethnicity circles in which English is the language everybody can understand. Even among family, some of the HL learners in this study said they felt embarrassed of their limited abilities and might be afraid to practice. The best they could hope for is a constrained recapturing, the hard-won ability to speak, read and write only the most basic Farsi. Overlying all of this apathy toward HL study and practice is the specific plight of Iranian-American students: in America, Farsi carries the baggage of threat. Where Spanish, French and German are routinely required in American high schools, it is unimaginable that Farsi will be offered any time soon, even if certified teachers are available. Farsi may be a "critical" language, but it is not one for which American parents want to register their children. Farsi, in many American eyes, is a terrorist language. Even indigenous languages such as Navajo are taught in public schools where there is a large native population whose parents want them to recapture their endangered language. The schools bring in local elders to teach the language. This is because Navajo is seen as a dying language – and the Navajo people are an endangered race (Zinn, 2003) -- and therefore no longer a threat to the American, White supremacy. Despite this support, Navajo students also face constrained recapturing. The bottom line is that trying to pick up a heritage language as an older child or young adult is like shoveling rocks uphill: Whatever one accomplishes, the success will be outweighed by the loss even in the face of arduous effort. Here is yet another

binary relationship: safe versus threat. One may choose to use one's heritage language in a setting where one feels safe, and veil it in a setting where one perceives a threat. American culture may also accept a "foreign" language if the people who speak it are perceived as safe, but if the people are perceived a threat, then the language will not be accepted in public, but will mark the speaker as scary.

The racial aspect of linguistic hegemony cannot be overlooked, especially in the case of Farsi in America. As previously established, power relations in America are arranged according to values which have their origin in White, northern European cultures (Fairclough, 2001). White, European-descended people have always and still do set policy for government and education, society's major institutions. Dominant ideologies function in these social institutions -- ideologies based on the "assumption that English is, in fact, a superior language and that we live in a classless, race-blind society" (Beykont, 2000, p.22). Not only are we not a classless, race-blind society, but we are also in the business of inventing new races by linking a language and/or nationality with a racializing function. Not even the election of Barack Obama, the first African-American president, can change that, for he, too, is bound by White, middle-class American values if he hopes to get anything done. For our purposes, it is also interesting to note that Obama speaks Standard American English, not Black English Vernacular (BEV). It is highly unlikely that Obama could have been elected if he did speak BEV, for White, middle-class society still sees BEV as a dialect of the poor, the ignorant, the street thug. Jane Hill talks about this kind of racializing hegemony, observing that there is a linguistic hierarchy associated with particularly marked identities that are indexed by language. So it is with Farsi: It is the language which signifies to the American ear warlike attitudes,

terrorism, backward thinking, and strange, outmoded ways. In the 21st century American discourses (which are rooted in hundreds of years of enforced White, European-descended supremacy), English has become a symbol of education and learning, of cosmopolitan economic and political leadership – the language of world dominance. Having a command of English is equal to being educated and capable, and not having flawless English marks a person as ignorant, intractable and even savage. Since many immigrants since the 1950s have been brown or black people from parts of the world other than Europe (even Iranians tend to be darker than those of European descent), this results in the racialization and devaluation of other languages than English. One language becomes a savage language (like indigenous languages when America was being settled by Whites) and another becomes a terrorist language, like Farsi, and there is not much that the speakers of these devalued languages can do to counter the dominant discourses. Here yet again is a familiar binary relationship: the savage versus the civilized. Throughout this research, we find that English-speaking Americans sought to dominate Others by forcing them not only to speak English, but to abandon their heritage languages. The less Americans understand about the Other culture, the more likely they are to object to the use of the HL, as is the case of Iranian culture and Farsi. As I discussed in Chapter V, some young Iranian-Americans consider it their right and responsibility to educate Americans about Iranian history, politics and culture, thus ideally easing some of the burden on Farsi speakers, but such counter-representation is like putting one's finger in a cracking dam: It does precious little to stem the flow of negative representations, ignorant assumptions, stereotype, fear, racism, and even outright hate – instead, it puts one in the path of the flood. Thus the counter-discourses

that interrogate this hegemony become silenced. The HL, then, is understood through the social, political, institutional, ideological, and psychological relations that construct its racialized position and produce oppressive and silencing circumstances that guarantee its loss.

Limitations of the Study

There have been three limitations to this study: 1) Sample size, 2) Geographic location of participants, and 3) Potential researcher's bias.

There were 22 participants in the East Coast University study. They were all one and a half or second-generation Iranian-Americans with at least one Farsi speaking parent and different religious backgrounds. Of these 22 students, 20 did not have a chance to go to Iran for extended periods of time while 2 did have the opportunity to live part of their lives in their heritage country. It would be interesting to see if a larger sample with more diverse backgrounds would yield the same rate of language loss and maintenance. The researcher is aware that the small sample size limits the degree of generalizations of the findings to similar groups of HL learners.

Geographic location is also a factor that might affect the findings. This group of students were from a large metropolitan area where they had limited access to Saturday Farsi classes organized by heritage community due to distance, but they had the advantage of having access to a large university where Farsi classes and courses on the Middle East were offered. The findings might be different in smaller towns where the community is closer and the students do not have to travel a long distance to attend various gatherings.

Throughout the study, I was also very cognizant of my own position as an insider studying one's own community and that this might cloud my objectivity, yet I kept the highest degree of professionalism during the interviews to avoid any potential bias. At the same time, this insider position helped the interviewees to trust me and to share their most personal experiences with me, which might have remained private otherwise.

Implications

Overall the findings from the East Coast University demonstrate that it may still be possible to enrich American culture with the contributions of Iranian culture; it may still be possible to save Farsi in America by finding ways to make immigrants and their children feel secure in unveiling their heritage language and culture, and instead wearing it proudly in public. In order to do this, Iranians must be free of the yoke of perceived terrorism, barbarianism, fanaticism, misogyny, perversion or whatever other misconceptions and stereotypes Americans may harbor against them. This means that not only individuals must be brave enough to speak Farsi in public and discuss their culture with anyone who will listen, but that the Iranian community must take on a concerted effort to educate the masses of Americans about who they are and what they are doing here. Perhaps advertising will be a tool they can use, working against negative representations by using the mass media that treat Iranians so badly. There needs to be a centralized effort to fund and encourage heritage language schools and develop curricula, which means allocating government funds to do so. American teachers should be trained to encourage discourse about heritage cultures and languages whenever possible, and to support students who may wish to use their HL or even organize with peers of the same

heritage. There are many things that can be done to support Iranian families as they become American without forcing them to veil or even shed their Iranianness.

Beyond the case of Farsi and Iranians, it is important for researchers and educators to look at the plight of heritage languages in America as their own, and to seek possible solutions to the problem of HL loss. If the many heritage languages immigrants have brought here are like candles, then protecting their flames illuminates the whole nation with the depth and breadth of the world's knowledge and wisdom. Allowing them to burn out within three generations leaves the entire nation in the darkness of self-centered ignorance and puts the US in the way of becoming backward ourselves, even as Americans consider themselves, and the English language, superior to everyone else.

Future Research

Be payan amad in daftar,
hekayat hamchenan baghist.
The night is departed; yet, my friend,
Our story's not yet at an end.
~ Rumi

The research has come to an end though the story is not finished yet. The second and third generations have a lot to teach us and we have a lot to learn from their stories. In order to understand their world better, the future research on HL loss and maintenance among the Iranian-American population can focus on the following topics:

1) Since family, friends, close relatives and Saturday Farsi classes were a strong factor in maintaining the HL, it would be useful to investigate the effectiveness of present teaching and learning material for Farsi and reach conclusions as to the best methods of curriculum and methodology of instruction for second and third generation Farsi learners.

2) It would also be of importance to study the effectiveness of the language courses at the universities and come up with a curriculum that could serve the needs of HL learners without mixing them with second language learners.

3) A comparative study can be done with regard to Farsi language loss and maintenance among various religious-background populations within Iranian-American communities.

4) Since this was a qualitative study with a limited number of participants, the same study could be conducted in other areas of the United States, such as Los Angeles, CA, where there is a larger Iranian community.

5) A quantitative or qualitative study could also be conducted as to how the second and third generations perceive the criteria for proficiency and how they plan to achieve that level.

6) Finally, it would be interesting to study the role of the Iranian and American universities and various other institutions in establishing programs where Iranian-Americans can take advantage of immersion, summer, and exchange language programs and at the same time experience the culture.

While second-generation HL loss is a grim reality complicated by major obstacles for the Farsi-speaking population in America, this researcher hopes that by unveiling some firsthand stories of the people whom this phenomenon affects, she has sowed some fresh ideas in the minds of researchers and policy makers who can take action to stanch the bleeding. By supporting and encouraging the recapturing and maintenance of heritage languages, the leaders in America's government and education communities will be encouraging a healthy diversity that will keep the country vital, teeming with possibilities

and capable of competing in a globalized marketplace. Most importantly, by supporting the holistic growth of individual identities, the United States will remain true to its longest-standing professed values of tolerance, individualism and personal freedom.

APPENDIX A

INTRODUCTORY LETTER

Study Participants Needed

Dear _____

My name is Farah Ramezanzadeh and I am currently pursuing a doctoral degree in Education, Culture and Society at the University of Utah in Salt Lake City, Utah. Presently, I am conducting a qualitative research study for my doctoral dissertation. The purpose of this study is to explore how the second-generation Iranian-American youth perceive various factors affecting their heritage language loss and/or maintenance in the United States. This study highlights the challenges of maintaining Persian as a heritage language and promoting inter-generational language transmission and preventing further language loss, given the status and power relations between minority/majority language in the United States.

The findings of the study will be based on the data collected through three semi-structured interviews with second-generation Iranian-American college students residing in the States of New York and New Jersey (with full informed consent of all participants). Interviews will be arranged at a time and location, which is convenient for the participants. The study will be completely confidential. The participants will be identified by name but will be assigned a pseudonym. The requirement for the participants is that 1) they should be second-generation college students of Persian ancestry who are either born in the United States or have immigrated to US at an early age (before elementary school), 2) those who are presently eighteen years of age or older, and 3) have different levels of communicative and literacy abilities in Persian.

There are no direct benefits for taking part in this study. However, the researcher believes that the information she gathers from this study will help fill in the gap in understanding factors that affect heritage language loss and maintenance in the US in the hope of providing a basis to facilitate development of strategies and programs for Persian language maintenance in the United States. Through your participation in this study, aspects of your role and ideas about this important issue can be included in the historical narrative. In addition, you will have the privilege of reviewing the raw data to make comments and suggestions, prior to its incorporation into the final results.

I would appreciate it if you give copies of this letter to anyone who might be interested to participate in this research study and have them contact me at 917-445-6944 or via email at farahsir@gmail.com for more information or on any further questions they might have about the study. I'd be delighted to meet with you and discuss the research in more depth.

Thank you in advance for your help and/or participation.

Farah Ramezanzadeh
University of Utah
Doctoral Candidate

APPENDIX B

COVER LETTER

Name:
Address:
City, State, Zip Code

Dear

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study on the topic of heritage language loss and maintenance among second-generation Iranian-American college students.

I look forward to speaking with you. As mentioned in our phone/email conversation, there will be a series of three interviews, each conducted separately at a place and time of convenience to the interviewee. Each interview will last about one hour and you have the right to stop the interview at any time you desire, and to "pass" on any question that you don't wish to answer.

I have enclosed the informed consent to give you a better sense of the terms and conditions for your agreement to participate in this study. I will ask you to sign the enclosed informed consent form when we meet for the interview.

If you have any questions about the enclosed forms or need more information on the study, I would be delighted to either talk to you over the phone (917-445-6944) or via email (farahsir@gmail.com) or meet with you in person to discuss the research in more depth and/or answer any questions you might have. Thank you again for your participation in this study.

Sincerely,

Farah Ramezanzadeh
University of Utah
Doctoral Candidate

APPENDIX C

INFORMED CONSENT

TITLE OF PROJECT

You are invited to participate in an interview for a research study on Heritage language loss and maintenance among second-generation Iranian-American college students.

Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being conducted and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and ask any questions that you may have or ask about anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take your time to decide whether you want to take part in this study.

BACKGROUND

Farah Ramezanzadeh, a Ph.D. student in the department of Education, Culture and Society at the University of Utah in Salt Lake City, Utah, will conduct the study. The purpose of this study is to explore how the second-generation Iranian-American youth perceive various factors affecting their heritage language loss and/or maintenance. This study highlights the challenges of maintaining Persian as a heritage language and promoting inter-generational language transmission and preventing further language loss, given the status and power relations between minority/majority languages in the United States.

STUDY PROCEDURE

If you agree to participate in this study, I will be asking you to fill out a consent form and then I will conduct three interviews with you. Each interview will take approximately one hour at a time and location that is convenient to you. In the interview, I will ask you to answer questions about heritage language loss and maintenance among second-generation Iranian-American college students. To be more specific, I may ask you questions such as “How do you perceive the value and uses of Persian language in the United States?” You may also be asked other kinds of related questions stemming from our conversation.

I will audiotape the interviews for the purpose of collecting accurate and complete information. You are not obligated to answer my questions. If you are unwilling to answer any question, simply say so, and we will move on. If, at any point, you want to talk "off the record," I will turn the tape recorder off and I will not take notes of that part of the interview. You may stop or withdraw from the interview at any time.

RISKS

The risks of this study are minimal. You may feel upset thinking about or talking about personal information related to your heritage language and culture. These risks are similar to those you experience when discussing personal information with others. If you feel upset from this experience, you can tell the researcher and she will tell you about resources available to help.

BENEFITS

There are no direct benefits for taking part in this study. However, the researcher believes that the information she will gather from this study will help fill in the gap in understanding the factors that affect heritage language loss and maintenance in the United States in the hope of providing a basis to facilitate the development of strategies and programs for Persian language maintenance in the Untied States. Through your participation in this study, aspects of your role and ideas about this important issue can be included in the historical narrative. In addition, you will have the privilege of reviewing the raw data to make comments and suggestions, prior to its incorporation into the final results.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Your data will be kept confidential. Research records and recordings will be kept in a locked filing cabinet or on a password protected computer located in the researcher's workspace. Only the researcher will have access to the original records. No copies of audio recordings will be made public without your written permission and they would only be available for educational or research purposes. . In publications, your real name will be removed and instead pseudonyms of your choice will be used.

PERSON TO CONTACT

If you have any questions or would like additional information about this research, please contact the researcher, Farah Ramezanzadeh, anytime by phone at 917-445-6944 or by email at farahsir@gmail.com. You can also contact my research advisor at ed.buendia@utah.edu.

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

Contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) if you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant. Also, contact the IRB if you have questions, complaints or

concerns, which you do not feel you, can discuss with the investigator. The University of Utah IRB may be reached by phone at (801) 581-3655 or by e-mail at irb@hsc.utah.edu.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Your participation in this study is voluntary. Refusal to participate or the decision to withdraw from this research will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. This will not affect your relationship with the investigator. If you decide to participate in this study, you are free to withdraw at any time. If you decide not to participate, your decision will be kept confidential.

COSTS AND COMPENSATION TO PARTICIPANTS

There will be no costs and/or compensation for participating in this study.

CONSENT

By signing this consent form, I confirm I have read the information in this consent form and have had the opportunity to ask questions. I will be given a signed copy of this consent form. I voluntarily agree to take part in this study.

_____

Printed Name of Participant

_____ _____

Signature of Participant Date

_____

Printed Name of Researcher

_____ _____

Signature of Researcher Date

APPENDIX D

FIRST INTERVIEW: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

As part of your participation in a research study on "Heritage language loss and maintenance among second-generation Iranian-American college students," please respond to the following questions. The information gathered here will be kept confidential and will be used for research purposes only. I would like to thank you in advance for your participation in this study.

Background Questions / Demographic Information

1. Name _____
2. Preferred Pseudonym _____
3. Age _____
4. Name of the University attending now _____
5. Class level at the University _____
6. Major _____
7. Where were you born?
8. If foreign born, how old were you when you came to the US? _____
9. If born in a Persian speaking country, how old were you when you left that country? _____
10. What language do
    a. Your parents speak? _____
    b. Your grandparents speak? _____

11. Are both or one of your parents Iranian? Specify. _____

12. Are your parents first generation immigrants?
If yes, what was the reason(s) for their sojourn (length and purpose)?

13. Have you been to Iran?
If yes, how often do you go to Iran? (Frequency and purpose)

14. What other countries do you travel to? (Frequency and purpose)

15. What is your nationality?

16. What is your first language?

17. In addition to English, what other languages do you know?

18. How proficient are you in that/those language(s)?

19. How was/were that/those language(s) acquired? (If not formally studied, where/how did you learn that/those language(s)?

20. Why did you study/learn that/those language(s)? Were there other options for you?

21. How often is/are that/those language(s) used? Where? With whom?

22. Have you ever attended any Persian language classes/Weekend schools/Saturday schools/Persian courses in college? Why? Why not?

23. If yes, how many years of Persian language classes/courses have you had?

24. Do you speak Persian in your daily life? Circle one.

    a. Never
    b. Rarely
    c. Sometimes
    d. Everyday

25. How do you assess your knowledge of Persian language? Please circle whichever appropriate.

    Communication: Below average, average, above average, excellent
    Comprehension: Below average, average, above average, excellent
    Reading: Below average, average, above average, excellent
    Writing: Below average, average, above average, excellent

APPENDIX E

SECOND INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

General Question:

1. Please tell me about some of the experiences you have had at home, at school, at other social public settings, with friends, family and other people that are related to Persian language: most favorite ones and least favorite ones. Why do you remember them?

Probing Questions:

2. What are the settings that you use Persian language and why? (Language use/ethnolinguistic value, attitude, choice, integration)
   2.1. Why do you use it at this/these specific setting?
   2.2. What is about this/these setting(s) that facilitate using Persian for you and why do you feel so comfortable using Persian at this/these setting(s)?
3. What advantages are there to using/practicing Persian at this/these specific setting(s)? School, home, other social public contexts? (Language use/ethnolinguistic value, attitude, choice, integration)
4. Are there any disadvantages to using/practicing Persian in the United States? (Language use/ethnolinguistic value, attitude, choice, integration)
5. I didn't hear you say anything about using Persian in other public spaces (for instance, school, going out shopping with friends, on the train, on the bus, etc.), what about those spaces? (Language use/ethnolinguistic value, attitude, choice, integration)
6. (If some spaces are mentioned as not used for speaking Persian, then ask) It seems this is a conscious decision? Why do you choose not to use Persian at that/those space(s)? (Language use/ ethnolinguistic value, attitude, choice, integration)
7. It seems like in this country English is everywhere? For you is it difficult to maintain your Persian language? How difficult or how easy is it? (Language use, Language learning)

8. Do you think it's valuable to learn and practice Persian language based on where you are at now, as a college student, living in the US, and having English language proficiency? (Language learning/ ethnolinguistic value, choice, feeling)
9. In your opinion, what are the advantages to Persian language learning in the United States? If yes, explain. (Language learning/functional gains and value, choice, feeling)
   9.1.(If academic advantages are mentioned), ask for specifications and detail, for example, getting better grades at school or on SAT exams or getting into a better college, being able to participate in Persian speaking study groups, etc.
   9.2.(If economic advantages are mentioned), ask for specifications and details, for example, access to better job opportunities such as those in the international market or in the political arena, or simply getting a better paying job, etc.
   9.3.(If social advantages are mentioned), ask for specifications and details, for example, ability to communicate with family and friends, participate in Persian cultural or social group and activities, read Persian newspapers, books, literature, history, etc., listen to Persian music/radio, watch Persian TV/films/videos, write letters to family or friends and/or participate in different chat rooms and online discussions, etc.
10. Do you think it's important for your children or your friend's children to learn and maintain their use of Persian language and culture? Why? In what ways? (Language use, Language learning)
11. What support, if any, would help you in maintaining Persian language? (Language use, Language learning)
12. What support, if any, is needed to ensure the future of Persian language and culture for the third generation in the US? (Language use, Language learning)
13. (If not already answered in previous questions, then ask) How much do you interact with other Persian-speaking students and communities? (Language use, Language learning)
14. How important is/are this/these community (ies) to you and how important are these interactions for the maintenance of Persian language and culture for your generation? (Language use, Language learning)

APPENDIX F

THIRD INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

General Questions:

1. How do you desire to be identified by other Americans? Why? (Integration, Identity)
2. How do you desire to be identified by other Middle Easterners? Why? (Integration, Identity)

Probing Questions:

If they say, for instance, Iranian-American, then ask:

3. Is there a difference that you see between being identified as an Iranian-American as opposed to an American or an Iranian? (Integration, Identity, Representation)
   3.1. Are there any difficulties in being recognized as, for instance, an Iranian-American and/or as an American in different contexts and spaces in the US? Explain.
   3.2. Are there any advantages in being recognized as, for instance, an Iranian-American and/or as an American in different contexts and spaces in the US? Explain.
4. Have you ever had a negative experience with other Americans as being identified as a Muslim? If yes, tell me a story about some negative experience.
5. Have you ever had a positive experience with other Americans as being identified as a Muslim? If yes, tell me a story about some positive experience.

General Questions:

Let's switch gears now and move to a question about your sense of being Iranian or Iranian-American or …., and its relation to knowledge and practice of Persian language.

6. In your opinion, to be an Iranian, how important is it that a person speaks and practices the Persian language? (Integration, Identity)
   6.1. Is there a relationship between Persian language usage and practice and identification with Iran and its culture, literature, and history?

7. If you have friends that their competency level in the Persian language is minimal, can they claim to be Iranian? (Integration, Identity)
8. How would one preserve one's Iranian identity without the knowledge of the Persian language? (Integration, Identity)

General Question:

Let's now talk about your sense of the way that Iranians are represented in the United States.

9. Based on your observations and experiences, are there any common misconceptions about those with an Iranian/Persian background in the US? If yes, where do you think they come from? (Representation, Ideological assumptions)

Probing Questions:

10. What effects do these movies, news, literature, and politics have on you and your daily activities?
    - 10.1. What about what your politicians say?
    - 10.2. What about the literature printed on the Middle East and its people?
    - 10.3. What about the Hollywood movies on the Middle East in general and Iran in particular?
11. What do you do about these representations/misrepresentations?

12. DO YOU HAVE ANY OTHER COMMENTS OR CONCERNS?

APPENDIX G

PARTICIPANTS' PROFILES

#	PROFILE	DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION
1	**Name:** Farnaz **Sex:** Female **Age:** 20 **Year @ College:** Junior **Major:** Neuroscience/Middle Eastern studies **Place of Birth:** USA **Parent's Place of Birth:** **Mother**: Egypt **Father**: Iran	**Years & Places of HL Learning:** No learning at home, No HL classes, family refused to speak any language but English **Proficiency in Persian (HL):** **Communication:** Below average **Comprehension:** Below average **Reading:** None **Writing:** None **Reasons for Parents' Leaving Iran:** Sought religious safety in England, Parents came to US to go to Medical School **How Often HL is used?** Occasionally to grandparents **How Often go to Iran?** Never been to Iran

#	PROFILE	DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION
2	**Name:** Ely **Sex:** Male **Age:** 20 **Year @ College:** Junior **Major:** Cell Biology/ Neuroscience **Place of Birth:** Germany, brought to US when he was 2 yrs old **Parent's Place of Birth:** **Mother**: Iran **Father**: Iran	**Years & Places of HL Learning:** Some learning at home from parents, No HL classes, never interested **Proficiency in Persian:** **Communication:** Average **Comprehension:** Average **Reading:** None **Writing:** None **Reasons for Parents' Leaving Iran:** Father seeking education & employment, Mother escaping religious persecution, Left from Iran to Turkey to Germany to US, **How Often HL is used?** Daily phone call to parents, 10 min/day **How Often go to Iran?** Never been to Iran

#	PROFILE	DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION
3	**Name:** Melissa **Sex:** Female **Age:** 19 **Year @ College:** Sophomore **Major:** Business/ French **Place of Birth:** USA **Parent's Place of Birth:** **Mother**: Iran **Father**: Iran	**Years & Places of HL Learning:** Some learning at home, One HL class **Proficiency in Persian (HL):** **Communication:** Below Average **Comprehension:** Below Average **Reading:** None **Writing:** None **Reasons for Parents' Leaving Iran:** Peruse higher education, join other family members in US, escape religious persecution **How Often HL is used?** When making phone calls to parents, Aunts, uncles, grandparents **How Often go to Iran?** Never been to Iran
4	**Name:** Michael **Sex:** Male **Age:** 18 **Year @ College:** Freshman **Major:** Undecided **Place of Birth:** USA **Parent's Place of Birth:** **Mother**: Iran **Father**: Iran	**Years & Places of HL Learning:** Some learning at home from parents, No HL class **Proficiency in Persian:** **Communication:** Below Average **Comprehension:** Below Average **Reading:** None **Writing:** None **Reasons for Parents' Leaving Iran:** Pursue Higher education, escape religious persecution **How Often HL is used?** Hear it when at home or family functions **How Often go to Iran?** Never been to Iran

#	PROFILE	DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION
5	**Name:** Niloufar **Sex:** Female **Age:** 19 **Year in College:** Sophomore **Major:** Business **Place of Birth:** USA **Parent's Place of Birth:** **Mother**: Iran **Father**: Iran	**Years & Places of HL Learning:** Some learning at home, No HL class **Proficiency in Persian (HL):** **Communication:** Average **Comprehension:** Average **Reading:** None **Writing:** None **Reasons for Parents' Leaving Iran:** Peruse higher education **How Often HL is used?** Whenever I go home to communicate with my immediate and extended family **How Often go to Iran?** Never been to Iran
6	**Name:** Ora **Sex:** Female **Age:** 20 **Year in College:** Junior **Major:** Civil Engineering **Place of Birth:** USA **Parent's Place of Birth:** **Mother**: Iran **Father**: Iran	**Years & Places of HL Learning:** Some learning at home, No HL class **Proficiency in Persian (HL):** **Communication:** Average **Comprehension:** Average **Reading:** None **Writing:** None **Reasons for Parents' Leaving Iran:** Peruse higher education **How Often HL is used?** Speak at home sometimes with my parents **How Often go to Iran?** Never been to Iran

#	PROFILE	DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION
7	**Name:** Nick **Sex:** Male **Age:** 18 **Year in College:** Freshman **Major:** Undecided **Place of Birth:** USA **Parent's Place of Birth:** **Mother**: Iran **Father**: Iran	**Years & Places of HL Learning:** Some learning at home, Some Saturday HL classes **Proficiency in Persian (HL):** **Communication:** Below Average **Comprehension:** Below Average **Reading:** None **Writing:** None **Reasons for Parents' Leaving Iran:** Peruse higher education **How Often HL is used?** When I go back home or at get-togethers with family and older relatives. With parents, they speak to me in Farsi and I respond in English. **How Often go to Iran?** Once at the age of about 10
8	**Name:** Mike **Sex:** Male **Age:** 20 **Year in College:** Sophomore **Major:** Undecided **Place of Birth:** USA **Parent's Place of Birth:** **Mother**: Iran **Father**: Iran	**Years & Places of HL Learning:** Some learning at home, Persian Saturday schools, 2 years of Persian Language in college **Proficiency in Persian (HL):** **Communication:** Average **Comprehension:** Average **Reading: E**lementary school level **Writing:** Elementary school level **Reasons for Parents' Leaving Iran:** Better Life, more opportunities for themselves and their children **How Often HL is used?** Mostly at my Parents' home with parents and family **How Often go to Iran?** Been there once

#	PROFILE	DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION
9	**Name:** Allen **Sex:** Male **Age:** 21 **Year in College:** Senior **Major:** Biology **Place of Birth:** USA **Parent's Place of Birth:** **Mother**: Iran **Father**: Iran	**Years & Places of HL Learning:** Some learning at home, No HL class **Proficiency in Persian (HL):** **Communication:** Average **Comprehension:** Average **Reading:** None **Writing:** None **Reasons for Parents' Leaving Iran:** Better opportunities **How Often HL is used?** Everyday when using the phone to talk to my family **How Often go to Iran?** Only been there once
10	**Name:** Nikki **Sex:** Female **Age:** 18 **Year in College:** Freshman **Major:** Biology **Place of Birth:** USA **Parent's Place of Birth:** **Mother**: Iran **Father**: Iran	**Years & Places of HL Learning:** Some learning at home, No HL class **Proficiency in Persian (HL):** **Communication:** Average **Comprehension:** Average **Reading:** None **Writing:** None **Reasons for Parents' Leaving Iran:** Better life opportunities for themselves and their kids **How Often HL is used?** With my immediate family **How Often go to Iran?** Once in a while

#	PROFILE	DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION
11	**Name:** Carolyn **Sex:** Female **Age:** 21 **Year in College:** Senior **Major:** Biological Sciences /Middle Eastern studies **Place of Birth:** USA **Parent's Place of Birth:** **Mother**: Iran **Father**: USA	**Years & Places of HL Learning:** Some learning at home, Saturday classes for 2 hrs/week, 3 years in college **Proficiency in Persian (HL):** **Communication:** Above Average **Comprehension:** Above Average **Reading:** Average **Writing:** Average **Reasons for Parents' Leaving Iran:** Mom came to US to study but married an American after studies and stayed here **How Often HL is used?** Sometimes at home with mom but dad doesn't know how to speak Persian **How Often go to Iran?** Every other year for the entire summer

#	PROFILE	DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION
12	**Name:** Rana **Sex:** Female **Age:** 18 **Year in College:** Freshman **Major:** Undecided **Place of Birth:** USA **Parent's Place of Birth:** **Mother**: Iran **Father**: Irish/English heritage Born in USA	**Years & Places of HL Learning:** Some learning at home, Saturday classes for 3 years **Proficiency in Persian (HL):** **Communication:** Average **Comprehension:** Average **Reading:** Below Average **Writing:** Below Average **Reasons for Parents' Leaving Iran:** Pursue higher education **How Often HL is used?** Sometimes with my mom and sisters, at parties and when I go to Iran **How Often go to Iran?** About every other year to visit my mom's family
13	**Name:** Rachel **Sex:** Female **Age:** 19 **Year in College:** Sophomore **Major:** Undecided **Place of Birth:** USA **Parent's Place of Birth:** **Mother**: Iran **Father**: Tajikistan	**Years & Places of HL Learning:** Some learning at home, One HL class at University **Proficiency in Persian (HL):** **Communication:** Below Average **Comprehension:** Below Average **Reading:** None **Writing:** None **Reasons for Parents' Leaving Iran:** More job opportunities, better life style, religious freedom, better rulers **How Often HL is used?** Sometimes hear it but never actually use it very much **How Often go to Iran?** Never been to Iran

#	PROFILE	DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION
14	**Name:** Shahbaz **Sex:** Male **Age:** 21 **Year in College:** Senior **Major:** Middle Eastern Studies **Place of Birth:** USA **Parent's Place of Birth:** **Mother**: Iran **Father**: Iran	**Years & Places of HL Learning:** Some learning at home, 2 years of Saturday classes, 3 years in college **Proficiency in Persian (HL):** **Communication:** Average **Comprehension:** Average **Reading:** Below Average **Writing:** Below Average **Reasons for Parents' Leaving Iran:** For better opportunities **How Often HL is used?** Farsi with mom **How Often go to Iran?** Before starting college, I used to visit some summers.
15	**Name:** Hansel **Sex:** Male **Age:** 22 **Year in College:** Senior **Major:** Finance **Place of Birth:** USA **Parent's Place of Birth:** **Mother**: Iran **Father**: Iran	**Years & Places of HL Learning:** Some learning at home, Two HL class in college **Proficiency in Persian (HL):** **Communication:** Average **Comprehension:** Average **Reading:** Below Average **Writing:** Below Average **Reasons for Parents' Leaving Iran:** For better life opportunities **How Often HL is used?** In family gatherings, at home with parents and little bit at Persian parties **How Often go to Iran?** Once every four years or so

#	PROFILE	DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION
16	**Name:** Shirin **Sex:** Female **Age:** 21 **Year in College:** Senior **Major:** Genetics/Middle Eastern Studies **Place of Birth:** USA **Parent's Place of Birth:** **Mother**: Iran **Father**: Iran	**Years & Places of HL Learning:** Some learning at home, 2 years of HL classes in college **Proficiency in Persian (HL):** **Communication:** Average **Comprehension:** Average **Reading:** Below Average **Writing:** Below Average **Reasons for Parents' Leaving Iran:** Better life opportunities **How Often HL is used?** Sometimes at home with family **How Often go to Iran?** Never been there
17	**Name:** David **Sex:** Male **Age:** 22 **Year in College:** Senior **Major:** Accounting **Place of Birth:** USA **Parent's Place of Birth:** **Mother**: Iran **Father**: Iran	**Years & Places of HL Learning:** Some learning at home, 2 years of HL classes in college **Proficiency in Persian (HL):** **Communication:** Average **Comprehension:** Average **Reading:** Below Average **Writing:** Below Average **Reasons for Parents' Leaving Iran:** Better life opportunities **How Often HL is used?** Sometimes with parents and elders **How Often go to Iran?** Never been there

#	PROFILE	DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION
18	**Name:** Rokhsareh **Sex:** Female **Age:** 21 **Year in College:** Junior **Major:** Biochemistry **Place of Birth:** USA **Parent's Place of Birth:** **Mother**: Iran **Father**: Iran	**Years & Places of HL Learning:** Went to school in Iran for a number of years **Proficiency in Persian (HL):** **Communication:** Excellent **Comprehension:** Excellent **Reading:** Excellent **Writing:** Excellent **Reasons for Parents' Leaving Iran:** Better life opportunities **How Often HL is used?** Sometimes with family and friends, reading and writing **How Often go to Iran?** Every year, visit my family
19	**Name:** Kevin **Sex:** Male **Age:** 20 **Year in College:** Junior **Major:** Cell Biology **Place of Birth:** USA **Parent's Place of Birth:** **Mother**: Iran **Father**: Iran	**Years & Places of HL Learning:** Some Learning at home, No formal studies **Proficiency in Persian (HL):** **Communication:** Below Average **Comprehension:** Below Average **Reading:** Below Average **Writing:** Below Average **Reasons for Parents' Leaving Iran:** Left to pursue better life **How Often HL is used?** At home and family interactions **How Often go to Iran?** Never been there

#	PROFILE	DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION
20	**Name:** Bahareh **Sex:** Female **Age:** 19 **Year in College:** Sophomore **Major:** Biology **Place of Birth:** USA **Parent's Place of Birth:** **Mother**: Iran **Father**: Iran	**Years & Places of HL Learning:** Some learning at home, One year Farsi class in Kindergarten, One year of Persian in college **Proficiency in Persian (HL):** **Communication:** Above Average **Comprehension:** Above Average **Reading:** Below Average **Writing:** Below Average **Reasons for Parents' Leaving Iran:** Political instability of Iran after revolution **How Often HL is used?** Mostly with my parents and occasionally with my siblings **How Often go to Iran?** Every other year since I was 3 years old
21	**Name:** Maryam **Sex:** Female **Age:** 18 **Year in College:** Freshman **Major:** Undecided **Place of Birth:** USA **Parent's Place of Birth:** **Mother**: Iran **Father**: Iran	**Years & Places of HL Learning:** No formal studies, learned by visiting Iran and from family members **Proficiency in Persian (HL):** **Communication:** Average **Comprehension:** Average **Reading:** Below Average **Writing:** Below Average **Reasons for Parents' Leaving Iran:** Pursue Higher education **How Often HL is used?** Every day with my family members **How Often go to Iran?** Every 2 years

#	PROFILE	DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION
22	**Name:** Zara **Sex:** Female **Age:** 22 **Year in College:** Senior **Major:** Architecture **Place of Birth:** USA **Parent's Place of Birth:** **Mother**: Iran **Father**: Iran	**Years & Places of HL Learning:** Went to school in Iran for a number of years **Proficiency in Persian (HL):** **Communication:** Excellent **Comprehension:** Excellent **Reading:** Above Average **Writing:** Above Average **Reasons for Parents' Leaving Iran:** Pursue Higher education **How Often HL is used?** Sometimes with family and friends, reading and writing **How Often go to Iran?** Once in a while

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