ZEHRA ŞAMLIOĞLU

THE LANGUAGE OF EXILE: LANGUAGE AND MEMORY IN ISTANBUL JEWRY

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THE LANGUAGE OF EXILE: LANGUAGE AND MEMORY IN ISTANBUL JEWRY

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This is to certify that we have read this thesis and in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in Cultural Studies.

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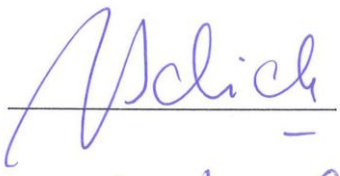
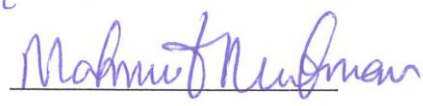
Assist. Prof. İrvin Cemil Schick 

Prof. Dr. Mahmut Mutman 

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Zehra Şamlıoğlu

ABSTRACT

THE LANGUAGE OF EXILE: LANGUAGE AND MEMORY IN ISTANBUL JEWRY

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This study explores the current situation of Istanbul Jewry—a small Jewish community within Turkey's large Muslim majority. In particular, it focuses on the changes that have taken place in the languages spoken by the community over the last century, in order to explore the experiences of transformation and integration within a religious minority in Turkey. The political, cultural, and social causes of language change among Istanbul Jews raise questions related to identity, culture, belonging, assimilation, resistance, and equality. The study thus relates the history of Istanbul Jewry to theories of language change, diaspora, and collective memory, reflecting on data gathered through personal observation, in-depth interviews, and analysis of primary and secondary sources. The qualitative findings suggest that the use of a particular language (Ladino, French or Turkish) has meant different things to different generations: The older generations see themselves as distinct because of their Ladino heritage, accepting their marginal position in wider society and making no effort to change it. In contrast, the younger generation is better integrated, speaking no Ladino and seeing little difference between themselves and the rest of Turkish society. Nevertheless, the state, politicians and the majority of the Muslim population continue to reproduce a discourse of Jews' outsider status, with which the younger generation must contend.

Keywords: Istanbul Jewry, language, memory, identity.

ÖZ

SÜRGÜN DİLİ: İSTANBUL YAHUDİLERİNDE DİL VE HAFIZA

Şamlıoğlu, Zehra

MA, Kültürel Çalışmalar Bölümü

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Bu çalışma, geniş Müslüman toplumda yaşayan İstanbul Yahudi Cemaati'nin güncel durumunu ele almakta ve cemaatin geçirdiği dil değişimlerine ve bu değişimlerin sonuçlarından yola çıkarak İstanbul Yahudilerinin geçirdiği dönüşüm ve Türkiye'de geniş Müslüman topluma entegre olma süreçlerine odaklanmaktadır. Dil değişimlerinin politik, kültürel ve sosyal etkileri kimlik, kültür, aidiyet, asimilasyon ve eşitlik gibi kavramlara dair sorular sormayı gerektirmektedir. Bu sebeple, bu çalışma kişisel gözlem, mülakatlar, birincil ve ikincil kaynakların analizine dayanarak İstanbul Yahudi Cemaati'nin tarihini dil, diaspora ve toplumsal hafıza teorileriyle ilişkilendirmektedir. Nitel veriler, kullanılan belli bir dilin (Ladino, Fransızca ya da Türkçe) farklı jenerasyonlar için farklı anlamlara geldiğini göstermektedir. Buna göre, yaşlı ve orta yaşlı nesil sahip oldukları Ladino mirasının bilinciyle kendilerinin geniş toplum nazarındaki konumlarının farkında ve bunu değiştirmek için herhangi bir çaba içerisinde değildirler. Fakat, Ladino konuşmayan genç nesil geniş topluma entegre olmuş, kendileri ve toplumun geri kalanı arasında herhangi bir fark görmemektedirler. Bununla birlikte devlet, politikacılar ve Müslüman topluluğun büyük bir kısmı genç neslin başa çıkması gereken ve İstanbul Yahudilerinin geniş toplum nazarında yabancı olarak algılanmasına sebep olan bir söylem üretmektedirler.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İstanbul Yahudileri, dil, hafıza, kimlik

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Finally I would like to thank my family, and especially my mother and my sister, for their patience, for letting me use their home like hotel and for taking care of me whenever I needed, even if I pushed the limits of our family ties while studying. I am also very grateful to my father, as I always felt his support and prayers with myself.

I hope this study will be of help to anyone interested in the subject and can contribute to the field.

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Introduction

1. Historical Background

At the dawn of the twentieth century, a question was posed to the Jews of the Ottoman Empire about which language they should speak. The answer to this simple question has affected their lives to a great extent because it also includes questions about the language of their children's education, the cultural models that they emulate, and the language in which the ideals of their Jewishness are reflected. Despite conflicting answers, the Jews of Istanbul eventually decided that, if they wanted to live a "cultivated" and "modern" life, Ladino or Yiddish could not remain their native languages. Against this backdrop, the Alliance Israelite Universelle offered French as a way for them to become modern and ideal Jews, after the model of French Jewry, and the Republican state offered Turkish as a way for them to become full citizens of the country in which they lived.

The history of Sephardic Jewry in Turkey dates back to the year 1492. After their expulsion from Spain as a result of the project "Reconquista", the Jews of Spain, also known as Sephardim, spread to different territories around Europe, North Africa and Middle East. Their expulsion and resettlement initiated the revival of Western Europe Jewish existence in the East towards the end of the 15th century and the beginning of the 16th, and the center of the Jewish world moved eastwards as a result (Benbassa & Rodrigue, 2010).

Before the arrival of Sephardic Jews in Ottoman lands, there had been settled Romanyot and Karay Jews (Benbassa & Rodrigue, 2010). However, since Sephardic Jews came with a strong cultural and social heritage, in the course of time they dominated the other Ottoman Jewish communities and assimilated them. The influx of Sephardic Jews changed the fabric of Jewish life in Ottoman lands (Angel, 2006, p. 24). Even though they had been expelled from their homelands, they remained strongly attached to their history, culture, and

Ladino language for several generations (Rozen, 2010, p. 92). Moreover, in the second half of the 15th century, Yiddish-speaking Ashkenazi Jews began to arrive in Istanbul, though their existence was also hidden behind the Sephardic Jews and later generations of the Istanbul Jewish community was mostly described as Sephardic.

Over their five-hundred-year history of Istanbul Jewry in Ottoman lands, two main turning points can be observed in the transformation of the community. The first one is the foundation of the Alliance schools towards the end of 19th century by the Alliance Israelite Universelle, and the second comes with the language revolution in the Turkish Republican Era. The picture before these turning points was a somber one due to Ottoman state policies and living conditions of the Jews themselves. Like those of other religious or ethnic minorities in the empire, the lives of Jews were isolated by language and culture from the society of which they were a part. They did not feel the need to integrate into Ottoman social life. They had religious autonomy and were allowed to live their lives according their religious traditions (Angel 2006, 40). Naturally, they remained attached to their traditions, ignorant of what was happening around them and nurturing the hope of a glorious future that would come sooner or later. They only spoke their own language, Ladino. Only the male members of their community could speak Ottoman Turkish, and then only to help them in their daily interactions, and the women were not expected to learn it at all. For a very long time, Turkish was just a foreign language for them, and this enabled them to maintain a closely-knit community and a unique way of life.

To a great extent, the foundation of the Alliance Israelite Universelle changed the flow of history for Eastern Jewry, and also for the Istanbul Jewish community. The Alliance was founded in Paris in 1860 with the aim of fighting for Jewish rights wherever they were lacking. Its project was to enable Jews to have a universal character, and this project was carried out through the Alliance schools. Unlike the traditional Jewish education system, whose basic reference point was Talmud, the Alliance schools' main aim was to educate children in French culture. The teaching of the French language was thus very important,

and, in the long run, the acquisition of French language by Middle Eastern Jewry can be seen as the most direct and radical impact of the Alliance. After 1863, Alliance schools were opened in important Ottoman cities like Istanbul, Izmir, Edirne, Salonika, Gallipoli, Baghdad and Damascus. The specially-selected teachers played a crucial role in the "civilizing" process of the Jews in these cities. As Aron Rodrigue points out:

> It became the duty of the Alliance to ensure that the rest of world Jewry followed in the footsteps of French Jewry to enter the new age. . . . Ethnic boundaries had shifted and had not created a 'lesser' Jew but simply a 'different' Jew, a distinctive, modern Jew. This was the model that had to be exported. (1993, p. 11)

Through the Alliance schools, French language gained popularity among Jews, together with the other, European-based enlightenment ideas. Learning French was not difficult for Sephardic Jews because Ladino also had a Latin origin. The idea of regeneration and emancipation now became the hardcore topic in the Alliance agenda. They now had the necessary justification for their act of "saving" the Jews outside Europe, namely in the Middle East. Rodrigue explains the Alliance rationale of using education to save the Turkish Jews from their ignorance, which was thought to be the reason of their declining status (Rodrigue, 1990, p. 15). Henceforth, the chief task on their agenda was to "regenerate" the Jews in eastern lands through education, modern trade and agriculture. The Alliance was not just offering education to the youth; it was also providing them with better job opportunities and social life options after they completed their education. In this respect, the transformation process of the Jews was accelerating.

The cultural, social and political situation of the Ottoman Empire in general smoothed the way for the expansion of the Alliance schools. As Rodrigue puts it: "The relative absence of the state in the sphere of education of non-Muslims until the twentieth century gave freedom of action to European Jewish reformers to proceed to the transformation of the educational system of the Jewish community" (1990, pp. 34-5).

The entrance of the French language into the lives of Istanbul Jewry changed many things that were taken for granted in their lives. As a result of both

economic and cultural interaction, a new understanding of social structure developed among eastern Jews. According to Marc Angel:

> As more students were 'Frenchified' in the Alliance schools, new cultural divisions surfaced within the Sephardic communities. Some of the more 'progressive' Sephardim came to see French as the language of culture; Judeo-Spanish was viewed as an archaic, corrupt language that lacked relevance in the modern world. (2006, p. 159)

Accordingly, the usage of Ladino was strictly forbidden in the Alliance's educational establishments, which also initiated the removal of Ladino from everyday life in the long run. Through the language training at Alliance schools, and the encounter with the West and western ideas, Sephardic Jews underwent a westernization and modernization process. As Rodrigue states:

> The Europeanization of day-to-day life was perhaps one of the most visible results of the new education. Names were a good barometer of change […] The growing use of French at home among graduates of the Alliance schools, and the relative eclipse of Judeo Spanish, was noticed as early as 1887. (1990, p. 119)

Although Alliance schools aimed above all to improve the cultural situations of Jewish communities, the communities themselves did not necessarily share this priority. They were primarily interested in improving their economic situations, and the Alliance gave them the chance to do so (Rodrigue, 1990, p. 89). Since commerce was the main economic activity for Jews, the Alliance also satisfied this community demand and thereby maintained its popularity and prestige in Jewish communities.

In 1924, the Alliance schools came to an end. Turkey's Ministry of Education ordered the Alliance schools to cease all their connection with their parent organization in Paris (Rodrigue, 1990, p. 163), which meant the end of the Alliance and its activities in Turkey in legal terms. After this step, the ministry replaced French with Hebrew in Jewish schools, thus undermining the official use of French (Rodrigue, 1990, pp. 163-4). Since Turkey's Jews did not speak Hebrew, which was simply the language of religion and prayer, they were obliged to start learning Turkish for educational purposes. As a result, in the

early Republican Era in Turkey, Turkish influence entered the lives of Istanbul Jewry.

In the early Republican Era, Turkey's governing elites pursued a language revolution in the hope of creating an ideal and homogenous Turkish nation. Citizens of the newly founded Turkish state were encouraged to speak only Turkish, use the Latin alphabet, and use pure Turkish words, no matter what their ethnic background. Under the new alphabet and language purification movement, all citizens were expected to acquire this new Turkish identity. In this respect, speaking any language other than Turkish was strictly forbidden for a period of time.

The creation of a national education system in Turkey in 1931 further reinforced the obligatory use of Turkish language in schools and everyday life. Moreover, as a result of the nationalist movements of the period, Turkey's Jews were expected to speak fluent Turkish without an accent and to fully integrate into society in order to prove that they had become "proper" Turkish citizens.

The way Istanbul Jewry used language, or their preference for a particular language, can be taken as a manifestation of their relative social position both in their community and in Turkish society more widely. The existence of three languages in their community imposed a hierarchy on Istanbul Jewry in terms of revealing their social and cultural status. Among themselves, knowing French was a symbol of being a member of the upper class, while Turkish was the language of state and also of the street, necessary for contacting the wider social world. In this respect, in their everyday life, choosing the right language for the right occasion was as important as choosing the right words and expressions. The structure of society and of their community played the role of a censor in determining the most appropriate language of communication.

The fact that the Jews of Istanbul have experienced three language changes over the last hundred years, and over the journey from empire to republic, raises questions related to identity, culture, belonging, assimilation, resistance, and equality. It also makes it necessary to start with the problem of language in order to understand the experience of Istanbul Jews as a community and as a

religious minority in Turkey and when inquiring into their transformation and integration over the last century.

2. Literature Survey

Most studies related to Istanbul Jewry focus on the community's history and related archive documents. The number of sociological and anthropological studies about Istanbul Jewry is relatively small, but increasing. This study will analyze qualitative data from in-depth interviews which focus on the idea of language. To build a sound theoretical basis for this analysis, a wide range of books and articles from the fields of history, the philosophy of language, and the sociology of language have been consulted, particularly on the key concepts of memory, modernity, diaspora and identity.

In order to make a sound analysis of Istanbul Jewry and their place in a large Muslim society, it is first necessary to have a preliminary understanding of the historical relationship between Jews, Muslims and Christians. A good starting point on the roots of this relationship is Mark Cohen's *Under Crescent and Cross: The Jews in the Middle Ages* (1994). Cohen investigates the legal position of Jewish people in Christendom and Muslim lands in the middle ages and shows the sources of some of the prejudices the followers of these religions hold against each other. Cohen also discusses concepts like ethnicity, hierarchy, collective memory, marginality, blood libel and dhimmi, with a focus on socio-economic conditions and religious beliefs. This book presents the building blocks of interreligious polemics and Jewish collective memory and investigates the role of religion in determining the social relations between Muslims, Christians and Jews.

The great expulsion from Spain in 1492 is a milestone in the history of Istanbul Jewry. Together with the conquest of Istanbul, the expulsion from Spain changes the flow of this history to a great extent. Lütfi Şeyban's *Mudejares & Sefarades: Endülüslü Müslüman ve Yahudilerin Osmanlı'ya Göçleri* (*Mudejares & Sefarades: The Migration of Andalusian Muslims and Jews to the Ottoman Empire*) (2010) provides a very detailed account of the migration of the Muslims and Jews and their admission to Ottoman lands after the expulsion.

Minna Rozen's *İstanbul Yahudi Cemaati'nin Tarihi: 1453-1566* (*The History of Istanbul Jewry: 1453-1566*) (2000) also focuses on the expulsion from Spain and includes very useful information about the Sephardic cultural roots of Istanbul Jewry. Rozen depicts the transformation the Greek-speaking Romaniot Jewry of Istanbul experienced with the arrival of Jewish people from the Iberian Peninsula in the fifteenth century. Thus, the book reveals the multilayered history of Istanbul Jewry, showing its internal ethnic variations and the traces and traumas of its expulsion. Rozen's historical quest also reveals the impact of the Ottoman Empire on the cultural and social values of the community and traces the development of Istanbul as the capital city of the Ottoman Empire.

Marc D. Angel's *Foundations of Sephardic Spirituality: The Inner Life of Jews of the Ottoman Empire* (2006) explores the cultural values, patterns, attitudes and teachings that characterized the Sephardic life and the ways they maintained their traditions through the long years after their expulsion from Spain. Presenting a historical framework, Angel reveals the inner dynamics of the Sephardic community in the Ottoman Empire and their folk wisdom. Angel argues that the Jews of the Ottoman Empire presented themselves as descendants of Spanish Jewish nobility and had a strong sense of pride and dignity which motivated them to preserve their cultural roots and values.

Aron Rodrigue (1990; 1993) has made invaluable contributions to the historiography of the Jewish people, through comprehensive studies of the foundation and operation of the Alliance Israelite Universelle and its schools and on Jewish life in the Ottoman Empire. His *French Jews, Turkish Jews: Alliance Israelite Universelle and the Politics of Jewish Schooling in Turkey, 1860-1925* (1990) examines the operation of the Alliance schools in Turkey alongside the social, economic and cultural conditions of its Jewish people, as well as tracing the Alliance's aim to regenerate and modernize the whole Jewish people in the image of European, specifically French, Jews. The operations of Alliance schools also give clues to the education system in Turkey, both in the context of its minorities and wider society. Rodrigue claims that the lack of central authority in the education system provided the necessary conditions for the Alliance to thrive until the advent of the law on unified national education in 1924.

Rodrigue's *Images of Sephardi and Eastern Jewries in Transition: The Teachers of Alliance Israelite Universelle, 1860-1939* (1993) sheds light on the operation of the Alliance schools in the Eastern countries. Through the letters of Alliance teachers to the administration in Paris, the book provides very detailed information about the history, curriculum, regulations and conditions of the schools. Since the book includes letters written from different countries, it also allows the reader to make a comparative analysis of Alliance schools and the living conditions of the Jews across different countries. The narratives of the teachers, which are sentimental to a great extent, show their belief in and dedication to the Alliance's mission of regeneration.

Rodrigue and Esther Benbassa's *Türkiye ve Balkan Yahudileri Tarihi* (*The History of Turkey and Balkan Jewry*) (2010) narrates the story of the Sephardic Jewish community who settled in the Balkans, Anatolia and the Near East after the expulsion from Spain in 1492. The book gives a factual account of the five-hundred-year history of the Sephardim, including the Holocaust, depicting the social status of Sephardim and their relationships with the Ottoman regime and other minority groups. Rodrigue and Benbassa focus on regulations of education, culture and religious rituals, showing the closely-related development of Jewishness and Sephardic roots; two important elements of the community's identity. While examining the history of Sephardic Jews, Rodrigue and Benbassa also question the widely accepted terms "Spanish golden age" and "Ottoman hospitality".

Sarah Abrevaya Stein's *Making Jews Modern: The Yiddish and Ladino Press in the Russian and Ottoman Empires* (2004) explores the modernization of the Jews in the Russian and Ottoman empires by analyzing the widely consumed texts by the Jewish authors printed in Yiddish and Ladino. This comparative study of Ottoman and Russian Jews provides evidence of diverse ways of envisioning modernity under the rule of empire and investigates the role of print culture in imagining national and transnational communities. The book studies how modernization discourse shaped people's lives in both empires and attempts to answer questions about what being a Russian or Ottoman Jew meant, whether Jews should be acculturated or not, and which language they should speak.

Through its textual analysis, Stein's study fills an important void in Jewish studies about the social life of Russian and Ottoman Jews.

Corry Guttstadt's *Türkiye, Yahudiler ve Holokost* (*Turkey, Jews and the Holocaust*) (2012) offers a comprehensive study of Turkey's politics during the Second World War and questions the common narrative, also accepted to an extent by Istanbul Jewry, that the initiatives of some Turkish diplomats in Europe saved thousands of Jewish people from the Holocaust. Guttstadt's study explores the official and nationalist ideology of the Turkish state towards minorities in detail and also deepens our understanding of the relationship between Nazi Germany and Turkey. Moreover, the book depicts the terrifying decisiveness and rigor of the Nazis in organizing and conducting the Holocaust through original documents.

Rıfat N. Bali has written several books on the history of Istanbul Jewry, which refer to a great deal of archival sources. In *Cumhuriyet Yıllarında Türkiye Yahudileri: Bir Türkleştirme Serüveni, 1923-1945* (*The Jews in Turkey in the Republican Years: An Episode of Turkification*) (1999), Bali uses official documents and contemporary periodicals to detail the lives of Jewish people during the single-party period and through the mass migration after the establishment of the State of Israel. His continuation of this story, *Cumhuriyet Yıllarında Türkiye Yahudileri: Devletin Örnek Yurttaşları, 1950-2003*, (*The Jews in Turkey in the Republican Years: Ideal Citizens of the State*) (2009) offers a very detailed narration of the political atmosphere in this period through archival sources. The book investigates whether the republican intention to create citizens was accomplished or not in the case of non-Muslim people. Analyzing key terms like "minority", "lobby", "anti-Semitism", "Holocaust" and "established order", the book focuses on the role of leading names in Istanbul Jewry in the attempt to correct the image of Turkey in foreign eyes and construct better diplomatic relationships.

The memoirs of Bensiyon Pinto, edited by Tülay Gürler in *Anlatmasam Olmazdı: Geniş Toplumda Yahudi Olmak* (*Impossible If I Didn't Explain: Being Jewish in Society at Large*) (2008) reveals very important points about a Jewish life in wider Muslim society. As the honorary president of Jewish community in

Turkey, Pinto gathers his personal experiences for the benefit of the younger generation. His explanations and memoirs are important in analyzing the relationship between Istanbul Jewry and wider Turkish society and the Turkish state. Since his life experiences commenced in the early 1940s, he gives first-hand accounts of a number of historical moments like the *Yirmi Kur'a* or "Twenty classes" incident, and the events of September 6-7, 1955. The book thus also contributes to oral history studies of the subject.

Roni Margulies' autobiographical essay, *"Bugün Pazar, Yahudiler Azar": İstanbul Yahudileri Hakkında Kişisel Bir Gözlem* ("*Today's Sunday, the Jews' Fun-day*": *A Personal Observation of Istanbul Jewry*) (2007), depicts Istanbul and its Jews from the 1950s onwards through his own family history and personal experiences. While making fun of the prejudices and clichés used against Jewish people, Margulies also explains the roots of these prejudices. Through everyday examples and stories, Margulies evokes Istanbul society while focusing on the problems of Jewish community in Turkey. Both Margulies and Pinto's books provide a new perspective for Jewish studies; their narratives couch personal experiences in the language of everyday life and do not fall into the trap of reiterating national discourses about the history and social life of Istanbul Jewry.

Erdem Güven's *Mekan, Kimlik, Yahudilik: Kuzguncuk Yahudi Cemaati Üstüne Bir Çalışma* (*Place, Identity, Jewishness: A Study on Kuzguncuk Jewry*) (2011) investigates Kuzguncuk as a locus of identity for Jewish people, focusing on the relationship between place and Jewishness. Balat and Hasköy are important loci of identity for Istanbul Jews, but Güven prefers Kuzguncuk as a case study. Kuzguncuk is a less-studied district and well-known for being a place tolerant of all religions with strong neighborhood ties, to the extent that its residents regarded it as a "piece of heaven". Güven conducted interviews with Jewish residents of Kuzguncuk and explores their local legends about the once very happy life there, also frequently expressed in their popular culture.

Ferhat Kentel provides a very useful analysis of the politics of the Turkish state and its effects on its citizens in *Ehlileşmemek, Düzleşmemek, Direnmek* (*Resisting Domestication and Normalization*) (2008). In a conversational style, Kentel

questions Turkey's state politics and popular reactions through both theory and empirical observation. Kentel enters the capillaries of Turkish society to touch the heart of terms like modernity, postmodernity, globalization, civilization, conservatism and nationalism. For Kentel, Turkey and its people need to confront themselves to address the buried memories of those religious or ethnic communities suppressed in the name of modernity. Kentel's analysis provides new dimensions to religious and ethnic minority problems.

Similarly, Leyla Neyzi deals with minority problems and identity matters in Turkey through the real life stories of interviewees in *Ben Kimim? Türkiye'de Sözlü Tarih, Kimlik ve Öznellik* (*Who am I? Oral History, Identity and Subjectivity in Turkey*) (2011). In particular, the story of Fatma Arığ, whose family kept their Sabbathaian identity secret for many years, is a remarkable case for the study of identity politics in Turkey. Besides contributing to debates around national identity, Neyzi also explores the relationship between history and memory and provides a forum for the voices of silenced people. The life stories that Neyzi shares in this book show how Turkish national identity can become both inclusive and exclusive at the same time, especially for Turkey's minorities. The book also reveals how necessary it is for oral history to explore the roots of social problems.

In order to develop a better understanding of the impact of language change on Istanbul Jewry, a number of theoretical discussions of language have been included in this literary survey. Mary Altabev's book *Judeo Spanish in the Turkish Cultural Context* (2003) is one of the few examples of studies related the languages of Istanbul Jewry, the death of Ladino, or the language shifts of the community. Altabev provides a sociolinguistic analysis of Ladino as a native speaker of the language and through fieldwork conducted in Istanbul.

Because languages have social, cultural, political and philosophical dimensions, it is not an easy task to analyze them from one perspective. Michael Shapiro's edited collection *Language and Politics: Readings in Social and Political Theory* (1984) provides many different perspectives needed for language studies, bringing into close harmony the two traditions of Anglo-American and continental philosophies of language. Against Austin and Wittgenstein's

philosophy, which emphasizes the contexts of action in which utterances have meaning, continental philosophy takes a semiological approach that looks at language as a system of conventional relationships between signifier and signified (p. 3). Thus the basic difference between the traditions can be simplified to "the emphasis on speech practices in the former tradition and on writing practices in the latter" (p. 4). This study focuses on the point where these two traditions intersect and analyzes the language changes in Istanbul Jewry from this perspective.

J. L. Austin's *How to Do Things With Words* (1962) introduced the term "speech acts" (meaning "what I say is what I do") and "felicity conditions" for these acts. Pierre Bourdieu further evaluates Austin's speech act theory of in *Language and Symbolic Power* (1991), arguing that language should not only be viewed as a means of communication but also as a medium of power. Bourdieu pays attention to the social conditions in which the words are employed, revealing the ways in which linguistic usage shows variations according to social class or gender.

Discourse by Sara Mills (1997) explores the definition and historical development of the term 'discourse', analyzing the term according to Michel Foucault and its application in the field of linguistics. Mills also examines the changes in the field of discourse analysis by discussing the works of Bourdieu and Slavoj Žižek. This discussion is also complementary to Foucault's essay "The Order of Discourse", collected in Shapiro's volume.

In *Kaybolan Sesler: Dünya Dillerinin Yok Oluş Süreci* (*Vanishing Voices: The Extinction of World's Languages* (2002), Daniel Nettle and Suzanne Romaine investigate the reasons behind the loss of world languages. They analyze language diversity in terms of biodiversity and argue that the loss of languages has a relationship with environmental problems. According to their analysis, based on interviews with indigenous people, the disappearing languages are also a part of the global ecosystem, and both are at a critical tipping point. In addition, the book explores how a language is born, dies and how it can be saved from becoming extinct. The book also includes contributions from the last speakers of some of the dying languages, and advocates immediate action to

protect vulnerable native languages. Nettle and Romaine's arguments about the process of language death are suggestive for the case of Ladino for Istanbul Jewry, and provide a theoretical background.

Remembering can be said to have a special importance for Jewish people. Pierre Nora stresses this by calling Jews "the people of memory" in his article "Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Memoire*" (1989). According to Nora, memory is hidden and crystalizes in "sites of memory", such as archives, museums, palaces, concepts, practices (such as commemorations), objects (such as inherited property), basic texts or symbols. Thus, people are not only haunted by memory but also by history.

Nora's reason for naming Jews the people of memory can also be observed in Yosef H. Yerushalmi's *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory* (1982), in which Yerushalmi examines the role of remembrance in Judaism in the light of references to religious texts, rituals and holy days. Yerushalmi discusses the tension between the Jewish tradition of remembrance and modern and secular Jewish historiography, depicting both what happened and what was remembered. In this way, Yerushalmi traces the roots of Jewish collective memory using examples from the religious texts.

Maurice Halbwachs' *On Collective Memory* (1992) is a path-breaking text for collective memory studies. Halbwachs' work on collective memory, which shows memory as a socially constructed notion rather than a given, has become a widely applied and cited text. In the territory that Halbwachs opened for memory studies, Paul Connerton's *How Societies Remember* (1989) analyzes memory as a cultural ability rather than as an individual feature by focusing on bodily practices. Beatriz Sarlo presents another perspective on the same subject in *Geçmiş Zaman: Bellek Kültürü ve Özneye Dönüş Üzerine Bir Tartışma* (*Past Times: A Discussion of Memory Culture and the Return to Subjectivity*) (2012). Invoking Susan Sontag, Sarlo advises us that understanding is more important than remembering, even though one needs to remember in order to understand.

Paul Ricoeur's *Hafıza, Tarih, Unutuş* (*Memory, History, Forgetting*) (2012) examines the relationship between remembering and forgetting and how this

relationship affects the perception and narration of history. Ricoeur analyzes these three related concepts in three different ways, undertaking a close reading of foundational philosophical texts and leading historical ones, relating his subject to the human condition. Ricoeur thus tries to answer the question of why some historical events, like the Holocaust, occupy a central place in the human consciousness, while others, like the Armenian genocide, get left behind.

The idea of diaspora also plays an important role in Jewish collective memory. Diaspora is a difficult concept to study due to multiple definitions for groups like refugees, guest workers, exilic communities, and overseas communities. These various definitions of the term diaspora have modified its ancient meaning, and the literature about the concept focuses on these widely accepted definitions. In his article "Diasporas" (1994), James Clifford argues that the discourse of diaspora has necessarily been modified and adopted throughout history, and that there is no certain definition of diaspora. In other words, because each diaspora has its own particular experience and definition, it is not possible to analyze all diasporas with the same conceptual tools. The case of Istanbul Jewry's five hundred years in Istanbul certainly seems to justify Clifford's claim of the uniqueness of each diaspora case.

Similarly, in the essay collection *Homelands and Diasporas: Greeks, Jews and Their Migrations* (2008), editor Minna Rozen argues that not every diaspora experience is the same, contrasting the Greek and the Jewish diaspora to provide a comparative analysis of the nature of diaspora. In this volume, Rozen travels to the ancient roots of the term, and offers a detailed analysis illuminating the Greek and Jewish diaspora for modern diaspora studies.

In their essay "Diaspora: Generation and the Ground of Jewish Identity" Daniel and Jonathan Boyarin claim that Jewish identity revolves around genealogy and territorialism. They thus formulate the Jewish identity as a perpetual diasporic tension, rather than as a form of cultural nativism. For the Boyarins, the diasporic Jewish identity is a disaggregated identity which disrupts the very category of identity (1993, p. 721). In their book *Powers of Diaspora: Two essays on the Relevance of Jewish Culture*, they also argue that contingency and

genealogy are the two important components of diasporic consciousness (2002, p. 4).

In his article "New Approaches to the Jewish Diaspora: The Sephardim as a Sub-Ethnic Group", Jonathan Ray points to the need for a fresh approach to the Jewish exile in modern diaspora studies, discussing the place of Sephardi history in particular. Ray suggests the case of the Sephardim case as an early model for diaspora, arguing that the way the community evolved after the expulsion in 1492 fits into the model of a diaspora as understood by the current theorists (2008, p. 12).

In *New Jews: The End of the Jewish Diaspora* (2005), Caryn Aviv and David Shneer argue that the new generation of Jews are settled and do not think of themselves as eternally wandering in a foreign land or as longing for Israel as the promised land. For them, this marks the end of the Jewish diaspora. In search of the "new Jews", the writers examine Jewish communities in Moscow, Los Angeles, New York and Jerusalem, attempting a portrait of Jewish life in the present.

As mentioned earlier, the number of sociological studies related to Istanbul Jewry from the perspective of language is relatively small, and there is a gap between the field of Jewish history and other fields of cultural studies. Moreover, although there are a number of sociological studies about Istanbul Jewry, these studies are generally conducted either by a member of the community, or by foreign scholars. The basic importance and uniqueness of this study is therefore that its author is a practicing Muslim woman from the surrounding Muslim society and has conducted in-depth interviews with members of Istanbul's Jewish community. In this way, the study takes a step towards closing the gap between Jewish history and the wider field of cultural studies.

3. This Study

Minorities have long been an issue in Turkish history. Despite the tension occurring between the state and minority groups from time to time, someway or other the voices of minorities and their demands for their rights are heard.

However, when it comes to Istanbul Jewry, their voice cannot often be heard in society at large. The Jews of Istanbul preserve their well-known identity as a "closed community", and, with their silence, it seems either they do not exist or are living complacently in Turkey. However, the political attacks directed at the community suggest another picture, and implies a great deal of sorrow in their history.

Thus this study will try to discover why we don't hear about the Jews of Istanbul. It will try to discover who and where they are, and why they prefer not to talk publicly. It will work on the hypothesis that their silence is related to the language changes they have been exposed to over the last hundred years. Both the Alliance Israelite Universelle and the Turkish Republic applied the same policy of changing the community's language to create the ideal Jews in their minds. Yet the study must also ask whether a change necessarily occurs through language change, and what using a particular language can mean in terms of identity and social politics.

The study has employed qualitative methods throughout. As detailed in the literature survey, a range of primary and secondary sources related to theories of language, diaspora, and collective memory and the history of Istanbul Jewry were consulted to develop a theoretical framework. This framework was then used to analyze data gathered from in-depth interviews conducted with Jewish people from Istanbul.

The study deals with a small sample and includes fourteen interviews with people from Istanbul Jewish community; most of whom have Sephardic origin. The interviewees were initially selected according to their age groups and were asked open-ended questions. The interviews started by asking if the respondents spoke Ladino, and, after establishing mutual trust and sincerity, took the form of pleasant conversations. The natural flow of these exchanges also shaped the flow of chapters in this study.

The interviews showed that it is necessary to update the definitions of some related cultural concepts. The first of these is the concept of being a Turk. In the past, while anybody who was a citizen of the Republic of Turkey was accepted

as Turkish, the rise of identity politics has started to undermine this definition. In some cases, being a citizen of Turkey before the law may not necessarily mean being Turkish all the time. There are many coexisting definitions of being Turkish, the amalgam of which ultimately adds up to an ambiguity. The Republic of Turkey established its need for a national identity on the idea of a singular ethnicity and language, by which the state which marked its difference from the Ottoman Empire. While the Ottoman Empire was multilingual, multicultural and multi-religious, the Turkish national movement identified itself with the Muslim and Turkish speaking population for historical, pragmatic and ideological reasons (Neyzi, 2011, p. 8). Therefore, national identity in Turkey has the potential to become both inclusive and exclusive.

The other concept that needs further definition is diaspora. The semantic domain of diaspora includes a multitude of terms like "immigrant", "expatriate", "refugee", "guest worker", "exilic community", and "overseas community" (Clifford, 1994, p. 303), yet the case of Istanbul Jewry seems not to properly match any of these definitions. However, some of their characteristics as a religious minority group cannot be explained without applying the term diaspora.

This study will proceed over four chapters. The first mainly deals with theories related to the concept of language, and presents the theoretical framework of this study. The main question in this chapter—also its title—asks what is "in" a language. This question has its roots in Shakespeare's famous lines in *Romeo and Juliet* —"What's in a name? That we call rose, by any other name would smell as sweet" — which suggest the interchangeability of languages, and this chapter takes up to question of what is distinctive in a particular language.

The second chapter focuses on Istanbul Jewry's languages of communication over the last century. Concepts like multilingualism and language shifts will be discussed in relation to the factors behind the death of Ladino, and some of the assumptions of the interviewees about its aftermath.

The third chapter discusses the idea of identity shaped in Istanbul Jews' discourses of modernity. Here, the relationship between language and identity

will also be discussed through an examination of naming practices and some newly constructed cultural sensitivities and terms.

The last chapter mainly addresses the concept of collective memory in light of the different diasporic features of Istanbul Jews according to age group. The chapter suggests the connections between the concept of diaspora and the operation of exilic language in Istanbul Jewry. The basic question is thus about the effect of Istanbul Jews' collective memory on their integration into Turkish society and on their preservation of their Jewish identity.

This study thus attempts to illuminate the current situation of Istanbul Jewry as a minority within a larger Muslim society, taking as a starting point the changes that have taken place in the languages spoken by the community. As Ricoeur puts it, "for a theory constructed within the sphere of language, the best test of its claim to universality [lies] in determining its capacity for extension to the sphere of practice" (2008, p. 164). Therefore, this study has tried to examine every aspect of the language of Istanbul Jewry.

All interviews for the study were conducted in Turkish and the English translations presented are the author's own. Without doubt, the picture depicted in this study may have shortcomings as a work by someone trying to understand Istanbul Jewry from outside. However, as a headscarf wearing and practicing Muslim woman, the author can only hope that the process of my carrying out the fieldwork has itself been a contribution to a better inter-communal openness and mutual understanding.

CHAPTER I: What is in a Language?

Istanbul Jewry, like many other Jewish groups around the world, is an exceptionally close community, but one that is also fully integrated into Turkish society. In this respect, individuals in this community have two simultaneous social positions; their relationship to their close community and the one they have to Turkish society. These different social positions reveal themselves through both the language they use and their manner of speaking a given language.

However, the problem of language necessarily goes beyond whether the community speaks Ladino, Yiddish, French, Turkish, English, or Hebrew. Language is not a mere instrument that people use to represent things and thoughts to themselves and to each other. According to Clark:

> The work of language projects a context for us in which gesture, timing, silence and so on are each part, yet none could be fully captured in a notation, a formalized system of grammar, or some taxonomy of types of speech act. (2002, p. 73)

Therefore, dealing with a language does not just mean dealing with the technicalities of a communicative device; it also means dealing with a historically lived mode of expression, which is also a form of life. There is indeed a technical, communicative element in language that keeps changing, but language itself is more than that; it is the way of being and mode of existence of a form of human life.

In order to analyze all the operations of language, this study divides language itself into layers which add up to a full description and definition of its functions. The first, outer layer is that of language as what Martin Heidegger called Being (Dasein). Any creature in the world undergoes an experience with language and language touches to the core of existence in the world. Thus, language as Being constitutes an ontological priority. The second is the layer of discourse, or the linguistic manifestation of existence in the world. Through the space of discourse, language manifests itself through its technical

communicative devices and communication itself, revealing its third layer. Language as a communicative device thus serves to mediate between the layer of Being and the layer of discourse.

This chapter asks the question of what is *in* a language. It will present the theoretical framework of the dissertation, analyzing the above-mentioned layers in language in the context of Istanbul Jewry. It will analyze approaches to the problem of language in three sections: The first concerns the relationship between language and Being, and Martin Heidegger's analysis of language will be the main reference point of this part. The second will analyze language as a form of discourse and will discuss Michel Foucault's arguments related to discourse and discourse practices. In the third section, the main focus will be on language as a tool of communication, in reference to the ideas of J. L. Austin and Pierre Bourdieu.

1.1. Language as a Form of Being

The self-revelation of being is actuated through language. However, as Umberto Eco argues of being:

> Even if it appears only as an effect of language, is not an effect of language in the sense that language freely constructs it . . . Language does not construct being *ex novo*: it questions it, in some way always finding something already given (even though being *already given* does not mean being already finished and completed). (2000, p. 54)

Being is in itself a language; the language which the world speaks. Being is thus revealed to human beings through words. Things need words in order "to be", and Being comes to light through language (Rosenfeld, 1976, p. 539). As Walter Benjamin puts it, "language communicates the linguistic beings of things" (1996, p. 63). As Eco continues, "Being underpins all discourses except the one we hold about it" (2000, p. 24), and it is therefore impossible to give it a proper and clear-cut definition:

> Being is not a genus, not even the most general of them all, and it therefore eludes all definition, if it is necessary to use the genus and the differentia in order to make a definition. Being is that which enables all subsequent definitions to be made. But all the

> definitions are the effect of the logical and therefore semiosical organization of the world. (Eco, 2000, p. 24)

People thus live in language. They express their relation to the world by means of language, but the world also has a language. Language has a being and Being also has a language. In this sense, language is both a subject, the very being of which is to be determined, and also belongs to Being, which is its distinctive property. Since, in Being, everything is related to everything, so language is also related to everything. Language brings things to light, revealing their existence to people. As Timothy Clark points out, "Language cannot be studied, as linguistics does, by evading the question of its mode of being. Nor can we step outside language, for human beings always find themselves in language and the world it opens" (2002, p. 88). Language leads people to being and reveals it to them. It both gives people a world and sets the limits of that world; "for human beings world-hood is given in language" (p. 74). Yet it is important to discover what kind of Being (*Dasein*) language is, and what its nature could be. It is certain that language is something more than a technical, communicative device. It has its own form of being, and is a mode of existence in itself. According to Heidegger (1982), language is something that holds itself back all the time, and it is thus not possible to know its nature, even though this holding back is in its nature. However, language both speaks and manifests itself in speaking; a characteristic that occurs elsewhere only in human beings; "Thus language not only holds back when we speak it in the accustomed ways, but this holding back is determined by the fact that language holds back its own origin and so denies its being to our usual notions" (p. 81). So, although language is revealed to people through speaking, they cannot know its exact nature since it holds itself back.

All people undergo an experience with language which touches the very deepest reaches of their existence. The experience with language befalls, strikes, comes over and overwhelms, and transforms people from one day to the next or in the course of time (p. 57). People are both within the language and with the language. In a way, they are born into language and embody it. Afterwards, this embodiment takes shape with them while also shaping them and they shape it within its limits; to the extent it allows them to do so. Thus, as Heidegger

phrases it, “In order to be who we are, we human beings remain committed to and within the being of language, and can never step out if it and look at it from somewhere else” (p. 134).

Language, as a form of life and—more than that—as “the house of being”, also has a linguistic entity. However, to understand a linguistic entity, it is necessary to ask of which mental entity it is the direct expression. According to Benjamin, the distinction between this mental entity and the linguistic entity, which is paradoxical, finds its expression in the word “logos” (Benjamin, 1996, p. 63). Also, in *On the Way to Language*, Heidegger says that:

> The word's rule springs to light as that which makes the thing be a thing. . .
>
> The oldest word for the rule of the word thus thought, for Saying, is *logos*: Saying which, in showing, lets beings appear in their "it is."
>
> The same word, however, the word for Saying, is also the word for *Being*, that is, for the presencing of beings.
>
> Saying and Being, word and thing, belong to each other in a veiled way, which has hardly been thought and is not to be thought out to the end. (1982, p. 155)

The connection Heidegger makes between “Saying” and “Being” is also the relation between the words and things. Being is intimately and necessarily bound up with saying in that “it is in language that things first come into being and are” (Rosenfeld, 1976, p. 539). As Heidegger says, “Where the word is missing, there is no thing,” (1982, p. 141) which emphasizes the fact that it is only through words that people know about the existence of things. The word thus stands in relation to the thing. In the absence of words, things also become absent; they disappear. It is the word which holds the thing in its presence, and it is actually the word that first fetches and brings it and preserves it as a thing (p. 146). Thus, the being of things resides in language, or, in Heidegger’s words; “Language is the house of Being.” As he points out:

> Language is not only and not primarily an audible and written expression of what is to be communicated. It not only puts forth in words and statements what is overtly or covertly intended to be communicated; language alone brings what is, something that is,

> into the Open for the first time. Where there is no language, as in the being of stone, plant, and animal, there is also no openness of what is. (1975, p. 73)

The connection between Saying and Being can also be found in the word *logos*, in which they are inseparable. Logos is both the capacity to speak and what one speaks, which is comprised of a reason connected to the order of the cosmos. Logos is the name for Being and Saying simultaneously (1982, p. 80). People name things according to this connection and in this way, beings come to appear. In this sense, "name-giving" is the first step into the realm of language, to the language of Being and thus to the Being of language.

People give voice to language through speaking, and language speaks by saying; "To speak *to* one another means: to say something, show something to one another, and to entrust mutually to what is shown" (p. 122). However, Saying and speaking are not the same things, as one may speak for hours but may say nothing. Thus, although language reveals itself through speaking the, its essential being is "Saying". Saying shows, makes appear, and is the "releasing offer" of the world (p. 107). Thus, "language both gives us a world and at the same time necessarily poses (usually unrecognized) limits to that world" (Strong, 1984, p. 81).

Nature speaks through the language of man and man's giving names to the things around him makes this possible. Naming is not simply labeling things in the nature. It is a way of "calling" and this "calling" brings "the thing" closer. Although "calling" brings the thing that is called into presence it always keeps itself away from the Being to which it comes closer. Thus, a word does not just simply give a name to something that existed before itself; it always gives that thing an existence, an entity.

The language of man speaks in words. For Benjamin, "Man therefore communicates his own mental being (insofar as it is communicable) by *naming* the other things" (1996, p. 64). In this sense, language is also that which man needs in order to cope with the things around him, to construct new things, to recognize existing things and communicate the details of things to others. As Heidegger puts it:

> Man speaks. We are always speaking, even when we do not utter a single word aloud, but merely listen or read, and even when we are not particularly listening or speaking but are attending to some work or taking a rest. (1975, p. 189)

Through speaking man, language speaks and it gives people a way to communicate with the world and to give meaning to it. Moreover, all the uttered and unuttered words leave behind traces, the total of which brings into existence the discourses.

There is a self and a world and they are the basic determination of existence, or *Dasein* in Heidegger's terms. This is Being-in-the-world, meaning that existence is given meaning according to time, place and to the interaction with people at that time and place. In this study, the Being of Istanbul Jewry is termed as a diasporic existence at this moment in history.

1.2. Language as a Form of Discourse

The language that is revealed through man's speech opens itself a space of discourse and manifests itself in thousands of different ways. Existing in the world is possible only through language, and discourse is the annotation of this existence. Being comes to light with language, and endures and takes new forms through the discourse that is produced by the use of language. As Foucault says, "Things are already murmuring meaning which our language has only to pick up" (1984, p. 125). With the utterance of a sentence, a subject leaves the domain of language and enters the domain of communication, which expresses itself as discourse. As Paul Ricoeur points out, "Only discourse, not language, is addressed to someone. This is the foundation of communication. But it is one thing for discourse to be addressed to an interlocutor equally present to the discourse situation (2008, p. 145). Therefore, language cannot be divorced from society as, through discourse, it comments not only on itself but also on its social surroundings (Bauman & Briggs, 2003, p. 24).

Since language can paraphrase itself in many different ways as it is used or consumed by individuals, society must order the multiple meanings and systematize them. As an outcome of linguistic practices, discursive formations occur according to social purposes. Moreover, as Bourdieu points out:

> What circulates on the linguistic market is not 'language' as such, but rather discourses that are stylistically marked both in their production, in so far as each speaker fashions an idiolect from the common language, and in their reception, in so far as each recipient helps to produce the message which he perceives and appreciates by bringing to it everything that makes up his singular and collective experience. (1991, p. 39)

The discourses that circulate in the linguistic market do not always come face to face with their addressee. Thus, discourse contributes to the construction of all dimensions of social structures, including the various social identities and subject positions (Fairclough, 1993, p. 64). For Fairclough, "Discourse is a practice not just of representing the world, but of signifying the world, constituting and constructing the world in meaning" (p. 64).

Therefore, through discourse analysis of spoken and written language, the mechanisms in the construction of this reality can be revealed. Discourse can shape the interpretations of events, experiences, and written sources. In this respect, it can be said that there is an ideological struggle in the very essence of the structure of discourse. As Sara Mills points out, "Discourses structure both our sense of reality and our notion of our identity" (1997, p. 15).

The first and the simplest unit of discourse is the sentence. It is the sentence that intends to say something real or true (Ricoeur, 2008, p. 104). For Ricoeur, "It is the linguistics of the sentence which supports the theory of speech as an event" (p. 115). Furthermore, the sentence, as a differential trait of discourse relating to language, "designates its speaker by diverse indicators of subjectivity and personality" (p. 143). Events and uttered sentences turn themselves into discourse and reveal the secret of their own essence. When these "thoughts that are dressed in signs and made visible by means of words" (Foucault, 1984, p. 124) circulate in society, they encounter limitations, exclusions and definitions. Discourse shows its impact through truth, power and knowledge, and it is through these factors that the discourse is produced, used, and reproduced.

The revealed and circulating language needs to be fixed since it manifests itself in many different ways. Society must then set the boundaries and have "a discourse" in which the "truths of time" operate, and which decides the roles for

speaking individuals. As Mills expresses it, “Discourse also constructs certain events and sequences of events into narratives which are recognized by a particular culture as real or serious events” (1997, p. 53).

In every society or community, the production of discourse is controlled, organized and redistributed by certain procedures and mechanisms, and indeed it operates through these mechanisms. These are activities of exclusion and limitation in discourses; those functioning from the exterior, the internal procedures and the ones that determine the condition of their application (Foucault 1984, p. 114, 120). All of these procedures operate in the name of “truth”, so discourse can be said to be the accumulation of practices and mechanisms that operate in the name of truth. Truth is an apparatus which implements itself as a form of rule and is directly related to the idea of power. Truth cannot function without power and the very logic of truth-telling implies power. However, truth is not singular; there are many ways of truth-telling, and there are many truths. The functioning of power relations in society creates and mediates truths and also avoids, erases and manipulates them. Likewise, prohibitions, exclusions or limitations also operate to serve this purpose. There is thus a struggle for discourse and by discourse. For Foucault, discourse “is the power which is to be seized” (p. 110).

The external procedures that control and organize discourse include, firstly, the things that people are not allowed to speak about, secondly, not allowing everyone to speak, and thirdly, the opposition between true and false (p. 113). In other words, in a given society, people may not speak about anything they want in any situation, and only those who employ sane reason can speak about the things that are not prohibited. The opposition between true and false, or the “will to truth”, is the dominant procedure because the other two constantly drift towards it. The will to truth increasingly attempts to assimilate other controlling procedures by constantly growing stronger and deeper, and the other two become “more fragile and more uncertain, to the extent that they are now invaded by the will to truth” (p. 114). The will to truth, like the other systems of exclusion, is based upon institutional reinforcement like books, libraries or laboratories, and it exercises pressure on other discourses (p. 113).

The internal procedures that organize discourse are principles of classification, ordering and distribution and include the ideas of commentary, author and discipline. Commentary allows people to say something supplementary to the text itself while depending upon it. Paradoxically, the principle of commentary both repeats things already said and those not said, thus eliminating the element of chance (or contingency) in the discourse.

The procedure that determines the conditions of the application of discourse, which functions through speaking subjects, includes speech rituals, doctrines, societies of discourse and social appropriation (p. 120-123). Although these are listed separately, they are all interlinked. These principles control the speaking subjects who have hold of the discourse. In this sense, not all the parts of discourse are open to everyone and not everyone has access to the discourse. This time, rather than the rarefaction of discourse, what is of the concern is the rarefaction of the speaking subject.

Speech rituals define the characteristics which must be possessed by the individuals who speak. These rituals fix the impact of words and their effects on the ones that are addressed and also determine the whole sets of signs that accompany the discourse like behavior and gestures (p. 121). Through speech rituals, the roles of speaking subjects are set and their particular properties are determined. These rituals bind individuals to certain type of understandings, and, as a result, do not allow them the others (p. 123).

Discourse circulates among and is transmitted by individuals, and the most effective way of transmitting, maintaining, circulating or modifying the socially appropriation of discourse is the system of education. Education can change the direction of operation of the "true discourse" and give shape to it. As Foucault points out the education system is nothing other than "a ritualization of speech, a qualification and fixing of the roles for the speaking subjects, the constitution of a doctrinal group, a distribution and appropriation of discourse with its powers and knowledges" (p. 125).

Apart from these procedures of limitation, exclusion, and control, a principle of discontinuity operates in discourses. In this respect, discourses may not

necessarily be the continuance of one another or may exclude one another. Discursive knowledge has a relation both to the power structures of society and the "truths of time". The power relations operating in a society are the mechanism for deciding which discourses are to be dominant and which discarded, though this is done in the name of truth. The discourse of truth thus operates as an authority mechanism.

Discourse both directly and indirectly tells individuals to do or not do something or to speak of this or not speak of that. Though one may speak truth, if it is not part of the "true discourse of time", it would be as nothing. A change in discourse is possible through a change in the truth understanding of time or people. It is through the operation of discourses that people's history, collective memory, values and norms develop and take shape.

1.3. Language as a Form of Communication

As Heidegger simply says; "Man speaks". As a form of communication, language operates in between Being and discourse. Being reveals itself through the medium of language and discourse is produced through the use of language as a communication tool.

In Pinker's words, as a communication tool, "Language figures human life in many ways. We inform, we request, we persuade, we interrogate, we orate, and sometimes we just schmooze. But the most remarkable thing we do with language is learn it in the first place" (2007, p. 28). As he emphasizes, people learn in the first instance which word stands for which thing. They start with simple names or nouns and then deal with larger grammatical units, speech acts, and statements. People learn to speak, not only by hearing a certain kind of speech spoken around them, but by also speaking. Thus, they also offer a certain form of speech to the society and construct languages. For Wittgenstein, "Man possesses the capacity of constructing languages, in which every sense can be expressed, without having an idea how and what each word means—just as one speaks without knowing how the single sounds are produced" (1922, p. 38). Yet people's innate capacity for constructing languages also bears within itself the characteristic of forgetting languages and thus killing them.

Speaking practice occurs through an exchange of linguistic utterances. In this sense, every speaker both uses the language and also produces it. However, people do not have a total command of the language they are speaking. Language has its own autonomy, its specific logic, and rules of operation (Bourdieu, 1991, pp. 107-109). In any language people always say more or less than they intend to say because they are not wholly in control of the meanings of their utterances.

Language is the key medium that enables people to maintain their everyday life and share it with each other. Thus, for Berger and Luckman, "An understanding of language is essential for any understanding of the reality of everyday life" (1991, p. 51). Language that carries the past within itself and transmits it originates in everyday life and also has reference to everyday life. Yet language does not merely communicate reality; the reality of everyday life is transcended through language, which actually plays a key role in shaping it.

In everyday life, linguistic utterances are censored by society. In this sense, not every utterance can be taken seriously or constitute a discourse. A discourse needs statements or speech acts as its basic building blocks; in order for an utterance to be an act it needs a justification of the social status or power of the speaker, without which it remains merely uttered "words".

In his theory of "speech acts", J. L Austin focuses on the "ways of speaking" of ordinary or everyday language and tracks the details of everyday language (Certeau, 1988, pp. xii-xvi). According to this theory, not every form of saying or act of speaking is a "speech act". In order for a saying to become speech act, it is necessary to have the appropriate authority, time, and place for the thing that one wishes to say. For example, if someone was to say, "I hereby declare that the Statue of Liberty will henceforth be known as the Statue of Beauty" this would be an act of speech but not a speech act unless the person held the authority to rename the Statue of Liberty, and this act of speaking would fail because it would find no response. Austin gives a positive example; in marriage ceremonies, the priest or the couple's declarations are speech acts. When either of the couple says "I do", they do not simply report something. They actually get married (Austin, 1962). Thus, the social conditions in which words are

produced or uttered have an importance in communication, and speech acts are not independent of the social circumstances in which they are uttered. As Bourdieu points out, "utterances are not only (save in exceptional circumstances) signs to be understood and deciphered; they are also *signs of wealth,* intended to be evaluated and appreciated, and *signs of authority,* intended to be believed and obeyed" (1991, p. 66). Utterances gain meaning according to the social position, role and authority of the speaker. The value of an utterance is not only in linguistic terms but also depends on its place in the whole social structure (p. 67). That is to say, the social position of the particular speaker or group of speakers both add to and shape the value of a linguistic utterance. Thus, people give a determinate form to the linguistic utterance and give stability to a particular language. As Bourdieu points out, "the social value of linguistic usages, the different usages between different [markets], gives a certain kind of stability to linguistic products" (p. 88).

Speech acts which call attention to the social conditions of communication gain meaning in coherent discourses, the content of which is necessary for their interpretation. Speech acts in turn make discourses possible as they are instances of discourse. As Ricoeur states:

> In speech, the interlocutors are present not only to one another but also to the situation, the surroundings, and the circumstantial milieu of discourse. It is in relation to this circumstantial milieu that discourse is fully meaningful . . . Demonstratives, adverbs of time and place, personal pronouns, verbal tenses, and in general all the 'deictic' and 'ostensive' indicators serve to anchor discourse in the circumstantial reality that surrounds the instance of discourse. (2008, p. 104)

Furthermore, as Berger and Luckman point out, language can become a repository of accumulations of meanings and experiences and can transmit those meanings and experiences to the following generations (1991, p. 52). In their words, "Because of its capacity to transcend the "here" and "now", language bridges different zones within the reality of everyday life and integrates them into a meaningful whole" (p. 54). Thus, language can make present objects and human beings that are spatially and socially absent. Language can "actualize the entire world at any moment" (p. 54) and thus can

construct a past, a history and a collective memory for a society. As J. A. Pocock points out, the language that we use is not of our own making but is made up by others. He thus emphasizes the connection between language and its characteristic of preserving and transmitting a vast accumulation of meanings:

> Men communicate by means of language, and . . . language consists of a number of already formed and institutionalized structures. These embody and perform speech-acts, but they perform the intentions of the user only through words formed by sedimentation and institutionalization of the utterances performed by others whose identities and intentions may no longer be precisely known. (1984, p. 30)

Thus, people's acts in communication are not completely their own. When people speak, they speak alongside their ancestors, whose voices are hidden and sprinkled throughout their spoken language.

As a tool of communication, language also plays a role in the constitution of subjectivity and identity. Directly or indirectly, the prevailing language structures assign roles to people and shape them. For Pocock, "To reshape language so as to reshape myself is to reshape another's self, both by changing the ways in which I appear and perform in his universe and by changing the ways in which he can define himself" (p. 39). Language also provides a ground for shared cultural identity and the necessary means for its production and use. As T. B. Strong phrases it, "Language is involved in making things the same for people, in their commonality and communality. It is also therefore a means of enforcing a common behavior on individuals" (1984, p. 91).

Nevertheless, a language is not a self-sustaining entity and can only continue to exist where there is a community to speak it and pass it on to the next generation. Where communities cannot flourish, their languages encounter the danger of extinction. Language has a direct relationship with society, and the cultural, political, and ideological changes in a given society thus affect language and the way it passes down the generations. Because a language is one the strongest symbols of cultural, ethnic, religious, or class differences (Nettle & Romaine, 2002, pp. 23-48), a crisis in language also brings about a crisis related to the issues in culture, politics, identity, individuality, and human rights.

1.4. Conclusion: Language and Diaspora

This study terms the mode of existence of Istanbul Jewry "diasporic". In this respect, it is possible to name the language of Istanbul Jewry as an "exilic language". This exilic language functions as a frame that covers both the language changes they have experienced and the mode of their diasporic historical memory. The problem of a diaspora is not merely as it seems on the surface; that a community is in exile from its homeland. Below this surface, the problematic of diaspora raises two fundamental issues connected to the problem of language and language change: "assimilation" and "return". Thus, a diaspora can be defined as an existence that lives with a tension between assimilation and return, and this tension finds its expression in the language, culture, history, collective memory, and perspective of mode of being of people that speak that language.

The language of exile reflects a tension between assimilation and return in various ways; politically, culturally, philosophically and technically. It raises political questions, such as about whether the community should remain where it is or travel somewhere else. It raises cultural questions about which identity the community should invest in; in this case being "good Jews" or "good Turks". It also raises philosophical questions related to Being itself because if, as Heidegger says, language is the house of Being any expression of human life can be taken as a language. Finally, it raises technical problems of language, of how to get on with the host community, understand their language, speak their language and act like them in everyday life. In fact, such questions of language frame all the experiences related to exilic existence.

This chapter has constituted the theoretical groundwork for the following three chapters. Although it has explained the relationship between language and Being as progressing from Being to discourse to communication, the following chapters will reverse this order of analysis to better reflect the practices of collective Jewish memory and their relation to the use of a particular language in Istanbul Jewry. The second chapter will analyze language as a communication tool in Istanbul Jewry and will discuss the languages members of the Jewish community use, the current situation of Ladino, their approaches to French and

Turkish, and their selection of language according to the situation. The third chapter will analyze language as a form of discourse, looking at the problem of identity in the light of the discourse of modernity. It will study how both Turkey's national discourse and the community's discourse as a religious minority group operate to shape the identity of Istanbul Jewry. It will also analyze language itself as an identity marker that reveals itself through naming practices, as well as how Istanbul Jewry is perceived by the majority Muslim society around it. The last chapter, will analyze Being as an incarnation of existence in a certain place and period. While analyzing the idea of the "diasporic existence" of Istanbul Jewry, this chapter will look at how they construct their collective memory and the ways of being that define Istanbul Jewry as a religious minority in Turkey. Undoubtedly, there are many ways of analyzing this existence, but here language will be the main reference point, following Heidegger's idea that "language is the house of Being".

CHAPTER II: Languages of Communication in Istanbul Jewry

As a communication tool, language is a vehicle of man's intentionality; people use it to influence others and produce reactions. Language also constructs a network of knowledge and conveys it (Haarmann, 1999, p. 63) although this is not its main function. As Harald Haarmann says, "If mankind constructs its world using language, then this means of communication necessarily covers every domain of human existence" (1999, p. 63). People construct their world through language and, in a similar way, construct languages through their experiences in the world. It is thus possible to think of any language as a means of developing a mode of symbolization to contact, represent and discuss the outer world. Through this mutual relationship, languages change over time, sometimes even becoming extinct. When a population acquires a new language, this may initiate the death of another one. Moreover, with the loss of a language, a particular way of interpreting the outer world and the knowledge this generates are also lost. As Edward Sapir points out, "Proverbs, medicine, formulae, standardized prayers, folk tales, standardized speeches, song texts, genealogies are some of the overt forms which language takes as a culture-preserving instrument" (1949, p. 18). Thus, language loss means the loss of all these associated cultural patterns.

Changes in people's economic, social, and political conditions play a key role in their choice to leave one language behind and begin using another. The processes of urbanization and industrialization at the beginning of the 20th century resulted in the diffusion of French, and, for Istanbul Jewry this was at the expense of Ladino. The politics of the subsequent formation of the Republic of Turkey made Turkish language a requirement for Istanbul Jews, rather than a choice, further undermining Ladino. As Bourdieu points out, "The official language is bound up with the state, both in its genesis and in its social uses. It is in the process of state formation that the conditions are created for the constitution of a unified linguistic market, dominated by the official language" (1991, p. 45).

However, the loss of Ladino and acquisition of French, Turkish, English, or (more rarely) Hebrew has not been a straightforward or uniform process for all members of Istanbul Jewry. That is to say, their experiences of these languages have differed depending on their socioeconomic and cultural position. The interviewees in this study and their family members or friendship circles have both common and diverging experiences of speaking or not speaking Ladino, and this can be taken as proof that Istanbul's Jewish Community is not a homogeneous group.

1. Languages of Communication: Ladino, French, Turkish, English, and Hebrew

While some languages spread and some wither away, the languages themselves are not to blame for this fact; it is people that transmit or kill languages. A language can only thrive if there is a community that speaks it and if it is transmitted from parents to children at home. Moreover, a community can only exist if suitable cultural and economic living conditions are provided within the majority society. Any small change in wider society directly affects the cultural and linguistic sphere of a community.

Political, economic, and social factors have played key roles in the language changes experienced by Istanbul Jewry. The arrival of French language in their community was a part of regional project by the Alliance Israelite Universelle for the cultural regeneration of Jews living in the Middle East. The Alliance may have had a political motivation for this project, but, for Istanbul's Jewish community, the main motivations were first economic and second cultural. Knowing French gave community members the chance to trade abroad, and this meant the accumulation of wealth in the long run. These economic effects meant that speaking French became a signifier of social stratification and status. Moreover, since Ladino is a member of the Latin family of languages, it was easy for its speakers to learn French and use it in their daily life. Until the foundation of Turkish Republic, bilingual competence in Ladino and French, was the norm for most members of Istanbul Jewry. Moreover, living in closely-knit neighborhoods alongside the other ethnic or religious minority groups of the Ottoman Empire enabled Istanbul Jews to acquire their languages. After the

foundation of the Turkish Republic, Turkish became the official language of the State, and this polyglot situation started to change. However, French and Ladino continued to be spoken within the community as "mother tongues", with Turkish remaining the language of interaction with the external, majority society. However, following the global inclination towards English as a tool of international communication over the last forty years, the influence of French has waned. Thus, English has also taken its place among the languages of Istanbul Jewry. Moreover, Istanbul Jews also have a degree of familiarity with Hebrew since the Turkish State officially recognizes it in the curriculums of Jewish schools, and it is also the national language of Israel and of religion.

1.1 Towards the Death of Ladino

The primary reasons for the loss of a language are not necessarily linguistic. The use of a given language is dependent on the conditions in a society as a whole. Therefore, a change in the use of that language occurs as a result of some wider environmental, political, or an economic crisis (Nettle & Romaine, 2002, p. 136). In the same way, such events can also be said to lead people to acquire a new language. Thus, language has a close and direct relationship with a given society and events in that society.

People in a society or a community may try to use a new language to be able to discuss problems, express needs or participate in daily life, thereby developing a sense of belonging to the place where they live. However, this can also hasten the deterioration of their native language since the practice of passing the native language to the following generations initially encounters a break, eventually leading to the total loss of that language.

A language effectively dies when people stop using it as a communication tool and when the social pattern of belonging through which people learn it comes to an end (p. 152). It is thus possible to suggest three types of language loss: The first is when a group of people who speak a given language becomes extinct, and their language becomes extinct with them. The second is when a group begins to use a new language voluntarily in the hope of gaining social advantages through it (p. 154). The third is when one group forces another to use a new language;

that is to say, involuntarily. The difference between voluntary and involuntary language change is that, in the former, people feel that the choice of whether or not to remain as they are, preserving their identity and native language, is still in their hands (p. 154). In involuntary language change, the main purpose is to bring under control minority groups that speak a different language. In this change, the social and natural environment is limited by the suppressive acts of power holders (p. 153). Though it is also possible to further subdivide these three categories, most cases of language loss are due to a combination of all three, and this is the case for Ladino.

In the loss of Ladino, it is possible to talk about a voluntary language change during the encounter with French. The Alliance Israelite Universelle promised the members of Istanbul Jewry a better, more cultivated and prosperous lifestyle, so the acquisition of French became highly attractive to them. One interviewee, Mr. N. had learned Ladino for economic reasons at an early age as a part of his job. In his words, "The Alliance schools illuminated us and showed us an intellectual path. We are thankful in this respect, but we paid a cost for this illumination: We left our own language behind and began to speak French" (interview, 31 October 2011).

Involuntary language change comes in the shape of Turkish after the establishment of the Republic of Turkey. The language reform of 1930s in Turkey and the politics of "*Vatandaş Türkçe konuş!*"[1] left no room for the use of any language other than Turkish. Although the initial goal of the language reform[2] was to close the gap between the written language of the Istanbul elite and the spoken language of the Anatolian population, the subsequent focus was to bring the Turkish language to a position from which it could provide the basic requirements of modern civilization (Sarajeva, 2006, p. 142).

Interestingly, the linguistic fundamentalism of the "*Vatadaş Türkçe Konuş!*" campaign also found supporters within minority groups. Within Istanbul Jewry, Avram Galanti and Moiz Kohen (Munis Tekinalp) are two of the most prominent

[1] Citizen, speak Turkish!

[2] In Turkey, this is referred to as the *dil inkilabı*; literally, "language *revolution*".

names of those who supported the policies of the Turkish State. Avram Galanti even published a book entitled *Vatandaş Türkçe Konuş!,* in which he examines ways to make Turkish the national language for everybody living in Turkey. He argues that all those living in Turkey should know Turkish and that it is the responsibility of the state to teach its citizens the national language. Giving the example of Istanbul Jewry in particular, Galanti describes how Turkish remained an unspoken language in the community for many years. According to Galanti, memorizing and using a few phrases to help fulfill the needs of everyday life is not the same as knowing a particular language (2000, p. 8).

The degree to which Istanbul Jews were affected by the *Vatandaş Türkçe Konuş!* campaign depended on the extent to which they were integrated into majority society. Those who continued to live within the confines of their tight-knit community do not remember having received any warning from members of the majority. However, those who had closer connections with wider society do remember these political attacks. One interviewee, Mrs. S., was raised in a time when becoming a "pure Turk" was seen as the ideal. She remembered the following incident:

> We went out with my mum. The *Şan* cinema was in Taksim at that time. In the bus, I started to speak in French with my mum. I told her something in French. She looked at me crossly. When we got out of the bus, she said to me, "You are not going to speak French in the street anymore! We speak French at home." I think this emphasis remained. It is very interesting that I still speak French with my mum. (interview, 24 June 2012)

Without doubt, the combination of the language and alphabet reforms and the *Vatandaş Türkçe Konuş!* campaign also played a crucial role in both nation formation and maintaining the state ideology of secular nationalism. As Geoffrey Lewis puts it, Turkey's language reform was a "catastrophic success" (2002), especially in terms of its aim to make Turkish the country's sole language.

As a result of both these voluntary and involuntary changes, from the beginning of the 20th century, Ladino lost its connection with the dominant discourse of the time and gradually started to lose its place in the lives of its speakers. Although the same state applied the same policies to other minority languages,

including Armenian, Greek and Kurdish, these have been able to survive until today. These languages have survived mainly through the choice of their speakers to resist state policies making Turkish ubiquitous and obligatory. In other words, their voluntary choice of language has been their own native language.

Istanbul Jewry has always been a multilingual community, but, as a result of the modernization initiatives in the 20th century, Ladino began to lose status in the eyes of the community, becoming a second-class language. Ladino gradually approached the bottom of the hierarchy of languages of communication for Istanbul Jewry, and was rarely defended and often derided:

> Indeed, that Ladino was a backward and useless language was one of few points on which virtually all contributors to the Ottoman Ladino press managed to agree. In the pages of the most popular Ladino newspapers and periodicals, the language was described as shameful (*una verguensa*), a *zhirgonza* (jargon), a bastard tongue, and a dying language. (Stein, 2004, p. 56)

One ninety-two-year-old interviewee, Mrs. L., also confirmed ladino's lowly status. She was fluent in both French and Ladino and stressed the "backward" image of Ladino in Istanbul Jewry. She also accused those people with a prejudice against Ladino of snobbery:

> Unfortunately, at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century, there was a terrible prejudice until the late sixties and seventies because many saw Judeo Espanyol speaking people as socially low. I witnessed this myself. There was this one person, and I guessed—I was even sure—that she would know Judeo Espanyol, but she was very snobbish (These types first speak in French). Two minutes later, I asked her something in Judeo Espanyol, but she said she didn't understand a word. I said, "Oh you may not speak it but you must have heard from your mother or grandmother." She said, "No; they would always speak in French. My grandmother would speak French too." I understood the situation . . . I said, "Oh, what a pity" and told her I thought that the more languages a person knows—even ethnic languages—the more open his or her mind would be. She agreed. (interview, 15 December, 2011)

Another interviewee pointed out the low position of Ladino in the community from her own experience of social prejudice. Mrs. F. grew up in Balat, regarded as a lower-class district by the Jewish community:

> We in Balat were just trying to be like them . . . You see, like me, they tried to send their children to St. Benoit to make them learn something . . . And we had relatives, for example . . . my uncle's . . . children all went there . . . They didn't have enough money, so they would cut down expenses on food, and send their children to a French school, just to make them move up the social ladder. (interview, 23 May 2012)

This being the case, the generation that was raised speaking Ladino and French at home took little care to transmit Ladino to the following generation. The main language of communication became French, and Ladino became a language that could be understood but not spoken fluently by many.

Today, as the interviewees of this study pointed out, most people above the age of sixty know Ladino fluently, depending on social class distinction. Yet, with this generation, the transmission of the language to the following generation was interrupted. Their children, who are between the ages of thirty and fifty, can understand and more or less express themselves in Ladino. Those aged between late twenty and forty, however, only know Ladino on a voluntary basis. They either partially understand but cannot speak the language or have a little familiarity with it through songs or idioms. This group speaks Turkish fluently, without accent, and mostly have English or (to a lesser extent) French as their second language. However, there are also some people who learn modern Spanish and familiarize themselves with Ladino later in life.

The following section will explore the key factors in language variation, change and loss in Istanbul Jewry. It will explore economic factors, the entry of women into the public sphere, and demographic factors. Language change is firstly due to economic factors in that learning French and other, multiple languages provided ordinary people with new economic opportunities. Such opportunities also gave the elites a chance to establish supremacy by providing them with technologies and organizations to further develop their control and domination (Nettle & Romaine, 2002, p. 218). Moreover, since women had played a key role in the transmission of language, culture, and religion, women's increasing presence in working life outside their homes during the twentieth century also explains the initial ruptures in the learning of Ladino and also of French. Patterns of linguistic change are also caused by demographic shifts; Istanbul

Jewry, which had previously lived in close neighborhoods communities, became increasingly dispersed around Istanbul, losing its ghettoized identity. Finally, language change is related to changes in the education system; when a language becomes a medium of instruction, this simplifies its acquisition and stabilizes its grammar and vocabulary, as well as shaping the worldviews of its speakers.

1.1.a. Economic Factors

Increasingly in the 19th century, an education in Ladino did not meet the needs of Ottoman Jewry, making it less possible for them to participate in the contemporary world (Ortaylı, 2000, p. 333). It was thus the French language which played the role of regenerating education and opening the world to the Jews of the Ottoman Empire, who were largely alienated from wider society and had been in an economic and cultural state of collapse for two hundred years (p. 334).

The arrival of the Alliance Israelite Universelle initiated the first economic revival for Ottoman Jewry. Although the Alliance operated through its schools and aimed at cultural regeneration, the network it provided also enabled the Jews to develop economic ties. As Aron Rodrigue points out, "Commerce was the lifeline of these communities, and the schools would lose their prestige and popularity if they could not supply what was demanded by the local populations" (1990, p. 89). At first, the education aspect of the Alliance was not its most valuable for Istanbul Jews, and they were mostly interested in how it could improve their economic situation. However, because the Alliance showed hostility towards the use of local languages, studying or teaching Ladino was not part of its civilizing mission. The local languages spoken by the Jews thus started to be undermined by both the Alliance's hostility and its economic policies. The Alliance made a bargain enabling the Jews to access commercial facilities through French language, which in turn meant acquiring Western culture.

Minority languages do not merely become extinct through political actions that target them. Economic factors also have a direct impact on language death as well (Nettle & Romaine, 2002, pp. 216-220). In fact, the sphere of language is

not often amenable to political supervision and direction, and direct legislative measures usually fail in the long run. However, economic and social factors have a more direct impact on changes and innovations in the sphere of language (Nettle & Romaine, 2002, pp. 20-24). As Stein points out:

> For Jews, success in the Ottoman economy increasingly depended upon ties with the Western Europe rather than ties with the Ottoman authorities. To develop such ties, Ottoman Jewry turned to Western Europe for cultural and economic inspiration and for broader personal and professional possibilities. (2004, p. 13)

This economic factor both initiated and hastened the process of relying on French instead of Ladino throughout the 19th century. Nevertheless, the acquisition of French was a voluntary act for Istanbul Jewry. Ladino started to withdraw from official use in schools, political institutions and economic life, and became a language used only at home or among friends.

Economic factors are also the touchstone of all the other factors that initiated and hastened the death of Ladino and acquisition of Turkish for Istanbul Jewry. The economic crisis in Turkey during the Second World War period deeply affected the lives of Jews—as well as other non-Muslim groups. This period witnessed harsh economic sanctions against non-Muslims, including the *"20 Kura"* legislation that pressed non-Muslim men into state service by force. In 1941, Turkey divided its citizens into twenty *kura*, or classes, and non-Muslim men aged 25-45 were re-enrolled in the armed forces and taken to cities in central Anatolia without knowing why or for how long they would stay (Guttstadt, 2012, p. 150). They were forced to carry out hard labor—road building or rock-breaking—under the supervision of armed Turkish soldiers (Guttstadt, 2012, p. 151). Bensiyon Pinto, who witnessed the period and whose father was re-enrolled, says that the basic purpose was to prevent non-Muslim people from participating in business life. His case is persuasive since the re-enrolled men were given neither guns nor uniforms and did not perform the duties of ordinary soldiers (Gürler, 2008, p. 32).

The Wealth Tax Law, adopted by the Turkish State in 1942, was one of the harshest sanctions applied against the Jews and other minority groups in Turkey (Guttstadt, 2012, p. 153). This tax was one of the war economy

measures of the period. Although there was no specific sanction against non-Muslim groups in the written text of the law, in practice the law applied only to them. The state increased tax rate for non-Muslims two to three times, effectively confiscating the wealth of non-Muslims living in Turkey. It was common knowledge that the taxes were arranged on an arbitrary basis (Guttstadt, 2012, p. 155). The police arrested those who could not pay before the deadline and they were taken to work camps in Erzurum (Guttstadt, 2012, p. 157). As a result, non-Muslims were denied not only their existing capital but also the workforce that could accumulate it. The basic purpose of the Wealth Tax was thus to Turkify the economy and its future development.

Through the global economic activity and fluctuations of the last fifty years, some world languages have become metropolitan languages, causing a decline in the use of local or periphery languages. While the economic take-off has aimed at a general rise in living standards, it has also exacerbated the gap between metropolitan and peripheral languages (Nettle & Romaine, 2002, p. 219). In order to able to participate in and gain a share in the metropolitan market, people adapt their language both literally and metaphorically. For Istanbul Jewry, first French and later English appeared as the essential metropolitan languages. One interviewee, Miss. E., who graduated from a Jewish high school in Istanbul, reported that Ladino had been absent from the curriculum, even as an elective course. Miss. E. further noted the economic rationale for this absence; she described how Spanish was an elective course since families saw it as an increasingly useful language for international business (interview, 29 December 2011). Thus, the tendency towards one language or another depends on the economic impetus of the time, and many ultimately see questions of cultural heritage and language preservation as secondary.

1.1.b. Demographic Factors

Demographic changes in Istanbul have directly influenced the language use of Istanbul Jewry. The 1934 Thrace events and the law of settlement of the same year showed the first signs of the problems that all Turkey's minority groups would face in the mid-twentieth century. The emergency measures during the

Second World War and the Istanbul events of 6-7 September 1955 later initiated increased immigration to Israel among Istanbul Jewry.

In the Thrace events of the summer of 1934, many Jews were violently expelled from Thrace and Dardanelles (Guttstadt, 2012, p. 140). Their workplaces were ransacked and Thrace became an insecure place for them in a remarkably short period of time. As a result of the violent attacks, nearly all of the Jews left their homes and took shelter in Istanbul and settled there afterwards. Some Jews also left for Greece or Bulgaria.

In 1934, the Turkish state passed the law of settlement. This law prohibited the creation of dense groups of those whose mother tongue was not Turkish. It also prohibited their establishing separate villages, neighborhoods, trade unions or associations, or monopolizing particular professions by training only those from their ethnic group (Benbassa & Rodrigue, 2010, p. 242). Moreover, the law of settlement restricted the percentage of foreigners in a village or neighborhood to 10% and introduced measures against speaking languages other than Turkish (p. 243).

In 1948, the Turkish government forbade migration to Israel (pp. 384-386). Those who wanted to leave at that time were forced to look for illegal routes. However, as a result of the harsh changes that the Second World War brought about in the Jews circumstances, after the opening of the borders in 1949 there occurred a mass migration to Israel (p. 384). Up to the mid-1950s, some 40% of Jews living in Turkey emigrated to Israel; of a population of 76, 965 Jews in 1945, only 45,965 remained by 1955 (p. 386). Currently, the number of Jews in Turkey is estimated to be about 20,000 and is still decreasing. The majority of the interviewees in this study reported that any political disorder concerning the Jews of Turkey would encourage them to emigrate, and the most recent example of this happening is after the Mavi Marmara incident of 2010.

Many Jews left Turkey for economic and political reasons in the post-war period. Young people who had no hope for integration or economic betterment chose to go to Israel. In his memoirs, Bensiyon Pinto, now honorary president of the Turkish Jewish Community (Türk Musevi Cemaati), states that he decided to

settle in Israel in 1954 because of an incident of discrimination he experienced while playing club football as a young man. Though his Turkish teammates were all wearing their football boots in the clubhouse, he was singled out for doing so in terms of his Jewishness: "Don't walk with your crampons in here, Jew!" Upon hearing these words, he realized that, whatever Jews did in Turkey, they would never be considered *normal* citizens and would ever remain "the other" (Gürler, 2008, p. 51).

While Turkey's Jewish population has been decreasing since the early 1940s, that of Istanbul itself have been increasing exponentially for the last fifty years. As a result, concentrated Jewish neighborhoods have become a thing of the past. While Jewish people previously lived in close-knit communities in Balat, Kuledibi, Hasköy, Nişantaşı, or Kuzguncuk, they are now spread out all around Istanbul. As one respondent, Mr. M., put it:

> The more crowded together you are the more in contact you are. Istanbul has grown tremendously and I think this is very important. In the old days, Jews were settled in particular places and they would know each other . . . Now, everybody is scattered around Istanbul, and they live in their own way. (interview, 19 April 2012)

Similarly, Mrs. K. remembered that the community used to live within walking distance. She complained; "I live in Kemerburgaz and my best friend lives in Tuzla! To see my best friend I need to travel one and half hours by car" (interview, 22 December 2011).

On the one hand, this increase in the distances between the members of the community decreases their communication practices, and, on the other, increases their contact with members of the majority society. Bensiyon Pinto states that it was natural for the Jews to speak Ladino or French when they were settled in close communities. When everybody around them was also Jewish, they did not need to speak Turkish. When they went out of their houses, they would only be in contact with the Jewish butcher, grocer or furnisher (Gürler, 2008, p. 62).

The current structure of Istanbul and the living conditions of the Jews in general do not allow them to see each other often. The previous Jewish neighborhoods

were either replaced with new ones, where Jewish people live together with other people, or the Jewish people themselves moved to neighborhoods where they would not have chosen to live thirty years earlier. Moreover, as a result of the city's transportation problems, it has become harder for super-busy individuals to get together to breathe life into their cultures and traditions, and this applies to the members of Istanbul Jewry. As one seventy-five year old interviewee, Mrs. G., stated:

> In the apartment where my grandmother lived, there were five or six Jewish families. They were like brothers and sisters. Without asking, they could go to each other's kitchen and take an onion. I mean, they lived like a family. Now, we even do not know the names of our neighbors. (interview, 29 December 2011)

Similarly, a middle-aged male interviewee, Mr. M., stated:

> In the old days, for example, we had a Jewish school in Ulus. They would open two or three classes each year. But this number has decreased to one class now. When we were young, at the end of 80s and beginning of 90s, our population was much larger . . . Now we are a minority of the minority. These factors are related to the language. The more of you there were, the more you would see each other. Istanbul is very big now. In the past, I mean, at the beginning of 90s, Jewish people would live in certain places, like Şişli, Osmanbey, Gayrettepe. Gayrettepe was as far as they went . . . And in those districts everybody would know each other. Now, everybody is scattered around. (interview, 19 April 2012)

After all these demographic changes in Istanbul and Istanbul Jewry, Turkish has become a necessity for Istanbul Jews. As Dorian points out:

> In terms of possible routes toward language death, it would seem that a language which has been demographically highly stable for several centuries may experience a sudden 'tip', after which the demographic tide flows strongly in favor of some other language. (1981, p. 51)

In the post-war era, the demographic tide flowed in favor of Turkish in Turkey and towards English worldwide. As a result, the use of Ladino and French decreased to a great extent among the Jews of Istanbul.

1.1.c. Women Joining the Public Sphere

Related to the economic factors outlined above, the entry of women into the

public sphere plays a key role in the changing transmission of minor languages. Since women have a substantial role and personal rights in the Jewish tradition, a change in their social roles or preferences also affects the flow of language, culture, and tradition. Women are considered in relation to children in the collective imagination, and, as a result, they are considered alongside both the family and the collective future (Yuval, 2010, pp. 77-80). Ninety-two-year-old Mrs. L. stated the importance of the role of women in Jewish tradition: "We have a saying that religion and traditions come from the mother. Most of the religious traditions come from mother. The father is utterly different" (interview, 15 December 2011).

With the arrival of the Alliance and its schools, the process of women joining the public sphere and the idea of the "modern Jewish woman" gained momentum and became widespread in Istanbul Jewry. However, this impact of the Alliance on women's lives depended to a great extent on class position, as it was easier for the upper class Jewish women to join the public sphere, learn French and have access to the periodicals of the time. Even though women did not immediately begin to take more part in the public sphere with the arrival of the Alliance, it prepared them for this idea, and this has made it easier for subsequent generations to venture beyond the private sphere. Also, even if they did not work, modern Jewish women were expected to be good mothers and wives.

> In spite of the conservatism of the educational ideology of the Alliance when it comes to women, in the local context its work of female education constituted a revolutionary development in the Middle East . . . Even though the goal of the organization was a limited one of making of women good mothers and wives, it is incontrovertible that by opening the doors of its schools to girls, it liberated them from ignorance and opened new horizons to the female section of the population. (Rodrigue, 1990, p. 79)

In terms of language change, the acquisition of French accelerated with the education of women at the Alliance schools, and thus started to become the language of the household. The popularity of French and poor reputation of Ladino was also supported through the periodicals of the time. These periodicals also targeted women, promoting proper or healthy behavior and

contributing to the public education of women. As Stein states, in the periodicals of Ottoman Ladino press, women were advised not to speak Ladino publicly and were scolded for gossiping in Ladino. (2004, p. 55). At the turn of the century, the Alliance financially supported the publication of several periodicals in the Ladino press, and many of these especially targeted women. Women were regarded as able to play a key role in the transmission of the knowledge of modernization and westernization in the French style. Because women were individually and collectively constructed as the symbolic carriers of the identity and honor of the community, it was held that targeting them would ease the process of transformation of Istanbul Jewry. As Stein argues, "it was Jewish women rather than men who were responsible for promoting cultural change. This is a quite different model from that of Western and Central Europe, where Jewish women were often the guardians of tradition" (2004, p. 127).

In the following years, an emphasis on speaking Turkish also emerged, but this did not have the same effect as the promotion of French until the closure of the Alliance schools and the reforms related to the nationalization of education in Turkey. After these reforms in education and language, it became necessary for the Jewish families to introduce their children to Turkish at an early age. To this end, the families either employed nannies or sent their children to nurseries. In later generations, since the mothers were often fluent in Turkish, their children also become so.

In Turkey, the entry of women into the public sphere and the world of work outside the home started to change the process of cultural transmission, and this change is also visible in Istanbul Jewry. The roots of women's entry to the public sphere can be found in the years of republican reform and revolution. It was a prerequisite for the reformers of the Kemalist regime to educate and so liberate women (Göle, 2010, pp. 29-32). The struggle to create the ideal Turkish woman initiated the public visibility of women, and new legislation increased their participation in social life by giving them the right to a profession. In this respect, women were regarded as simultaneously an important measure of civilization, the precursor of the new life, and the protectors of tradition; even when they were a member of a minority group. However, in time, the process of

transmitting the culture as it used to be has experienced a rupture. Teaching the old habits or traditions now became difficult; especially for working class women. One working class woman interviewee, Mrs. K., said:

> In the early days, we knew that our mothers would be at home when we returned from school. We would watch them as they did the housework, and so on. For example, I still know many of the dishes my mother cooked during my childhood. Now, we don't do that sort of thing. Even if I return home early, my daughter either has homework to do or something like that. She does not know how to do anything. When I compare our teenage years, they aren't similar at all. (interview, 22 December 2011)

The presence of a mother at home who cares for her family profoundly affects the manner and speed of the transmission of culture, tradition, and language. A number of people with Ladino speaking parents or grandparents at home report that they acquired knowledge of Ladino by listening even if they could not speak it. Seventy-five-year-old Mrs. G. grew up in a multilingual environment with Ladino, French, Turkish, and Romanian. She says that she only started to speak Ladino at the age of sixty-five after a course in modern Spanish. She states that, although she could understand Ladino, she had never spoken a word of it because of her own obstinate refusal to. Yet when she was exposed to modern Spanish after so many years, her memory of Ladino was reactivated, and she would speak Ladino instead of Spanish, and this was also the case for many of her classmates at the language school. She added that Ladino was in their subconscious, and this was forcing them to speak Ladino.

The acquisition of Ladino and Sephardic culture through listening encountered a break as Jewish women entered the public sphere and working life in increasing numbers, leaving their closed communities. Thus, not only did practices of language learning change, but the Jewish community also experienced a transformation. Mrs. K.'s experience was also that of other women of her generation and later:

> If you took women out [of the home], there would be no tradition. [In the past], women would sit at home like inseparable part, and there would be continuous knowledge transmission from women. If women are not at home what can they transmit to children? There is no time either. And besides, children are super-busy now .

> . . My daughter went to nursery when she was one and a half because I was working. There was a housemaid at home who spoke Turkish badly. So what do you think happened? I wanted my daughter to speak Turkish fluently, so naturally I sent her to nursery. If she had to learn Turkish, then she should learn it properly. (interview, 22 December 2011)

In a similar vein, Mr. M. describes how the integration of women in public life has affected communal values and practices:

> After all, women were at home, taking care of their children, and they had a life restricted by the bread winning of their husbands. Now, they're participating in working life . . . Everybody has tiring lives. Everybody has to work because it is difficult to keep up with a single salary. Therefore, they send children to nurseries at the age of two or three. When women were not working, visits to neighbors and close relationships between households were much more common. (interview, 19 April 2012)

Because Ladino has survived to the present day mainly through oral transmission by women down the generations, there are a limited number of written sources in the language. The lack of written sources made the women the main carriers of tradition and culture. When their position changed in both their in both their own community and wider society, the transmission of Ladino slowed down, and the socio-political situation gave momentum to the transmission of first French and then Turkish.

1.2.d. Education

According to Strong, language "is involved in making things the same for people, in their commonality and communality. It is also, therefore, a means of enforcing a common behavior on individuals" (1984, p. 91). It is education that provides the necessary basis for this process. Education not only helps to spread a language within a group, but also stabilizes it. It enables people to live in a standardized discourse because any system of education is a way of modifying and maintaining the adoption of discourses. As Foucault says:

> What, after all, is an education system, other than a ritualization of speech, a qualification and a fixing of the roles for speaking subjects, the constitution of a doctrinal group, however diffuse, a distribution and an appropriation of discourse with its powers and knowledges? (1984, p. 123)

In the early 20th century, there was little central state control of the education of non-Muslims in the Ottoman Empire. As Rodrigue argues, various kinds of schools with different philosophies and outlooks coexisted in the education system of the empire, such as state secular schools, Muslim religious schools, *millet* schools and foreign schools (Rodrigue, 1990, p. 160). This created favorable grounds for the development and mission of the Alliance in the Ottoman lands, as a result of which the European Jewish reformers could transform the education system as they desired. However, after the establishment of the Republic of Turkey began the process of becoming "one nation", the indifference towards the Alliance schools in the Empire gave way to suspicion. The favorable grounds for the Alliance to operate now vanished; especially with the adoption of the law on the unification of education in 1924. The law required the Alliance schools to cease all contact with the organization in Paris, requiring the end of the Alliance in Turkey for all practical purposes (p. 163). The Ministry of Education now required Jewish elementary schools to teach either in Turkish or Hebrew, which was regarded as the mother tongue of Istanbul Jewry. This was not due to official ignorance, but was actually a considered step towards linguistic uniformity; because the Jews in Turkey had very little familiarity with Hebrew, the law encouraged Jewish schools to adopt Turkish, which now displaced French as the language of instruction (p. 164).

After the reorganization of the Turkey's national education system in 1924, the participation of Istanbul Jewry in wider society increased. Nevertheless, the language that Jews would use varied, depending on their socio-political and economic positions and education. As well as the variations in educational options, the political situation of the country and changes on a global scale have often meant that the process of language acquisition over the last fifty or sixty years has not followed a linear path.

Although Ladino has its own alphabet (the *Rashi* alphabet), it has not developed as a written language. Moreover, since Ladino is not the language of religion for Jewish people and is not taught at schools, it did not gain stability among its speakers. As one interviewee, Mrs. L., says:

> The most important thing was that this language passed from generation to generation by being heard. There was no academic thing. Of course, there were books and writers from the 18th century, but who read those books in our daily language? They were rarely read. Some people wrote. Because there were outstanding, clever people, they wrote, but people read very rarely. This language thus passed from generation to generation by being heard. But people don't always listen well. Involuntarily, there were some phonetic changes happened. (interview, 15 December 2011)

The education that individuals receive also determines their worldview. Mr. H. was born into a family of many languages, and locates the origins of his worldview and language preference in the education he received, which was Anglo Saxon, and in his being a member of a wealthy upper class family. He says:

> I went to primary school in Şişli Terakki. This was common for my generation of Jews. I mean, it is a good school. Then, I went to secondary school at the English High School and later to Robert College. [These schools] were not common for Istanbul Jewry. When you go there, you start to get an education in a world other than the community; the same education the dominant classes get. Utterly different doors are opened in your cultural world. (interview, 8 December 2011)

That Mr. H. describes his educational choices as uncommon emphasizes the social class differences within Istanbul Jewry. However, for those that could afford it, sending their children to elite schools was common. As Mrs. F points out, those who could afford the school expenses would often send their children to French schools, and saw French as a route to a higher social position (interview, 23 May 2012).

Twenty-eight-year-old Miss. T. can understand Ladino but cannot speak it. She reports that her family members have been attending French-medium schools for six generations. Her grandmother knew Ladino and French, but Ladino was the language with which she felt most comfortable. Although Miss. T.'s parents also know Ladino, her father forbade them to speak it at home for a period. Miss. T. also reports that her father would get angry with his wife because she did not speak proper Turkish. However, his attitude changed over the years, and he now regrets his negative reaction to Ladino. This prejudice was the result of the education he received, and it changed along with the political situation of

Turkey. Moreover, the distinction between the attitudes of Miss. T.'s mother and father relates to the different educations they received. Her father studied medicine in a Turkish state university during the clashes between leftist and rightist movements in the late 1970s and 80s, and came to privilege political concerns over his Jewish identity. However, her mother grew up in a tightly-knit circle within the Jewish community and was never politicized by her education. Thus, her Jewish identity became her primary concern.

In contrast, Mr. A. is not confident at all in Ladino. He was a high school student in a public school during the conflicts between left and right in the 1980s. He proudly described his wide circle of friends in the everyday Turkish of a salesman:

> This is very interesting. The caretaker of our apartment, who I played football with, was the head of *Dev Sol* in the Erenköy district. My desk-mate at school was a supporter of Türkeş. He was my best friend. We spent three years side by side. On one side, I had extreme leftist friends, and, on the other side, I had extreme rightist friends. While walking in the street, we would get confused about which pavement we were supposed to walk on. If I wore jeans I would become a leftist; if I wore fabric pants I would become rightist . . . I mean, I experienced those things, but only superficially of course. My friends would protect me by saying I was one of them. I had a great circle of friends. (interview, 28 June 2012)

Twenty-six-year-old Mr. B. cannot speak Ladino either, although he can partially understand it. His schooling was similar to that of Mr. A., and he spent all of his education in public schools. Mr. B. attributes his worldview as an "open person" to his many friends from wider society during his education.

2. Multilingualism and Language Shifts

It is generally assumed that language and ethnicity are directly connected, and that the loss of one also involves the loss of the other. In an age of nation states, this idea has always found the necessary grounds to flourish. However, a fixed language is not a requisite of group identity. One culture may be comprised of different languages, and the ethnic identity of Istanbul Jewry is no exception.

Language acquisition at an early age is a natural and extremely rapid process.

After this early phase, individuals lose their ability to quickly learn and use a new language. Although multilingualism can be relatively easily achieved in the right circumstances, most people do not have the requisite socio-cultural and political conditions. Istanbul Jewry is one of the rare communities that have this luxury, and a sizeable majority of its members are multilingual. The informants in this study shared and supported the idea that multilingualism enables people to have a more flexible and liberal mode of thinking and brings with itself a multicultural environment. Nearly all of the interviewees knew at least two languages, and the elder generations knew the highest number. However, many could not give a clear answer to the question of when and how they learned so many languages. They responded that it simply "happens". As Mrs. L. stated:

> To tell you the truth, I do not know how I learned French and *Judeo Espanyol*. I guess, it all happened in my babyhood. I learned Turkish at school. Also, there were wonderful women at our home, Fatma and Emine. I learned from them too. (interview, 15 December 2011)

Mrs. L. can now use the three languages fluently with the exception that her Turkish still has a strong accent, and admitted she feels more comfortable speaking Ladino or French.

In a multilingual environment, individuals can use particular languages for different purposes, depending on the aesthetic or social values inherent in one or another language. Even within the same family, family members may coexist by communicating in different languages. According to Mr. D., multilingualism is a natural thing, and he claimed to have learned his many languages at home simply by listening. He explained the language diversity in his family as follows:

> My father would speak with his parents in the Czech language. My mother would speak in French with her mother. My grandmothers and grandfathers would speak in German. At home, we would speak in Turkish, French and English. My mother would speak in Greek with the housemaid. I mean we were quite a multilingual family. (interview, 14 May 2012)

Similarly, Mr. H. described the linguistic situation in his family as a "hodgepodge":

> Let me sum up: One side speaks Ladino; the other Russian. When it comes to the generation of my mother and father, French and Turkish become more dominant. And in my generation it is Turkish. I mean, in my childhood, when I went to my paternal grandmother, I would hear Russian when they talk among themselves. When I went to my maternal grandmother, I would hear Ladino. At home, my father and mother would talk to each other half in French and half in Turkish. They would speak to me and my sister sometimes in Turkish, sometimes in French. (interview, 8 December 2011)

The multilingualism of Istanbul Jewry shows stability in terms of French, Turkish or Ladino, but whether people learned other vernacular languages such as Greek or Armenian depended on socioeconomic and demographic factors. The more the minority groups were in contact, the higher the rate of language influence between them.

The identity of Istanbul Jewry is not merely constructed through language. Having always been a multilingual community, Judaism plays a vital part in their social and personal lives whether they are religious or not. As Haarmann puts it, although Hebrew is the sacred language of Judaism, it is a symbolic marker of *Judaism* and not necessarily of *Jewishness* (1999, p. 63). Likewise, Ladino and Yiddish are "markers of a local proliferation of Jewry but not exclusive or overall features of it" (Haarmann, 1999, p. 63). Indeed, it is this very characteristic of the Jewish people that has enabled them to preserve their ethnic identity over the centuries despite so many language changes.

2.1 Language Shift and Code Switching

As a result of the requirements of the everyday life of a community, its members may begin to consider a community-wide language change necessary. However, an inevitable phase in the process of adopting a new community language is bilingualism. Societal bilingualism is understood to be the prerequisite for any language shift (Fasold, 1984, pp. 216-17). The bilingual context initiates and promotes the process of change both of a language and in a language, and this bilingual context operates through code switching. As Maandi argues:

> The alternate use of two languages in a discourse and even in a sentence may be considered as borrowing at an individual-speaker

> level, but not on the level of the community speech variety. Codeswitching is not identifiable by linguistic features alone. The occurrence of a borrowed item that shows a high degree of social integration, i.e., acceptance and use by community members, could be interpreted as an instance of a loanword, while one that shows a lower degree of social integration would be an instance of codeswitching. (1992, p. 229)

In their everyday life, Ottoman Jewry had a multilingual environment as a natural result of living together with the other minority groups of the Ottoman Empire. This multilingual environment influenced both the development of Ladino and led to their acquisition of other languages. A language always takes words from the other languages used in the environment in which it circulates and is used. As Maandi continues:

> Languages in contact provide . . . dramatic instances of change in language structure and use. Within one generation, contact situations may lead to extensive rearrangement of language structure. In the case of a minority language, inadequate speaker control of grammatical distinctions leads to development of new paradigms and to new uses of lexical items. (p. 230)

Ladino also harbors a mixture of loan words from other languages spoken around it. Ladino's development as a mainly orally-transmitted language also brought about the acquisition of other languages for Istanbul Jewry. Mrs. K. studied the variations of languages in Istanbul Jewry, and claimed that previous generations of Istanbul Jews would have known up to six languages (interview, 22 December 2011) most of which were acquired by hearing them being spoken around them.

Also, as a result of their grammatical or lexical structures, some languages can explain or state some things more easily or more beautifully than others (Nettle & Romaine, 2002). Bilingual people often switch to another language if they think it more appropriate for expressing what they intend to say, and this is the case for Istanbul Jewry. Mrs. K., who is fluent in five languages, remarked that:

> Some concepts in some languages can only be explained with expressions in that language. Sometimes you see that what you want to say in one language cannot be said in the other because it does not have an equivalent [phrase]. In this multilingual environment, people use the language which best suits what they intend to say. (interview, 22 December 2011)

Moreover, language switching can also be observed in situations where speakers do not want the people around them to understand what they are saying. Thus, switching languages can also serve as a warning mechanism. Mr. A. said the following:

> We always speak in Turkish. But we have this thing . . . How can I put it? For example, I remember from my childhood that when elders would teach manners in a family they wouldn't say, "stand up straight . . . look, there are many people around . . . it is a shame" but would switch to Ladino in such circumstances . . . When we got the message in that language, we would immediately pull ourselves together. But we have never felt the need to speak Ladino. We used Turkish all the time. (interview, 28 June 2012)

Having a command of multiple languages and the ability to switch between them also enables the speakers to have a sense of freedom and self-confidence. However, language shift may ultimately lead to language death in the contact situation (Maandi, 1992, p. 230). For Ladino, this death seems unavoidable for all the reasons mentioned so far in this chapter.

3. After the Death of Ladino

The lack of written material in Ladino means that it is fundamentally an oral language. Ninety-two-year-old Mrs. L. who defines Ladino as "*un variant del Espanyol*" (a variation of Spanish). Remarkably, she stated:

> Both Yiddish and Ladino have the same difference, and it is the fact of their *being the language of a nation that has no land* [emphasis added]. If we lived in a stable land, of course the language would gain stability. *Judeo Espanyol* is in constant revolution. For example, my mother would say *amabilita* [friendly]. She would use *-ta* a lot, [but] *-ta* is totally Italian. To my surprise, that use of *-ta* was equivalent to *-dad* in original Spanish. (interview, 15 December 2011)

In recent years, some have made efforts to preserve Ladino through standardization. Currently, to keep the tradition alive, Ladino is used in a special section of one of the weekly Jewish newspapers. Some enthusiasts write in Ladino, and have prepared dictionaries and a database of its native speakers to avoid its total extinction. However, despite these efforts, with the death of the elder generations of Istanbul Jewry, it seems that Ladino will inevitably take its

place in the cemetery of dead languages. With the loss of the language, a vast amount of knowledge and a way of life will also die. The death of Ladino thus raises the question of what its afterlife might look like.

There was no consensus on the aftermath of Ladino among the interviewees. However, their answers to this question can be divided into two groups. Some interviewees thought of it as simply a loss of cultural heritage while others felt that religion would become more central to the lives of new generations as a direct result.

In any oral tradition, proverbs and idioms are an indispensable way to preserve a vast amount of knowledge in a few words. Ladino is also exceptionally rich in terms of proverbs and idioms, so the loss of Ladino also means the loss of a tradition and knowledge base that has existed for five hundred years. Interviewees that knew Ladino frequently resorted to Ladino proverbs (with their Turkish translations) in order to convey a clear-cut message. The loss of the idioms and words of wisdom in the Ladino language mean a lot to its remaining speakers. As Miss. E. said, "When Ladino disappears, the way that you express Ladino culture will also disappear. Are there any other words or languages to express it? Sure, there are. But it is not the same" (interview, 29 December 2012). Likewise, Mrs. K., who also plays an active role in linguistic studies and projects related to Ladino, held that:

> Idiom and proverbs are one of the most important characteristics of Ladino. For any situation, we can use a different idiom or proverb. And this is an incredible wealth. And these idioms and proverbs are generally humorous and amusing. They are very appealing to the senses at the same time. When they have gone, it will be a great loss. This is one of the most important things. (interview, 22 December 2011)

Mrs. K. was also one of those who claimed religion would fill the cultural void left by Ladino's disappearance: "When Ladino is out religion will be in. People will get more religious willy-nilly because there won't be anything else" (ibid.). Similarly, Mrs. L. said that, in her ninety two years of life experience, she had observed how people became fanatically religious to fill a void in their lives (interview, 15 December 2011). She also warned that becoming fanatically

religious does not merely show itself in strictly following religious rules or being an Orthodox Jew, but also has its radical nationalist elements.

The idea that, in the absence of Ladino culture, religion may come to constitute a much more central place in the lives of the Jewish community in Istanbul raises the question of whether the death of Ladino will also lead to a revival of Hebrew. This question has no straightforward answer. It is true that the revival of Hebrew in Israel has put it on the agenda of Jews all around the world more than ever before. Previously simply the language of religion, Hebrew now also serves a nation with which every Jew has some connection.

Hebrew is thus more than the language of religion since it became an official language. In fact, Hebrew is currently the only language that has been fully and successfully revived through language planning (Nahir, 1998, p. 336). During this revival, communicative, political, religious and literary factors were at work, and, of all these, the communicative factor was the most critical in its success. According to Nahir, the records of the revival period indicate that the community had a favorable attitude towards Hebrew although Yiddish was their language of communication (p. 346). It is particularly interesting that people decided to shift to Hebrew even though it was an effectively "extinct" language. The success of Hebrew shows that it is not impossible for communities to shift *en masse* from one language to another. Istanbul Jewry is the only Jewish community where the rate of Hebrew literacy approaches zero, and the fact that it is taught at Jewish schools has not changed this significantly. Even so, many people have passive knowledge of Hebrew. However, having already experienced one language shift, though not a radical one as in the case of the Hebrew revival, Istanbul Jewry may indeed consider introducing Hebrew as a fourth language in the future.

CHAPTER III: Languages of Modernization

Every challenge to a rule appeals to a different truth, and all rules are vulnerable to other accounts of the truth and vice versa. Language is central to all such enterprises. Conveying information is neither the only nor the elementary function of language. As Harold Haarman points out, "If mankind constructs its world using language, then this means of communication necessarily covers every domain of human existence" (1999, p. 63). For Paul Ricoeur, Language establishes the relationship of people to the world, and, without this function, "only an absurd game of errant signifiers remains" (2008, p. 145). It is thus in discourse that the symbolic function of language is actualized (p. 141).

Discourse, which is the counterpart of language systems and a "language event" (p. 141), contributes to the construction of society and social identities, relationships and systems of knowledge. For Ricoeur:

> Whereas language is only the condition for communication for which it provides the codes, it is in discourse that all messages are exchanged. In this sense, discourse alone has not only a world but an other, another person, an interlocutor to whom it is addressed. (ibid.)

Moreover, discourse plays a role in the transformation of society (Fairclough, 1993, p. 64) and has a profound influence on the way people think and act. As Norman Fairclough puts it:

> Discourse as a political practice establishes, sustains and changes power relations, and the collective entities (classes, blocs, communities, groups) between which power relations obtain. Discourse as an ideological practice constitutes, naturalizes, sustains and changes significations of the world from diverse positions in power relations. (p. 67)

This chapter will analyze the dominant role of modernity discourse in the social transformation of Istanbul Jewry and also of Turkey in the 20th century. It will analyze the relationship between language and identity, and also examine the discourse through which people's identities are shaped. This discourse is also a ground on which language reveals itself as a communication tool.

In Turkey and elsewhere in the last century, the discourse that outweighed all others was that of becoming modern. At the beginning of the 20th century, modernity discourse aimed to provide people better futures, to promote civilized and prosperous lifestyles and to create and maintain order. For Bauman and Briggs, as the "discursive realm" of modernity emerges, it is characterized by a rejection of rhetorical manipulation (2003, p. 45). Thus, as they describe it, "The path to modernity seemed to lie in circumventing language, in connecting the mind more directly to nature" (p.29). Thus, modernity, which was hostile towards rhetoric, saw a way forward in interfering with spoken languages and purifying them. The reformers hoped that promoting one language as the national language and rejecting elaborate language in favor of plain and simple words would remove obstacles on the road to progress.

Turkey, and most modern nation states emerging from revolution or war, tried to constitute its unity and togetherness through the discourse of modernity. These interpretations of modernity in turn contributed to the creation of modern politics. Modern nation states did not limit themselves to enabling better lifestyles and futures for their citizens; they also wanted to bestow a better future on the backward people of other countries. As a product of modern French nation, the aim of the Alliance Israelite Universelle in establishing schools was nothing more than the legitimation and spread of this motto of acculturation for a better future. This discourse of the Alliance shaped the lives of Istanbul Jewry to a great extent; especially when combined with the nationalism and modernity discourse of the newly founded Turkish Republic. Moreover, for Jews in Istanbul and around the world in the aftermath of the Second World War, the discourse of modern progress became complicated by a holocaust discourse, which came to occupy their lives.

Clearly, the discourse of the Turkish state and of its society in general does not coincide. This inconsistency between multiple discourses raises questions related to identity, which presents an ongoing problem. Language provides the elementary means of fulfilling the task of identity construction. The analysis of language practices provides a crucial point of entry in understanding how social

relations are conceived and work and thus how identity is constructed (Scott, 1998, p. 283). This chapter will thus inquire into the ways meanings change, how they emerge and disappear, and what these processes reveal about the constitution and operation of power in the case of Istanbul Jewry in relation to the wider society they live in.

1. Becoming Modern

In order to understand why modernity is so often appealed to in Turkey, it is necessary to look at how it is explained and adapted in Turkish society. The idea of "modernism" is related to a great extent to the pursuit of better futures (Harvey, 2010, p. 70). According to Tibi, "The cultural project of modernity revolves around the concept of knowledge as related to a specific worldview based on the belief that man can shape his own destiny and also determine his own social and natural environment" (2001, p. 4). As Afary and Anderson explain, as traditions which give meaning and to an extent certainty to the world decline, rationality and human perception step in to take their place, and the aim of life becomes to master nature through science and labor. According to them, this also affected the way modernity discourse was produced historically; "Modern historical inquiries produced a notion of progress based on the acquisition of technology and the control over nature" (Afary & Anderson, 2005, p. 17).

Throughout the 20th century, becoming modern and seeking prosperous futures were commonly accepted key goals. As part of the practice of creating nationalist ideologies, nation states imposed an understanding of homogeneity in modern thought, trying to create shared historical memories. Within this process, while the traditions that could be incorporated into this shared historical memory were promoted, the ones that could pose a danger to it were suppressed and disposed of.

The ideas of the Enlightenment are widely held to constitute the very core of global modernity. For Seidman:

> Assumptions regarding the unity of humanity, the individual as the creative force of society and history, the superiority of the west,

> the idea of science as Truth, and the belief in social progress, have been fundamental to Europe and the United States. (Seidman, 1998, p. 1)

In this sense, the basic feature that has characterized modern history is the globalization of the Western order (al-Azmeh, 2003, p. 141). In this process, "the knowledge holders" saw themselves as holding the "necessary" right to illuminate the rest of the world, which suggested a classification of the enlighteners as superior and the "to be enlightened" inferior . As Zygmunt Bauman points out:

> The era of modernity had been marked by an active superiority; part of the world constituted the rest as inferior—either as a crude, still unprocessed 'raw material' in need of cleaning and refinement, or a temporarily extant relic of the past. Whatever could not be brought up to the superior standards was clearly destined for the existence of subordination . . . This active superiority meant the right of the superior to proselytize, to design the suitable form of life for the others, to refuse to grant authority to the ways of life which did not fit that design. (1994, p. 189)

In its aim to enable better futures to people and illuminate them, modernity functions through an understanding of time and order. In this respect, the time of modernity is linear, existing between a wasted past that could not continue and a future that does not exist. For modernity, it is necessary to move forward because the imagined and enviable future lies ahead. However, although, as a discourse, modernity emphasizes the ideas of "progress" and "the new" and talks about change, modernity as practice adapts the old in a different context (Kentel, 2008, p. 36), and thus partly reproduces it.

The modern, rational mind pays utmost attention to creating and putting into practice social order. In this sense, the discourse of modernity revolves around the idea of removing ambivalence. Combatting ambivalence is at the core of modern politics, the modern mind and modern thought. According to the modern perception, the idea of order should spread to both the intellectual and political spheres. Constructing order and keeping it mean establishing friendships and fighting enemies. Most importantly, it means fighting against ambivalence (Bauman, 2003, p. 39). This ambivalence—the placing of a thing or an event in more than one category—is a disorder that finds its roots in

language. Language, through its function of naming and classifying, places itself in between a world which is simultaneously random and in order and suitable to people's needs (p. 10). In this respect language strives to keep the order and to suppress the randomness or contingency.

As Bauman argues (2003), the desire to bring order also necessitates the existence of chaos. Thus, the struggle to achieve an ordered life turns into an eternal struggle because the language creating order always produces its counter. Modern existence thus forces its own culture to oppose itself. Yet modernity desires this incompatibility between itself and its culture (p. 20). Modernity's desire to order society for its own wellbeing always requires making classifications and definitions which operate according to dualities. Community engineers separate the good or useful ones from the bad and useless, and, in the long run, this process results the division of society into natives and strangers. When the characteristics of a group of people cannot be defined, seem unusual to the rest of the society, and cannot be put into any of the new categories, they are labeled as "strangers" regardless of any shared history.

Through their unaccepted differences from the rest of society, strangers are a threat to the order of the world. Therefore, their position in society dangles by a thread. Strangers have the freedom to leave but may also be forced to leave. It does not matter how long the stay of the stranger has lasted; this stay is always temporary in the minds of the natives or insiders. Bauman says that the stranger represents a synthesis of closeness and distance which is incongruous and thus undesirable (p. 83). With their undesirable characteristics, strangers are seen as a nuisance to modern states. Moreover, the ambiguous situation of strangers as neither wholeheartedly for nor against the national project causes modern states to lose sight of the future. Thus, in time they can be suppressed, physically or mentally exiled, or become taboo (p. 91) as perceived threats to the epistemological wellbeing and physical security of the state. If it is not possible for states to get rid of the strangers entirely, the next best solution is to treat them as untouchable and minimize social interactions with them (p. 91).

The struggles of ethnic, cultural, and religious minorities to escape being categorized as strangers often fail. The more they emphasize their being "natives" of the host country, the more they unwittingly reproduce their stranger status because they base their discourse of "sameness" on the refutation of the alleged differences. The rules of this game hardly change in their favor once they receive the label of stranger because of its negative connotation in the natives' mind. The "naturalness" in the "native" position of the majority groups of the state makes it difficult for the strangers to escape from their category. Moreover, since the majority reproduces its natural right to ownership of the state by blaming the strangers for difficulties, the social boundaries between the minority and majority groups remain intact.

1.1 Modernizing Istanbul Jewry in the Modernizing Turkey

The modernization of the Turkish state and of the Jewish community in Istanbul follow similar paths, and their histories are in many ways parallel. However, these histories have many layers, and, in this respect it is possible to talk about multiple Jewish and Turkish modernities. The main reference and model for the modernization of Turkey after 1900 was the West, and specifically France. Turkey thus adopted a secular and authoritative system in which school was the most important medium of modernization (Kentel, 2008, p. 19). School and education "civilize", people and achieve the integration of ethnically different people into wider society. Since the basic aim of modernization is to constitute a forward-looking society in the present time, it is necessary to control and discipline every social unit (p. 20). The function of these ideal "new people" that modernity wished to create through education was to catch up with the West, compete with it and demonstrate their new power to it.

The state that created Turkish modernity or was created by it is not an amicable one. Its perception was based on creating otherness, and it wanted to mold its citizens into the ideal individuals in its perception (p. 52). This state discourse is powerful and operates through its every branch or organization. What the state aimed to create was a new vision of its communities and religious or ethnic identities. It saw these communities and identities as enemies or rivals and, to a

great extent, this is what they became (p. 44). However, it was not able to create this envisagement in the eye of society as a whole but it was able to create a part in the society who has that envisagement.

Thus, in the process of nation building, Turkey's state elites applied an unquestionably modern rationality to constructing Turkish society. This modern rationality also appropriated the right and the ability to interfere in the national language. In other words, the "modern mind" believed that it could bring spoken language under control by means of reason and give it a new shape. In this respect, state elites thought of the language as a mere instrument with which to create Turkish identity, putting the language to mechanical use. Reducing language to the symbolic mode became a central means of purifying it and making modernity possible (Bauman & Briggs, 2003, p. 37). Language thus became a means to create new forms of exclusion.

Believing that the East had fallen behind the West for religious and cultural reasons, republican elites thought that it was necessary to adopt not only Western technology, but also Western culture and modes of thought in order to catch up (Schick, 2011, p. 27). As a result, one of the basic principles of the alphabet reform of 1928 and the language reforms of 1930s was creating new "Turkish" words and dismissing the "old words" of Arabic or Persian origin that were a part of the Ottoman tradition. However, the reforms also borrowed words from the French language, bringing a new language to replace the old for reasons which were basically ideological (p. 27). As Richard Bauman and Charles Briggs point out in relation to language reforms generally:

> Practices of linguistic purification ironically became key social hybrids in that they placed a vital aspect of the creation of modernity in the hands of the elite and designated its fruits as a means of ensuring the reproduction of their social, political, and economic capital. (2003, p. 43)

In the early republican years, Turkish modernity accepted everybody as a "Turk" regardless of their ethnic or religious background. In other words, being a citizen of the Republic of Turkey was sufficient to become a Turk. However, the state also wanted to see evidence of its citizen's Turkishness in their speaking a modern Turkish supposed to have no connection with the past. For

many years, the idea that multilingualism is not a threat to people's devotion to their nations was anathema to Turkey's nation builders, and this is demonstrated by their frequent resort to the phrase "*Vatandaş, Türkçe Konuş*!" in times of crisis with minority groups.

The modernization discourse of the Turkish state was a top-down movement initiated by state elites, and the idea of nationalism was thus at its forefront. In this sense, the discourse emphasized both the idea of a better future for Turkey's citizens—modernization—and the indivisible unity of the nation. The national discourse of the state wanted to subsume all citizens under the title of Turk regardless of their religious or ethnic origins and arranged its politics accordingly. In the eyes of the builders of the Turkish state and society, banning the use of other local or ethnic language and the creation of a pure Turkish language had utmost value. However, simply naming all Turkey's citizens Turk's was felt to be insufficient as it contained within itself the idea of ambivalence. Those who could did not fit into the categories defined by the state elites thus posed a danger to the epistemological wellbeing of the state. While the new republic's minorities strove to prove their loyalty to Turkish, their efforts remained inconclusive. This inconclusiveness contains the very first seeds of racist reactions to them as "strangers".

As mentioned previously, creating a homogeneous society without divisions was one of the most important elements of modernity. While founding a new society, the perception of modernity requires forgetting all old habits. Just as the republican elites regarded the Ottoman language as archaic because it contained Arabic and Persian words, Ladino's position of a degenerate language in the Jewish community can also be explained by the modern motto that "old is bad". For Istanbul Jewry, one by-product of the process of becoming modern was that Ladino became labeled as the language of lower classes within the community and became seen as amusing or quaint. Even before Turkish modernization gained momentum in every corner of society, the Alliance Israelite Universelle had already been shaping Istanbul Jewry in the French fashion through its schools and periodicals. As stein explains:

> The Ladino press helped synthesize a culture that resembled neither traditional Ottoman Jewish culture, nor contemporary French culture, nor the culture of the Ottoman Christian, Armenian, or Muslim bourgeoisie, though all served as influences. Ladino periodicals helped to shape a modern Ottoman Jewish culture that borrowed from regional, trans-national, extra-national, Jewish and non-Jewish models but also transformed them, creating, in the process, a culture—and a form of modernity—unique in texture and substance. (2004, p. 125)

Both French-style and Turkish modernization used language as a tool in order to accomplish the aimed-for transformation and step into a prosperous future. In this sense, the transformation of Istanbul Jewry was enabled by the Enlightenment discourse coming from Europe, especially France, and the nationalist discourse of the Republic of Turkey. However, the juxtaposition of these two discourses, the chaos of the Second World War, and the political fluctuations of the Turkish state would all change the flow of this transformation.

1.2. A Way Out: The Discourse of Tolerance

The widely-used concept of "culture" points to a negative aesthetic of the "other", and this aesthetic supports the creation of certain identities and the idea of multiculturalism in the host country (al-Azmeh, 2003, p. 18). The emphasis on culture and its commonality creates the grounds for defining differences and emphasizing them. What al-Azmeh calls "cultural differentiation" emerges in an atmosphere in which the idea of individuality has become widespread (p. 19). Over time, cultural differentiation can lead to cultural marginalization in a negative sense and can become an instrument of state politics. Though multiculturalism emphasizes the idea of being together and living peacefully in the same country under the same flag, there is a very thin line between applauding multiculturalism and creating marginalization; the necessary conditions for racism. Marginalization aims at exclusion, and multiculturalism is only possible by means of refusing this discourse. However, this refusal actually justifies its existence.

The Turkish state regards minorities as strangers and its discourse is shaped by its reactions to these strangers. Thus, even though Sephardic Jews have been

living within the current borders of Turkey for five hundred years and despite the fact that Jewish presence in the region predates the Ottoman conquest of Istanbul, state discourse still regards the Jewish community as the guest of the state and special emphasis is given to the fact that they are under the protection of the government. Thus, in state discourse, Istanbul Jewry is regarded as the stranger of the nation. Moreover, even when state discourse approves multiculturalism and emphasizes the benefits and wealth of national ethnic or religious diversity, it includes the Jewish community as a whole religious group. In other words, while distinguishing between Armenian, Kurdish, Greek, Laz or Circassian groups, they do not distinguish the Sephardim or Ashkenazim but simply refer to "the Jews" instead, if indeed they are mentioned at all. In this sense, the Jewish community seems a ghost haunting the country. Everybody knows they live in Turkey, but nobody cares about them as longs as they do not attract negative political or religious attention.

The movements of Istanbul Jewry have been shaped by periodic exiles, such as the expulsion from Spain. In this respect, the Jewish community had long been a closed community in Turkey, its alienation from public affairs encapsulated in the Ladino proverb *no mos karişeyemas en los meseles del hükümet* ("We do not interfere in issues of government"). However, after the foundation of the Republic of Turkey, their visibility in public life slowly started to increase, and they even had a deputy in the parliament in the early Republican and Democrat Party years. Yet their visibility also fluctuated with the changing political and social atmosphere after the Holocaust and the foundation of the state of Israel.

The years under the government of Democrat Party were relatively comfortable for Istanbul Jewry, with the exception of the 6-7 September events. To a great extent, they were able to recover their economic loss stemming from the sanctions of the Wealth Tax (Bali, 2009, p. 516). However, after the coup of 1960, things started to get worse again for the Jewish community. The rise of Islamist anti-Semitism of the National Salvation Party (*Milli Selamet Partisi*, MSP) caused Istanbul Jewry to prefer invisibility or migration to Israel. Through the 1970s, as a result of the rising economic, political and terror crisis in the country, the Jewish community became ever more invisible. In this atmosphere

of turmoil, the important thing for the Jewish community was to avoid attracting attention either individually or as a whole community (p. 228). Their inclination to live hidden away from the rest of the society is best summarized in a saying condensing the experiences of the middle-aged generation that was raised with the French culture: *pour vivre heureux, vivons cachés* (to live happily, we live in hiding). These unpleasant experiences and the increasingly negative atmosphere towards Jews in Turkey thus sowed the first seeds of the "tolerance discourse" in Istanbul Jewry.

Towards the end of the 1970s, the Jewish community's role in Turkey started to change, and, in 1980s, its leading names worked for the Turkish Government in order to correct Turkey's negative foreign reputation and improve its image in the West. They acted out a script in which Turkey had no problems with its minorities, the Jewish community had been living in the country peacefully for centuries, and that allegations about of an Armenian genocide were lies. The Jewish leaders also tried to persuade their own community of the truth of this discourse. A meeting with the directors of the Holocaust Memorial Museum in the USA in 1983 ratified the following statements, which were subsequently repeated at every opportunity and became common sense for the Jewish community in Turkey: 1) the Holocaust was a unique massacre with no equivalent; 2) the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Turkey had treated the Jewish people with tolerance for centuries; 3) Turkey had sheltered German Jewish scientists who fled the Nazis; 4) Turkey was the only state in the Islamic world that officially recognized Israel and that had diplomatic relationship with it, and; 5) Armenians had supported the Nazis during the Second World War (Bali, 2009, p. 285). These arguments were the building blocks of the tolerance discourse which developed in the 1990s, and has been actively promoted by the Quincentenial Foundation (*500. Yıl Vakfı*).

The tolerance discourse officially started with the celebrations for the 500th anniversary of the arrival of the Sephardim in Ottoman lands, and these celebrations were also a means of for the Jewish community to endear themselves to wider society. To this end, community leaders promoted speaking good Turkish, being attached to Turkish traditions and defending the Turkish

government internationally. This discourse, which was developed in collaboration with the Turkish state, was an effort by Jewish leaders to escape from their stranger status in the country. However, the initial concern of the state was not to take care of its Jewish citizens, but to correct its bad reputation abroad.

The tolerance discourse itself actually reproduces the idea of being a stranger in that it emphasizes being a guest or a newcomer to the host country. The first evidence of being a stranger in a majority society is silence and invisibility. This is followed by a rhetoric of being *very happy in the host country and very thankful to it*. Next, as a result of the desire to erase the label of stranger, there is a declared attachment to the traditional values or customs of the country, also known as trying to become more native than the natives. As Bauman points out:

> Ethnic-religious-cultural strangers are all too often tempted to embrace the liberal vision of group emancipation (erasing of a collective stigma) as a reward for individual efforts of self-improvement and self- transformation. Frequently they go out of their way to get rid of and to suppress everything which makes them distinct from the rightful members of the native community—and hope that a devoted emulation of native ways will render them indistinguishable from the hosts, and by the same token guarantee their reclassification as insiders, entitled to the treatment the friends routinely receive. The harder they try, however, the faster the finishing-line seems to be receding. (1998, p. 71)

As a part of the efforts to correct Turkey's image abroad in the 1980s, the leading names of the Jewish community developed and promoted a discourse of being satisfied with their conditions in Turkey. Moreover, the establishment of the Quincentenial Foundation also served the purpose of positive advertising for Turkey. The foundation's name emphasized that the Jews had been expelled from European Spain in 1492, and that the Ottoman Empire embraced them and they had been living in Turkish lands peacefully for five hundred years. Finally, the year 1992 was declared to be the year of tolerance (*hoşgörü yılı*) and was celebrated both nationally and internationally. These celebrations and the 500th year facilities contributed to an increase in Istanbul Jewry's visibility to majority society; at least, to an extent.

The Quincentenial Foundation had three basic purposes: 1) to reflect a positive image of Turkey as a civilized country that saved the Jewish people from Inquisition Spain (and thus not, as its other minorities allege, a barbarous country which perpetrated massacres of Armenians in 1915-16, repressed minorities through the Wealth Tax and forced conscription during the war, unleashed pogroms against Jews in the 1930s and 50s, invaded Greek Cyprus and suppressed the Kurdish people); 2) to enable Turkish-Israeli affiliation, 3) to enable Western support for Turkey's bid to join the EU (Bali, 2009, p. 360).

With the activities of the Quincentenial Foundation, aided by the developing communication and transportation technologies, the image of Istanbul Jewry started to change. However, their secretive and secluded lifestyle did not change a great deal. Their invisibility meant living with two discourses: a public discourse about the good life in Turkey and the positive relationship with the Turks; and a private, communal negative discourse on the very same subject. Moreover, the invisibility meant continuing to live at a distance from majority society, avoiding any behavior either good or bad that could attract attention and somehow cause trouble for the Jewish community (p. 383). This dual discourse was also visible during the fieldwork for this study. The older interviewees with official positions in the community stressed the positive discourse with little emphasis on past hardships. However, younger interviewees were more critical of this dual discourse, which partially continues the tolerance discourse. Mr. N., who is above the age of sixty and an active member of the Jewish community, emphasized the hospitality of the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Turkey. However, Miss. T., who is twenty-eight years old, openly criticized this dual discourse: "These are politically correct explanations which mean 'we keep ourselves to ourselves, we are happy, do not touch us' " (interview, 22 November 2011). Similarly, Miss. E. who is thirty-three, said:

> Actually, there is nothing to tolerate. I did not make any mistake to cause them to have to tolerate me because tolerance is such a thing. You make a mistake and I pretend not to see it, and, as a result, I tolerate it. If I did not do anything wrong to you why should you tolerate me? I think the word is misused. Yes, this is

> our mistake; we used this word. But they only welcomed us; they did not tolerate us. (interview, 29 December 2012)

This dual discourse is not just produced inside of the community. It was also established as a result of the mutual relationship with majority society which was skeptical about Jews being "proper" Turkish citizens. Although Jewish people in Turkey had equal citizenship rights before the law, because they took for granted their dhimmi (*zımmi*) status since their arrival to the Ottoman Empire, they also set themselves apart from the rest of society. The leaders of the Jewish community in Turkey and the chief rabbi follow a strategy shaped by the wishes of the state in their relations with the media, established order and society (Bali, 2009, p. 500). Moreover, the community's collective memory of expulsion and immigration also contribute to alienation from mainstream society (see Chapter 4). When asked about this invisibility and silent diplomacy of the Jewish community, Mrs. K. replied:

> What are you going to do? Well . . . What would happen if you raised your voice? We are talking about a community that has a population of 15-16 thousand people in country of more than 70 million. I mean what would happen if you raise your voice, or if you don't? Who would recognize you? What difference would it make? All in all, how are you going to introduce yourself to that many people? Now this I get angry about: For example, you meet with somebody and he or she says "oh, you don't look like a Jew". What does it mean to look like a Jew? What does a Jew look like? Shall I have horns or a tail? A Jew is also a human being, so what do you mean? How she could recognize a Jew well enough to say you don't look like one, well I don't know! (interview, 22 December 2011)

Likewise, Mr. H. points to the relatively small size of the community to explain its silence. Yet he also indirectly criticizes the politics and management of this silent diplomacy and tolerance discourse in the community with a demographic argument:

> Don't forget this: we are talking about 20 thousand people. It is already a small community. Secondly, it is a community from which the most idealistic and wealthy children have migrated to the USA in every generation. Most of them do not return. I mean, in every generation, the smartest and most idealistic members of this community leave if they can afford to and those left behind try to manage as best they can, you know. (interview, 8 December 2011)

Mr. H. thus makes a fairly bold criticism, uncommon among the other members of Istanbul Jewry of his age group. However, the younger generation is more often critical of the unwritten codes and taboos both in their community and wider society. Mr. H.'s claim also attracts attention to another demographic fact in Istanbul Jewry; while the upper class of the community has migrated to Western countries the lower classes have preferred to move to Israel. After all these migrations, it is the lower middle classes who were left behind.

2. Failed Promises

The social promises of modernity—equality, freedom, respect for human rights, different religions, cultures and races, the sum of which would bring the utopian future—did not match the requirements and impositions of the time and faded away, drowned out by the loud questions about their legitimacy. Those promises were not internalized, but became a story that was mechanically memorized and repeated (Kentel, 2008, p. 120). The dream of the prosperous future was founded on the idea of progress and reiteration of the dream itself, not conscious thought and action for its realization. In other words, it became only a dream.

Instead of the universal "equality and sameness" that modernity initially emphasized, in time the idea of "differentiation" started to find its voice (p. 91), and this included both resistance to and celebration of differences. In the end it was realized that the communities, that is to say the cultural belongings or manifestations that were supposed to be abolished by modernity or were supposed to melt into in the nation state's unity, had actually not been abolished. On the contrary, the communities tried to redefine themselves for their new times (p. 82).

Modernism did not deliver on its promises, and, as a result of this failure, the idea of postmodernism emerged. Out of the hope for a just and rational world came the monstrosity of industrial capitalism and totalitarian regimes. As an example of this failure of modernism and its promises, the Iranian revolution of 1979 was a rejection of the principles of modernization and progress into a

better and more prosperous future. Moreover, the revolution shook and questioned the attempt to modernize Islamic countries in the European style and became hallmark for the construction of religious identities. For Afary and Anderson, "The Iranian revolutionaries wished to create a society that was the absolute 'other' in relation to the modern Western world. They wished to take 'nothing' from Western philosophy, from its juridical and revolutionary foundations" (2005, p. 75). Thus, the wishes and aims of the Iranian revolution demonstrated that what seemed a retrograde movement in the revolution in the modern sense actually proved that modernization as a project was in itself archaic.

Likewise, a certain distrust of the discourse of civilization and modernization, a growing curiosity about sub-cultures that were not part of mainstream, the rise of identity politics, a search for cultural or a personal self, and a return to the centrality of spiritual and communal identities were the basic characteristics of what was named postmodernity in the Western world (Schick, 2011, p. 32). However, according to Laclau, "What the 'situation of postmodernity' challenges is not so much the discrimination and choice between social and cultural identities but the status and logic of the construction of those identities" (1989, p. 64). In this sense, postmodernity is not a simple rejection of modernity; rather it is a transposition of modernity's themes and categories (p. 65). What is called postmodernity is not simply a strategy to construct identities through the search for cultural roots or differences; what characterizes it is avoidance of any fixity, and talking about how ethnic identities or differences are constructed is the outcome of this process.

Thus postmodernity implies a particular weakening of the absolutist character of the values of Enlightenment modernity (p. 67). In this respect, the modern idea of time, which is focused on a better future, encounters a break with postmodernity, which becomes more past-centered. In other words, people start to experience a "return to past". Thus, all the differences that modernity tried to melt into certain categories start to reveal themselves, and this rediscovery of the past leads to the creation of new subjectivities and identities.

After the mid-1970s, the current of postmodernism also began to influence social and intellectual life in Turkey (Schick, 2011, p. 32). This opened Pandora's box and a future-oriented Turkish society started to rediscover its past. This further subdivided and multiplied the borderlines and dualities that modernism had set and emphasized. This being the case, it has become possible to see differentiation or diversity in the concept of strangers. In this sense, it has become hard to talk about a single group of strangers. Rather, according to the site and scale of analysis, it is possible to talk about many different varieties of strangers. The closer people look, the more they see the differences. Thus, Istanbul Jewry no longer appears as a homogenous group of people. The identity of an individual, which in the past was the size of the neighborhood or district where he or she grew up, now expands to fill the whole world. For example Mrs. G. learned Ladino after the age of sixty and has now, at the age of seventy five, connected online with others who speak Ladino all around the world, to refresh her memory of the language and the old days. As a result, she reconstructs her identity through people that could be classified as Ladino speakers, non-speakers or "others". As she explained it:

> I joined to a Ladino website which has 1,500 members. When you write a message, 1,500 people read it. Answers come from all around the world, from people in every country. On that website . . . [there are] memories, language, words and so on . . . Because I am a member of this website, we read the writings related to the past and all that. Everybody shares their memories. I mean, the memories come to the surface more and more. (interview, 29 December 2012)

All in all, the return to the past, the growth of media technologies and the rise in the mobility of populations have all contributed to the dissolution of old rigidities and brought subjects into a decentralized perspective. The breakdown in the absolute definitions of identity and the realization of differences have displaced the understanding that "old is bad" and led to the discovery of new cultural sensitivities. The inclination toward defining the self finds voice in Istanbul Jewry in terms of a trial revival of awareness of their ethnic language and Sephardic culture.

3. Identity *Matters*

The rigidities that dissolved when postmodernism broke down modernity's conceptual walls left behind many concepts, groups and individuals awaiting identification, definition, or categorization. Identity, which is the incarnation of ambivalence, is discussed most when it is not known where somebody belongs. In other words, identity reveals itself when, according to Bauman:

> One is not sure how to place oneself among the evident variety of behavioral styles and patterns, and how to make sure that people around would accept this placement as right and proper, so that both sides would know how to go on in each other's presence. (2002, p.19)

A discussion of identity attempts to fix all these floating concepts or ambivalent individuals in place. However, in this abundance of reference, knowledge and communication, the issue of identity starts to take on a problematic characteristic.

The identities endowed by modernity are divided and dispersed as a result of the failure of its pledges. Questions of identity feature in the realization of this failure, the feeling of insecurity in a decentralized world, and the interactions between large numbers of people as a result of global social movements. Thus, identities have started to have relationships that go beyond national borders. Yet the increase in these relationships has also led to a crisis in identity matters because, as Laclau points out, "The radical relationalism of social identities increases their vulnerability to new relations and introduces within them the effects of ambiguity" (1989, p. 71).

The desire to know the details of the being of the other brings with it the act of naming and thus necessitates the creation of identities. The concept of identity is often described as a "construction" to indicate that identity is not merely something that people have at birth but has an aspect of fiction and narration in itself. The construction of identities is also proof that they can be reconstructed or reproduced in some other way. Therefore, it is important to understand in what context they are constructed. As Stuart Hall points out:

> Precisely because identities are constructed within, not outside, discourse, we need to understand them as produced in specific historical and institutional sites within specific discursive formations and practices, by specific enunciative strategies. Moreover, they emerge within the play of specific modalities of power, and thus are more the product of the marking of difference and exclusion, than they are the sign of an identical, naturally constituted unity—an 'identity' in its traditional meaning. (2002, p. 4)

The individual self evolves, takes on new features, and constructs itself for others through mutual interaction. While identity shapes itself, it also shapes the other and is shaped by the other. Since the self tries to define itself according to the other, it can also be said that self sees the other as a completed, total image. The exchange between the incomplete self and the total image never ends because the self is in a competition both with the other and with itself. Although the self is in constant contradiction with the other, it tries to complete and define itself through the existence of the other. As Bauman says, "We are 'us' only in so far as there are people who are not us—them" (1990, p. 55). For Laclau:

> If the limits of the system can be subverted by a reality exterior to it, then, insofar as every identity is relational, the new relations of exteriority cannot but transform the identities. Identities can remain stable only in a closed system. (1989, p. 73)

This being the case, as a result of the present tremendous developments in the communication and transportation technologies, talking about the multiplication of identities and identity crises has become a common phenomenon. Talking about cultural identities is only possible through cultural relationships, as identity would mean nothing in isolation. After the Jewish community opened its doors to wider society and interaction occurred, its members felt the need to introduce and talk about themselves. No such need had been felt in Istanbul Jewry's historically closed community, but emerged with the promotion of the tolerance discourse both nationally and internationally.

Although identity is associated primarily with tribes or groups, it is also linked to individuality and the development of a unique self (Kellner, 2003, p. 232).

Thus, one may have many identities and it is always possible to extend the list. When Mr. H. was asked how he defines himself, his answer displays the complex and never-settled character of identity:

> When people ask me, especially while I am abroad, I say I am from Istanbul (İstanbulluyum). I do not say I am Turkish because I am not. I even do not say I am from Turkey because I do not have any relationship with, let's say, Tokat. If I said I was Jewish, that would also be misleading. I may say I am socialist, but that would not answer the question. Therefore, I say I am from Istanbul. This is the solution I have found. It is the best possible way of defining myself culturally. (interview, 8 December 2011)

The way Mr. H. defines himself is not a common one among Istanbul Jewry. However, as he points out, the answer people give to this question depends to a large extent on their whereabouts. Therefore, if the question was asked in Turkey, the first answer would be "Istanbul" and the next would be "I am Jewish", which would then be followed by an explanation of whether or not they were Turkish.

The matter of identity also reveals itself in Istanbul Jewry in the new sensitivities about traditions, use of new terms, personal names and mixed marriages. Yet, above all, it is language that functions as the key identity marker, giving the very first clue of their identity as Jews in Turkey. However, Ladino is not the only element that enables their ethnic identity, and neither is Judaism; more than either, their ethnic identity is centered on their experience of being Jewish in Turkey, though this experience includes Judaism as a cultural trait, their traditions, their languages, their cuisine and their music.

3.1. Constructing New Terms, Discovering Sensitivities

As a result of the movement towards returning to and rediscovering the past, a nostalgia industry has arisen out of a past that was supposed to be lost (Neyzi, 2011, p. 25). The re-discovery of the past has accelerated thanks to the new media, communication and transportation systems, which have increased both the flow of knowledge and people's mobility. Moreover, the new media have started to bring many taboo subjects onto the social agenda and have thus decreased the gap between the public and private spheres (Neyzi, 2011, p. 25).

The re-discovery of the past has also increased the popularity of cultural differences and identity politics. The more people explore the details of the past, the more they discover new sensitivities, creating awareness in terms of cultural or national belonging. A nostalgia industry springs up, approaching the past like the attic of an old house, rummaging through it for anything strange and beautiful. However, the past cannot be re-discovered on its own terms; it is always reproduced and interpreted by means of the aims and expectations of today (Neyzi, 2011, p. 11).

In everyday life, discovering the past takes many different forms, such as reviving old traditions, constructing new words for cultural definitions, or celebrating long-forgotten events. The discovery of the past gained momentum in Istanbul Jewry with the 500th year celebrations, and an example of the cultural revival in the community was the naming of their ethnic language. Istanbul Jewry did not recognize the name Ladino for their language until the 1990s. Before this, it was known in the community as *Musevice* (the language of *Musevi* people). The word *Musevice* was widely used during the periods when Istanbul Jewry sought to preserve its status as a closed community, and the language was thought to be spoken only by Istanbul Jewry. Of this, Mrs. K. narrated a remarkable story:

> For our Passover supper I invited the director of Cervantes Institute who is a close friend of mine . . . That night my sister's parents-in-law were also invited. [They] are not educated people and they speak only Spanish. They speak a mangled Turkish. Anyway, Pablo arrived and he started to speak with them in Spanish . . . You see, they realized that he was talking [to them] and they could understand but there was something weird. Then they asked me "Is he a Jew?" I said no, and as soon as I said so they started to speak with him in Turkish. I asked why they spoke in Turkish and they said, "How do we know if he could understand us?" And I said, "Come on, he's Spanish—of course he will understand!" I mean, we have funny situations like this. It is as if only the Jews can understand this language. I mean, such a view exists. (interview, 22 December 2011)

As a result of the opening up to wider society with the quincentennial celebrations, the term "Ladino" was coined to emphasize the Latin and European roots of the language. In a similar way, as a result of the increase in

the interaction between Jewish people globally, the word Ladino also emphasized Istanbul Jews sense of their cultural difference from other Jewish communities.

The rediscovery of past culture also creates new sensitivities in terms of cultural self-definition, expressed in the construction of new terms and social rules. For example, while the use of some words can create conflict within a society, others can have positive connotations. In Istanbul Jewry, such a struggle over words occurs between the words *Musevi* and *Yahudi*; both of which mean "Jewish". Yet the word Yahudi had become a pejorative word for the community while Musevi was seen as a "kind" word. There was little agreement among the interviewees about the reasons for this difference. Seventy-five-year-old Mrs. G. described the difference itself:

> For some reason, we used to call ourselves Musevi. It was as if Yahudi belonged to a plebeian class. Musevi was like a special class. Later, there was a reaction against this difference between Yahudi and Musevi. As I said, there is actually no difference, but Yahudi was used as a pejorative word. A reaction occurred in the youth 20-30 years ago. What does it mean to say Yahudi or Musevi? If we are Yahudi we are Yahudi. They started to say Yahudi as an act of rebellion . . . they turned Yahudi into a challenge. In my youth, if you called someone a Yahudi, she or he would be offended. In the identity card, it is written as Musevi, not Yahudi. (interview, 29 December, 2011)

In a similar way, Mrs. S. explains her understanding of the distinction between Yahudi and Musevi:

> Yahudi sounds pejorative to me. For example, I know these statements: cowardly Yahudi, dirty Yahudi . . . So I would say we are Musevi, not Yahudi. It was something I had a complex about because we know ourselves as Musevi and people speak Musevice. Terms like Yahudi were produced only recently. (interview, 24 June 2012)

The conflict over the meaning of these two words didn't just concern Istanbul Jewry; it arose as a result of interactions with majority society which often used the word Yahudi as an insult to mean "tight-fisted", or "dirty". However, the social struggle over these words often became tragi-comic; Mr. D. related an anecdote to explain the difference, the truth of which he was unsure. According

to the story, when the violinist Yehudi Menuhin came to Turkey, a newspaper wrote his name as 'Musevi Menuhin' in order not to offend him (interview, 14 May, 2012). Unlike other interviewees of his generation, Mr. D. described the difference between the words in terms of their ethnic and religious roots:

> Yahudilik actually refers to Judea—that is to say, a region in Palestine and those who originated from that region. Therefore, it is an ethnic word. Musevi means following Moses—that is, a religion. For example, in Iran, the name Musevi is very common. The family name of Khomeini is Ruhullah Musevi. (interview, 14 May 2012)

Only Mr. D.'s definition of these two words reached down to their roots, and others were generally unconscious of their etymology. Moreover, the difference in the usage of Yahudi/Musevi was generational in Istanbul Jewry. Although the older generation still tends to use Musevi instead of Yahudi, the younger generation did not recognize such a strict distinction. For example, Mr. B. (26) knew about the difference but did not recognize it. However, like many of her peers, Mrs. S. (62) still uses the word Musevi, and emphasized her confusion about the new uses of these words:

> When you look at the Musevi people in Turkey today they have new definitions for themselves. They have accepted being Yahudi. What happened? We did not like being Yahudi; we were not Yahudi. It was said that Yahudi would not be said. Now, we all accepted the word Yahudi. It is okay, all right. There was no such word as Ladino. What is Ladino? I swear we did not know what Ladino was. It all happened recently. (interview, 24 June 2012)

She went on to say that, as well as new words, they also had new festivals to celebrate. She gave the example of Hanukkah:

> Ah! How did they remember to celebrate Hanukkah? Now, the community is searching for itself. Hanukkah! When my son went to the USA in 2000, he returned with Hanukkah songs. "It's Hanukkah, Hanukkah!" I said, my dear son, what is this Hanukkah, Hanukkah? My grandmother had a Hanukkah candle in the kitchen. I swear, she did not use it even once in her life. Even her! . . . There was no idea of Hanukkah. (interview, 24 June 2012)

Mrs. S. especially emphasizes the fact that her grandmother did not use the Hanukkah candle because she was a very traditional and uneducated Jewish woman who just spoke Ladino and some Greek. All these newly discovered

terms and sensitivities are constructed categories which function to fix free-floating identities. People are made aware of these categories and they thus become conscious experience against the background of an unspoken existence.

3.2. Language as an Identity Marker

As modern nation-states were built, national languages replaced the ethnic languages. These national languages had global functional significance and were regarded as superior by their associated political ideologies. Selecting a national language was a necessary step in the construction of national identity. However, adopting one particular language did not always mean adopting a particular political ideology because language changes cannot infuse all parts of collective consciousness. Since language mediates between past and present, it provides a repository for a group's collective identity, which is also rooted in a national territory (Chriost, 2004, p. 151). Furthermore, whether it is used or not, most people feel a degree of attachment to their ancestral language.

When people give up one language and acquire a new one, they may transfer part of their former language into the new one, consciously or unconsciously. For example, Ladino, which has roots in Spanish, also contains many words from Ottoman Turkish, French, and other minority languages spoken around it. These borrowings are also indicators of social integration for a community.

Language influences the way people conceive themselves. For Ricoeur, "Language contains specific connecting units that allow us to designate individuals . . . One language may make finer distinctions than another in some particular area, and this corresponds to the respective features of each natural language" (1994, p. 27). Like a traditional costume, language identifies those who belong to a particular group (Dorian, 1999, p. 31). Spoken language is a marker of identity, but it is not its essential defining feature; other markers that have similar effects can replace language. Moreover, a group identity can be constructed by means of multiple languages, on the condition that this is politically and socially permissible.

For Istanbul Jewry, their being Turkish was measured by their approach to Turkish and their way of speaking it. Their accented Turkish often functioned as a marker and set them apart from the rest of the society. Unlike most of her generation, Mrs. S. now speaks very fluent, good Turkish, but she related one memory that went directly to the heart of the issue:

> 15 years ago we moved to Çengelköy . . . I went to the pharmacy and asked for something. There was an old man sitting there. He said "Madam where are you from?" I asked him why. "Your Turkish is a bit different." Then, the pharmacist lady said, "She is not Muslim, it is because of that." For the first time, I thought that my Turkish might sound different, and since that day, I have been pretty anxious about it. I know for sure that I do not speak like a Musevi, but I thought that there was no immigrant Turkish accent or sound in my Turkish. Probably there was something unusual in my speech to make the man ask me. It is not good; it is not nice because I am Turkish. But, of course, you get uncomfortable if there are those little emphases. (interview, 24 June 2012)

The languages people speak create awareness of belonging and difference. Speaking Ladino, French or an accented Turkish identifies someone as a Sephardic Jew, and this helps Jews to identify who belongs to their community. However, when they utter even a single word from their ethnic language or speak an accented Turkish, they also become different in the eyes of members of other ethnic groups, or those who speak no Ladino. Young Istanbul Jews speak a very fluent Turkish and are well-integrated into majority society, but being indistinguishable from the majority is not the final solution to the problem because of the differentiating reactions from mainstream society. Mrs. K. explained:

> As a result of the language, we knew that we were different since birth. Because, in the simplest term, nobody else spoke the way we did. But it is not the same now. Since people now consider themselves equal, when problems happen, it's a big trauma . . . because our generation expects [less]. I mean, it does not make a difference. We are different after all, and this could happen. But, in the new generation, many of them are not even aware that they are different because we tried to raise them that way. At least, I did so. But when something happens, my daughter feels very upset and confused. She says "how come?" But these things happen, and you have difficulty in explaining them. (interview, 22 December 2011)

When asked about the reason for this "trauma", Mrs. K. asked: "If we are that similar, why there are there such discourses in the country against me and people like me?" (interview, 22 December 2011).

Speaking an ethnic language also endows its speakers with collective consciousness, often making people's perception of who and what they are clearer. As Miss. E. stated:

> Language is like a separator. I mean, it of course makes you different from the rest of society, but, at the same time, it gives you a nucleus of culture [in which] there are proverbs and, idioms, which are the things that make you Sephardim. (interview, 29 December 2011)

Similarly, Mr. M. explained why his ethnic language had implications for his sense of cultural identity:

> For example, when I went to Israel for the first time—I only went once anyway—since I do not know a word of Hebrew, it was very difficult for me to relate to the country. Interestingly, when I went to Spain, since I know the language, I had more contact with the country and the city . . . because you feel closer to the thing whose language you can understand. Since I do not know a word of Hebrew, Jerusalem seemed to me just a cult, religious place, and a symbolic country where religions meet. However, as I said, I felt more sense of belonging in Spain. The roots of my past were there before the fifteenth century. (interview, 19 April 2012)

As a result of the demographic changes in Istanbul today, the function of language as an identity marker is no longer as visible as it was. In other words, the cosmopolitan structure of Istanbul does not allow the differences between people to be determined through the languages they speak or their accented Turkish. This is because the number of people speaking Turkish with a local accent is very high, and it has actually turned into one of the city's key characteristics.

3.3. Naming

Personal names are often the signs through which people get their very first impression of each other. Names are the book-covers of existence. It is through names that people are initially identified, and names reveal the initial core

information about people's ethnic, social, religious or cultural identities. As Paul Ricoeur points out:

> Once again, the privilege accorded the proper names assigned to humans has to do with their subsequent role in confirming their identity and their selfhood. And even if in ordinary language proper names do not completely fill their role, at least their aim is indeed to designate in each case one individual to the exclusion of all the others in the class considered. (1994, p. 29)

In Istanbul Jewry, the practice of giving names to children has historically had a strategy-tactic relationship towards the impositions of the Turkish state or the requirements of the Alliance Israelite Universelle. As Michel de Certeau puts it, "there are countless ways of 'making do'" (1988, p. 29), and Istanbul Jewry has usually found a way around these impositions.

According to Certeau, *strategy* is that which has a place of its own and "is organized by the postulation of power" (1988, p. 38), and is thus able to produce taboos, impositions, power or discipline. However, *tactics* are not defined according to place and do not obey the rules of place. They have neither a time nor place of their own, but act according to the proper and artful use of time. Tactics have their own way of doing things and can manipulate and divert the taboos or impositions created by strategies. The naming practices of Istanbul Jewry show that, as a result of the impositions of the Turkish state, they altered their tradition but managed to remain within it. For example, to adjust their names to the law requiring the use of Turkish family names, Jewish families changed one or two letters from their family name or used another name that had a similar meaning.

Historically, the changes in naming practices sheds light on the transformation that occurred in Istanbul Jewry. For example, "Hayim" is a traditional Jewish first name which means life in Hebrew. Under the influence of the Alliance Israelite Universelle's Eurocentrism, people began to use "Vitali", an Italian word for the vital, the animating principle of living beings. Finally, with the foundation of the Republic of Turkey, people started to use "Vedat" or "Hayati", which are Turkish names again meaning life or related to life. Another example of changing naming practice is the use of Avraham, which is Hebrew, Albert,

which is French and Alper, which is Turkish. As for family names, the community traditionally used the names of the places that they lived while they were in Spain, like Toledo, Castelliano or Seville. For example, according to Mrs. F., the original owners of *Sevil Parfümeri*, a cosmetic company in Turkey, had Seville as their family name (interview, 23 May, 2012).

The important point in the use of three names that have different origins but similar meanings is the fact that they can be used simultaneously depending on the situation and interlocutor. Mrs. F. stresses the hardships in naming practices because of the problems in the official institutions. She identified two tendencies in naming practices in Istanbul Jewry about the naming practices: the first group give Turkish names in order to conceal their identity, and the second group want to protect their original names or roots (interview, 23 May, 2012). She added that:

> We have tradition of naming children after elders; no matter whether they are alive or dead. Now, we also have the problem of the Surname Law. My family name is Efron, but I am not an Efron officially; I am Çiçek. In 1934, my father-in-law went to the registrar to officially record the family name. He had been a Efron for centuries! He said the family name was Efron. However, everybody was giving something to the officer—I do not know how true it is, they say so—and took names like Sefron, Lefron . . . but at least Efron is there. My father-in-law was not such a man. The officer said Efron was not acceptable; you had to give a Turkish name. What did he do? He had a neighbor named Çiçek and recorded it as Çiçek. But all of our relatives abroad are Efron. (interview, 23 May, 2012)[3]

Mrs. F. added that neither she nor her husband had adjusted to their Turkish family name, and everybody knew them as Efron in the community. However, her children did not have any problem with using it, proving the fact of generational differences in Istanbul Jewry.

[3] All names have been changed to protect anonymity.

3.4. Mixed Marriages

Mixed marriages are the stuff of nightmares for most ethnic communities, no matter how large their population. The reason behind their disapproval of mixed marriages is basically the fear of assimilation. For religious communities, there is also a concern related to their religious sensitivities.

Mixed marriages are also signs of the degree of interaction between different communities and integration into majority society. Until the foundation of the Republic of Turkey and the inurement of the Law of Settlement, though communities lived close to each other, they did not have much interaction in everyday life. It was generally the men who were the public faces of the communities, and women spent most of their time in the private sphere. In addition to the social, economic or political reasons for this invisibility and limited interaction, there was also the fear of inter-communal love affairs, which would open the doors of the communities to each other. Arranged, early marriages could also be a sign of this anxiety about mixed marriages. In Istanbul Jewry, the normal age to marry was approximately nineteen for girls and twenty-four for boys.

Over time, the negative reaction to mixed marriages has decreased as the boundaries between the communities have loosened, but it is still a point of hesitation. Sixty-five-year-old Mrs. F. was proud of her traditions and suspicious of mixed marriage:

> In the past, it was rejected, but it isn't anymore. People have gotten used to it now. But nobody is infatuated with it. I think it is so for the other side as well. Nobody is infatuated with it. I mean, everybody has the burden of maintaining his or her generation, and origins. The reaction is huge. Many serious problems occur with the children, because they cannot be circumcised. Religion is passed down through the mother in our tradition. I mean, if the mother is Jewish, it is easier. (interview, 23 May 2012)

In Istanbul Jewry, the reaction to mixed marriages varies according to generation. In general, the younger generation has more interaction with wider society and so tends to consider mixed marriages more normal than their elders. However, religious sensitivities create exceptions across the age groups.

For example, seventy-five-year-old Mrs. G. had a mixed marriage herself, and claimed that she and her husband did not encounter any problem in their marriage, which she explained by both their lack of religion and the existence of foreign brides in her husband's family. She told the story of her marriage as follows:

> In my first marriage, I married a Jewish man. It was not a good marriage. After three years, it resulted in divorce, and I was already thirty. In our time, thirty was regarded as old. Therefore, my decision to remarry made [my parents] happy. I learned afterwards that [they] had talked to each other. My father had said, "She wants to marry a Turk. What shall we do?" And my mother said "If they have decided, they are going to marry anyway. If we stand against it, it will be bad. We have only one daughter and if we do not want to lose her, we should accept." But they didn't tell us about this. We saw only their voluntary acceptance. (interview, 29 December, 2011)

Mrs. G. is an exception for her generation because merely being unreligious may not always mean a family is well disposed to mixed marriage—even if the subjects feels and sees themselves as fully integrated into the Turkish society. Sixty-two-year-old Mrs. S. had a father who was indifferent to Sephardic traditions and tried to raise his children as Turks in every sense. She states the reaction of her father as follows:

> All of my friends were Muslim. I mean, of course, if you raise your daughter in these conditions, this is what she will do. And one day, a friend of mine started to call me more often. It was clear that that boy and me were dating . . . After he found out, my father said being friends with a Muslim boy is all right but your date should be Jewish. It was very important. This was the first time . . . at the age of nineteen, I was faced with my father's opinion on this for the first time. (interview, 24 June 2012)

However, she further stated that her father's harsh reaction surrendered to the time; her brother married a Swiss girl, her son a Muslim girl whose mother is Greek, and her cousin to an English girl. The rise in the mixed marriages in Mrs. S.'s family shows their degree of integration into majority and international society. However, this degree of integration can also become a reason to avoid mixed marriages. Feeling the burden of maintaining their roots may take new forms depending on where they live.

Those that migrated to Israel from Turkey live close to each other and have a community there, like other national groups there, and the first generations there tended to marry those from similar backgrounds. Mrs. F. shared a true story from her family about this situation:

> My aunt certainly searched for brides who have Turkish origins for her sons—I am talking about Israel. Both of them were born in Israel, but their mother came from Turkey. I mean, at least these girls have a Turkish education. My aunt is 88 now, and she was able to find Turkish brides for her sons. I mean, they are that Turkish. And they talk in Turkish among themselves. (interview, 23 May 2012)

In the current situation, the rise in mixed marriages in Istanbul Jewry depends basically on demographic differences, the decline in the population and the low birth rate. While they were living close to each other, people did not have a choice to marry people outside their community. However, as the community opened its doors to wider society through education and communication technologies, closer relations began and the young generation now sees mixed marriages as normal.

CHAPTER IV: Speaking Memories

I have an interesting story. Some people do not believe it. I was in my second year in primary school. One day, our teacher did not show up and some other teacher came to the class. Actually, we didn't do anything that day. At one stage, friends were telling jokes in the class. Everybody came to the board and told a joke. There was a boy, Cihat, he told a joke, starting "there were three Jews". I found this joke very funny and told this to another boy in our apartment who was in my age. Then, he gave me a dirty look and said "we are Jews". I could not understand it at first because I did not know what "Jew" meant... I thought it meant student because I was identifying myself as such. Afterwards, I went upstairs and told the joke to my father. He did not smile. Then, he told me the meaning of Jew. Until that day, I knew I was different, but I didn't know what this difference was. (Mr. D, interview, 14 May 2012)

> *I will tell you something very interesting [about] Ferruh Kethüda Mosque in Balat. In the past, the houses were not like skyscrapers. The mosque was, let's say, two streets away. There was no traffic, no proper roads—everywhere was silent. We always heard the mosque form our home. And I have a fondness to the sound of azan, despite myself. Twenty-five years ago, there was an azan program on the radio. My children said, enough mum, why does it concern you? How can I explain . . . It is like an invitation to God. But, for example when I see a Priest's program on TV in some foreign channel, it does not concern me. I mean it does not grab my attention because it does not carry a trace from childhood. There is a trace from my childhood [in the azan]. (Mrs. F., interview, 23 May 2012)*

There are different modes of remembering for every individual, in every society and in every culture. Thus, *how* something is remembered is as important as *what* is remembered. Different groups of people may remember identical events differently because different cultural tools can mediate the functioning of memory. Memory is not just related to how people remember themselves; it is

also related to how other people remember them. As Maurice Halbwachs says, "It is in society that people normally acquire their memories. It is also in society that they recall, recognize, and localize their memories" (1992, p. 38). It is in this respect that there exists a social framework for memory and a collective memory (Halbwachs, 1992, p. 38).

Any language brings with itself a world of its own. In its multilingual historical life experience, Istanbul Jewry has absorbed the worlds of the languages its members speak without radically altering their Jewish identity. In other words, through the influence of language changes, Istanbul Jews have transformed themselves as they have continually had to adapt to the changing society they live in. However, this language change has not greatly affected their collective memory, and their religious and ethnic identity has not changed radically as a result. Most of the time, the religious and historical roles that Judaism plays in the construction and maintenance of Istanbul Jewry's identity outweigh the impact of linguistic changes. Thus, in the case of Istanbul Jewry, it is possible to talk about two forms of memory; a "communicative memory" (Assmann, 2008) that lives in the languages they use and a "cultural memory" (Assman, 2008) shaped by their religion and its cultural interpretation and which the changing languages cannot touch or alter.

The main reason for investigating the traces of memory in Istanbul Jewry is the importance of "remembering" for the Jewish people in terms of protecting and maintaining their cultural and ethnic identities. Pierre Nora names the Jewish people the "people of memory" and says, "In this tradition, which has no other history than its own memory, to be Jewish is to remember" (1989, p. 16). In this sense, it can be said that the language of Jews' being is "to remember". In other words, their being is grounded on the idea of remembering and they reinforce this with the "double writing" of pedagogical and performative acts. As J. Rodriguez and T. Fortier also point out:

> Remembering has been a key to survival for Jews, whose identity has long been bound up with oppression and resistance. The key memory for the Jewish community is told in the story of Exodus, which has been the guiding myth for Jewish identity. (2007, p. 4)

This being the case, even if Jews change their languages, this does not diminish their Jewish identity. However, since changing languages do affect their everyday life practices, a tension occurs between protecting their cultural identity as it is and assimilating into the majority society.

The demand to assimilate in the majority society is worked out through the transformation of the communicative device of language. As J. G. Pocock says:

> Our language assigns us roles, either directly or indirectly; to reshape language so as to reshape myself is to reshape another's self, both by changing the ways in which I appear and perform in his universe and by changing the ways in which he can define himself. (1984, p. 39)

So, for Istanbul Jews, it becomes not only a political, but also a philosophical, cultural and technical problem when they are expected to use less Ladino, speak good Turkish, understand Turkish, and act Turkish in everyday life.

Language allows the memory to speak. If, as Heidegger says, "language is the house of Being", in this house Istanbul Jewry, like Jewish communities all around the world, is multilingual, has a history and memory of exile, lives with the Holocaust discourse and the politics of Israel that affect their worldview and lives. The way that all these factors are interpreted reveals the implications of a diasporic existence which is reinforced by Judaism and their collective memory as a Jewish community. In following the traces of Istanbul Jews' collective and individual memory, the purpose of this chapter is to examine the ways in which their diasporic cultural identity is produced.

1. Traces of Memory

Memory can be described as a socially constructed property of individual minds. Although people may live in the same territory or feel themselves as a part of the same nation, since their experiences are different, they remember different things according to their ethnicity, class, gender or age. Halbwachs says:

> Memory gives us the illusion of living in the midst of groups which do not imprison us, which impose themselves on us only so far and so long as we accept them. If certain memories are inconvenient or burden us, we can always oppose to them the sense of reality inseparable from our present life. (1992, p. 50)

Memory necessitates a revival, a return to the past, but, says Beatriz Sarlo, the return of the past is not always a redemptive moment of remembering; it can also rear its head to attack the present (2012, p. 9).

Pierre Nora defines modern memory as archival. In this sense, memory relies simply on the materiality of the trace, recording or visible image (1989, p. 13). He also points out the difference between true memory, which is hidden in the gestures, habits and skills passed down by unspoken traditions, and memory seized by history and transformed by it (1989, p. 13). Historical memory requires social groups to redefine their identities and to remember to protect the trappings of their identity. For Nora, "To understand the force and appeal of this sense of obligation, perhaps we should think of Jewish memory, which has recently been revived among many non-practicing Jews" (1989, p. 16). Thus, modern memory operates through the aspects of archive and duty and the case of Jewish people supports this suggestion very well. As Y. H. Yerushalmi points out:

> The collective memories of the Jewish people were a function of the shared faith, cohesiveness, and will of the group itself, transmitting and recreating its past through an entire complex of interlocking social and religious institutions that functioned organically to achieve this. (1982, p. 94)

1.1 Individual and Collective Memories

Although memory is for the present, the experience related to it is based to a great extent on knowledge about the past. People are born into a collective discourse of rules, regulations, roles, values, and tales which are passed on to new generations through the family, school and other institutions. In other words, the construction of individual memory and thus identity is realized and preserved through the medium of narrative. These narrative patterns influence people's experiences and shape the meaning of their lives.

The link between individual and collective memory is intrinsic; these two realms are intertwined. The link between individual memory and collective memory maybe a word, an image or a specific thing that makes something erupt in consciousness. Depending on time and place, this eruption can present itself

as an otherness and can make a claim on the individual subject in terms of belonging.

Istanbul Jewry remembers. Even if its members do not put what they remember into words publicly or openly, they do remember. The past, with its sorrow and happy moments, is stored in all their memories. The community's public silence about its memories is a rightful silence, because living in the past and always talking about it would raise a paranoid generation. However, sometimes a word, song or action can take the past from its hiding place and bring it into the present. For Mr. D., whose father lost all of his family in the Second World War:

> He had a big library and half of his books were related to the Second World War. One day, I remember—I was very little so I don't feel any guilt about it—while I was talking I said Alfred Hitler. My father was nearly going to faint to see how it could be forgotten in one generation! Because, for my father, Adolf Hitler was the man that directed his life and I didn't even know his name, I mean his first name. My father overreacted at me about how these things could be forgotten in one generation. A great deal of my father's identity was the Second World War. (interview, 14 May, 2012)

However, the past does not always necessarily show itself as harboring bad memories. Actually, on the individual level, memory tends to cover the traces of bad events in time and bring the good ones forward.

In Istanbul Jewry, individual and collective memory manifest themselves in terms of being both Jewish and being Jewish in a majority Muslim society. Therefore, the collective memory of the large society separately or their experience with the Jewish people as a minority group, is also inclusive in this process of memory construction. On the collective level, there are some prejudices against the Jewish people in majority society and Istanbul Jewry is also aware of these prejudices. Moreover, since being Turk, or being from Turkey is generally associated with Sunni Islam, when people realize that Istanbul Jews' names or accents are not familiar they immediately ask "aren't you Turkish?" Thus, when viewed from this aspect, Turkish national identity appears as both inclusive and exclusive. When citizenship is based on having secular and modern values, Turkish identity is inclusive, but when it is based on

only one language and one ethnic belonging associated with one religious heritage, Turkish identity becomes exclusive (Neyzi, 2011, p.23).

However, it is also possible to find the traces of individual friendships between Turkish Muslims and Istanbul Jews, which shows that these prejudices exist on the collective level, and do not always affect the individual level. Mrs. F.'s memory of the 6-7 September events is just one example among the many:

> I experienced the 6-7 September events. On 6-7 September, Balat and Ayvansaray were incredible . . . My mom was eight months pregnant with my brother. We had neighbors, Raziye Hanım and Ethem Effendi. They were our next-door neighbors. They would always fight with my mom about petty things like, "You poured water to my garden!" or "Your tree makes a shadow in my garden!" I mean, they would grumble to each other. That night, Raziye Hanım, Ethem Effendi and their children put their chairs on to our door and hung up a lamp. "You cannot enter. You cannot do anything. This place is mine." We, I swear, look as I speak I shudder, because I will never forget it. I was eight years old. We were hiding behind the iron bar and we were watching Ethem Effendi protecting us outside. (interview, 23 May, 2012)

Mrs. F. further says:

> We lived in close contact with wider society who we call our Muslim brothers. My marriage witness was Ahmet Koyuncu. Think how intertwined we were! They had a minibus working between Sarıyer and Taksim. They didn't work nights. On summer nights, they would call to my mom "Come on Ester, we are going to have tea in Sarıyer or in Emirgan. On Pesah, our Passover festival, neighbors would bring our bread and yoghurt . . . I mean, the first bread we are going to eat after the Passover. That is to say, we shared many things. (interview, 23 May, 2012)

Mrs. F. strongly believes that the hardships experienced in the past are of foreign origin and have nothing to do with the Turkish people. Although she experienced the 6-7 September events and the bombing of the synagogue *Neva Şalom*, she never lost her belief in the majority. She emphasized the deep friendships between two sides and did not blame the local people.

For Assmann, in order to include and emphasize the cultural sphere in the study of memory, it is possible to divide memory into cultural and communicative strands (Assmann, 2008, pp. 109-118). Cultural memory is a form of collective

memory and is institutional with stable characteristics. On the other hand, communicative memory is non-institutional, non-formalized and exists in everyday interaction and communication (p. 111). Yet the boundary between cultural and communicative memory is not impermeable, and transitions between the two can change their patterns over time.

These days, the communicative memory of Istanbul Jewry is basically Turkish, and in this sense they are often unable to find common ground in everyday communication with other Jews around the world. However, their cultural memory is shaped according to the doctrines and rituals of Judaism, and it is this that enables them to connect with Jews in other countries. The cultural memory of Istanbul Jewry, nourished by Judaism, includes mythical history and absolute past events. This cultural memory is transmitted through rituals and various kinds of performances either in Hebrew or Ladino. However, Istanbul Jewry's communicative memory is more focused on a recent past embodied by informal tradition and everyday life practices.

1.2 The Pedagogical and Performative Aspects of Jewish Memory

A process of natural selection is applied to memories, and while some of them continue to live on, others are repressed and even discarded. The idea of myth is also connected to that of memory. A myth smooths over the complexity of historical events or their contradictions and creates easily-remembered and memorized stories. Together, myth and memory condition action. As Bell says, "Myth, as a story, simplifies, dramatizes and selectively narrates the story of a nation's past and its place in the world, its historical eschatology: a story that elucidates its contemporary meaning through (re) constructing its past" (2003, p. 75). So, myth is also part of collective memory, but the feelings and reactions of those that experience this memory and those that learn about it later are different. Homi Bhabha describes this as the production of the nation as narration:

> There is a split between the continuist, accumulative temporality of the pedagogical, and the repetitious, recursive strategy of the performative. It is through this process of splitting that the

> conceptual ambivalence of modern society becomes the site of writing the nation. (1990, p. 297)

The pedagogical aspect, according to Bhabha, has to do with the myths of origin and other narratives that tell people who they are, where they come from and what made their nation as it is now. In other words, it "founds its narrative authority in a tradition of the people" (p. 299). The performative aspect is about the day-to-day reproduction of nationhood by means of certain rituals.

> This supplementary space of cultural signification that opens up—and holds together—the performative and the pedagogical, provides a narrative structure characteristic of modern political rationality: the marginal integration of individuals in a repetitious movement between the antinomies of law and order. It is from the liminal movement of the culture of the nation—at once opened up and held together—that minority discourse emerges. (p. 305)

In Jewish culture, the memory of the community does not depend only on its historians. It is the religious and communal duty of the people to be historians of their own memories. According to Yerushalmi, the collective memories of the Jewish people depend on shared faith, cohesiveness, and transmission of the past through interlocking social and religious institutions (1982, p. 94). Thus, the core of the Jewish identity is constructed though the religious historical events which are reflected in the Old Testament and the prayer book. For P. Connerton, "While its basic elements remain identical throughout the Diaspora, in almost every country, the details of the prayer book bear the impress of the local conditions to which the Jewish community in the country in question was subjected" (1989, p. 45) Thereby, in both the Old Testament and the prayer book, "remembrance" becomes a technical concept that recalls the great historical events that shaped the early life of Jewish people (Connerton, 1989, p. 46). For example, the Passover, one of the most important annual festivals of the Jewish calendar, explicitly reminds the people of the exodus from Egypt and refreshes their memory. As Yerushalmi further argues:

> The basic rituals of remembrance were still those, which, biblical in origin, had been significantly expanded in rabbinic halakhah. These provided a shared network of practices around which clustered the common memories of the people as a whole. And so the great historical festivals of Passover, the Feast of Weeks and Tabernacles remained central, but these did not exhaust the

> historical conjunctions of the Jewish calendar. There was Purim, with its festive reading of the Book of Esther, and Hanukkah, sometimes accompanied by the so-called *Megillat Antiochus* (the "Scroll of Antiochus"). (1982, p. 40)

Notable in this process is the language used in the religious texts, which directly address the Jewish people in the first person singular "I" (like "I left Egypt", "I left Jerusalem"), rather than an ancestral "they" or a collective "we" (p. 44). Thus, reciting these lines, the first person singular pronoun enables the individual to oscillate between an individual memory and collective memory.

Besides these religious recitals, in the narratives of Istanbul Jewry it is possible to find their Spanish roots, which live on in their family names, folk songs, proverbs, stories of hardship or good days in Turkey, and Holocaust discourse, which includes museums, movies and visiting concentration camps. In all these ways, Istanbul Jews reinforce their sense of having existed in the world as a community for thousands of years.

Jewish collective memory is most actively transmitted through rituals, ceremonies, and other performative acts. "Memory" says Yerushalmi "flowed, above all, through two channels: ritual and recital" (1982, p. 11). Like myths, rituals can be seen as symbolic texts. They narrate the cultural values embodied within language using the body and augment the communication situation with actions. What is remembered in rituals or ceremonies is that the community's identity as told in a master narrative (Connerton, 1989, p. 70). Thus, for Yerushalmi:

> True, Joseph had lived many years ago, but in the fixed rhythm of the synagogal recital he is in prison this week, next week he will be released, next year in the very same season both events will be narrated once more, and so again in every year to come. (1982, p. 42)

This is also a variant of individual memory that makes sense of the past in a kind of collective autobiography (Connerton, 1989, p. 70).

Through the "double writing" of the "pedagogical" and the "performative" in their lives, Istanbul Jewry has adapted religious rules to its everyday life practices and as a result of which a transformation and a decline occurs in their

religious collective memory. For example, when the community lived gathered around the synagogues, Istanbul Jewry had the chance to conduct their religious duties according to the requirements of the religion. In the modern city, using a car to reach a distant synagogue breaches the religious injunction not to use energy on the Sabbath or festival days. Thus, while performing an aspect of religion by praying in the synagogue, they must reinterpret and convert tradition. Or, in other words, they practice the religion of their elders as they see it. As Mrs. F. stated:

> I do not follow all the requirements of my religion, but I eat halal meat. I do not light a fire on Saturdays. Because, since I married at an early age, I saw that my mother-in-law did it that way because I lived with them. There was this tradition and I carried it up to today. My children also eat halal meat, but that's all. I mean, I don't know whether we carry it like a label. (interview, 23 May, 2012)

There are also cases where people discovered and adopted religious practices at a later age. Mrs. S. had begun to observe the Sabbath:

> I have discovered that we need to celebrate Sabbaths. Every Friday night I light my candles and say my prayers, whatever the hour is. My husband also accepts this. I also say Sabbath Shalom to my children and perform my duty. (interview, 24 June 2012)

Mrs. S. and Mrs. F.'s experiences of religion are common in Istanbul Jewry. However, as it is dependent on demographic factors and population decline, commitment to Jewish religion and culture is declining in younger generations. Istanbul Jews are now looking for and producing new forms to keep their traditions alive in the face of increased secularization, which is the result of the modernization process they have experienced both through the Alliance and reforms and revolutions of the Turkish Republic.

1.3. The Language of Memory in Istanbul Jewry

The capacity to speak, being part of our biological heritage, is universal and therefore not a distinctive characteristic of human beings (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 55). What is distinctive is the way human beings communicate. However, the way human individuals communicate is not purely of their own making. As Pocock says, every individual speaks with many voices, "like a tribal shaman in

whom the ancestor ghosts are all talking at once; when we speak, we are not sure who is talking or what is being said, and our acts of power in communication are not wholly our own" (1984, p. 29).

Halbwach points out that intelligible words are the precondition for collective thought, and every intelligible word is accompanied by recollections (1992, p. 173). Thus, according to him, "It is language, and the whole system of social conventions attached to it, that allows us at every moment to reconstruct our past" (p. 173). Language allows memory to speak, and memory speaks through a language that is inherited. Language is thus not just a communication tool; it also includes a way of life. Language is the only realm in which these experiences exist and take new forms. As Derrida says, "One cannot speak of generations of skulls or spirits except on the condition of language—and the voice" (2006, p. 9).

However, although the content of the memory is determined to an extent through the spoken language, the effects of language on memory are debatable. Adopting a particular language does not necessarily mean adopting one given way of thinking or political ideology (Safran, 1999, p. 80). Although language plays an important role in the protection of collective identity and communal bonds, it is not in itself sufficient. Therefore, instead of conducting a quixotic argument about whether language depends on thought or vice versa, suffice it to say that they are in mutual interaction.

The replacement of a vernacular language that the Jewish people speak does not necessarily mean a radical decline of Jewish identity or culture and its replacement by the nationalism of the acquired language. For Jewish people generally, and also for Istanbul Jewry, it is religion rather than language that is the main ingredient of their identity. In this respect, it can be said that Istanbul Jews' identity is not dependent solely on Ladino, but on being Jewish and multilingual.

However, for Istanbul Jewry, on the collective level, memory waits to be discovered in songs, rituals, stories, proverbs or ceremonies. According to Rodrigues and Fortier, personally, individuals discover their cultural memory

through crisis, while, collectively, individuals discover their cultural memory though songs, rituals or other mediating forms (2007, p. xii). Mrs S. narrated a moment of return to the past, when hearing Ladino songs from childhood had caused remarkable joy. Mrs. S.'s father had rejected his ethnic roots to a great extent and was always very strict about being a proper Turkish citizen. However, on hearing old Ladino songs on his birthday:

> Oh my God, he cried, he smiled . . . They were just Ladino songs. He was very happy. I understood then that he did not feel harshly towards them any longer . . . And he said to me, "My dear, you made me happier than last year, you brought my childhood to me." (interview, 24 June 2012)

It is through the language of memory that the past visited Mrs. S.'s father because it is through language that memory imposes the necessary feelings upon the emotional message (Rodriguez & Fortier, 2007, p. 10).

1. 4. The Holocaust

The Holocaust has rising importance in constituting the basis of collective memory for Jewish people. Holocaust memoirs have become a resource through which contemporary Jewish identity is built and protected. The Holocaust left behind a feeling of emptiness, and people fill this emptiness with movies and documentaries or by paying visits to the concentration camps. According to Yerushalmi "The Holocaust has already engendered more historical research than any single event in Jewish history, but I have no doubt whatever that its image is being shaped, not at the historian's anvil, but in the novelist's crucible" (Yerushalmi, 1982, p. 98).

Research on the Holocaust has been fruitful and it has become a widely discussed and remembered topic. Over time, the Holocaust has become one of the building blocks enabling identification with Jewishness. Especially when the possibility of being assimilated into a majority society is high, Jewish people feel a high degree of attachment to the Holocaust even if they did not experience it directly or in their family history, and it thus becomes a site of memory and a way to remember being Jewish. Mrs. S.'s statements about the Holocaust also

reveal the relatively recent intrusion of Holocaust discourse into the lives of Istanbul Jewry.

> Don't forget that the Holocaust story has only been revealed in the last few years. I mean, I didn't study it at school in 1960s . . . We knew of Hitler. That's all. What's Hitler? After all, we studied Turkish history. We knew that the Jews were thrown into ovens etc. But we did not really perceive its explicitness. I mean, how many concentration camps there were, where they gathered and for which reasons, or what happened afterwards. It is as if these things only started to be explained after the 1990s. (interview, 24 June, 2012)

Newspapers, television, videos or photographs are very powerful and convincing mediums for learning about the past. For Sarlo, most of the time, people confuse the information they receive through these channels with their own "memoirs" (2012, p. 82). As Derrida says, "This is what makes our experience so strange. We are spectralized by the shot, captured or possessed by spectrality in advance" (Derrida & Stiegler, 2002, p. 117). Visual media, especially movies, have a deep impact on consciousness. While watching a movie, spectators follow the camera movements with their eyes and thus identify themselves with the camera. In cinema, says Connerton:

> I am simultaneously in this action and outside of it, in this space and outside of this space; having the power of ubiquity . . . The inscriptional practice of cinema makes possible, and is in turn made possible by, the incorporating practice of the spectator. (Connerton, 1989, p. 78)

Thus, movie scenes can blur the line between reality and fiction and enable the spectators to borrow memories on the screen and make them their own. Thus, Holocaust narratives can even have a great impact on the lives of those who did not experience the Holocaust and make them feel a deep degree of attachment to it. Although they have no firsthand experience of the Holocaust, most of the interviewees in this study agreed and accepted that the Holocaust is a cornerstone of Jewish history, and that its realities should be transmitted to future generations. This need has also something to do with the "duty" to respond the memory of being Jewish. In his book, *The Other Heading*, Derrida refers to this as a "'duty' to respond to the call of European memory, to recall what has been promised under the name of Europe, to re-identify Europe"

(1992, p. 76). Recalling the Holocaust has now turned into a promise to the Jewish people to re-identify Jewishness in its own name. In this sense, Mrs F. states:

> Never forget that eighty percent of filmmakers in Hollywood are Jewish. We know that [the Holocaust] should not be forgotten in world Jewishness . . . I think it shouldn't be forgotten. It is a bitter wound for us. Recently, I have become unable to watch these movies any more. I mean, I started to get disturbed because I feel so sorry. I went to a camp in Prague. My husband said he wouldn't do it. Then, we joined another tour during our visit. On the last day we went. I wish we hadn't, because all the good memories of our visit were forgotten and just that day remained in our heads. Like we see in the movies, there were these "work is freedom" things; all the camps, built-in beds, operation tables where they castrated women. Any Jew that knows his or herself would wear the kippa and pray for them. The prayer of the dead . . . It is not easy. I mean, [these are] very bitter things. (interview, 23 May, 2012)

Mr. A. also thinks about keeping the Holocaust memory alive and transmitting it to the next generations in all of its brutality as a unique case in history. He claimed:

> A downtrodden society . . . Six million citizens died . . . There are examples of it; there are photographs. I mean, you cannot say it did not happen. Now, they say that Turkey committed genocide. If so, prove it. There is no proof. Armenians say there was genocide. Where is [the proof]? There is no such thing. There was no order given. Because there was a commandment for everything in the Ottoman Empire and it would be preserved in the state archives, even if they were secret. How would it have been possible without an official commandment? It is impossible . . . Therefore, I think every Jewish family should tell their children about the genocide. Your ancestors were exposed to genocide. You are going to view life accordingly. You suffered. You are going to stay strong. (interview, 28 June 2012)

For Mr. A., the uniqueness of the Holocaust makes it a special event; rather than being a crime against humanity it takes the form of a crime only against the Jewish people. Interestingly, however, those whose families suffered losses in the concentration camps approach the Holocaust dispassionately. In fact, remaining silent is the most common strategy among the Holocaust survivors. Mr. H. stated:

> The Holocaust is not a powerful word for me. Its political meaning is at the forefront for me. My grandfather knew where and under what circumstances each member of his family were killed. Since the Germans were very organized and recorded these things, my grandfather knew. But, for me, it is too far away. These things happened before I was born. And my grandfather would never talk about it. I think this is common . . . I mean, you cannot raise a child in fear. So, partly consciously, partly unconsciously, these things were not spoken. My grandfather would not talk about his life in Poland and his family there. After I grew up, I made him speak, and so I know about it. If I hadn't asked, I would never have known. (interview, 8 December, 2011)

Similarly, Mr. D. also experienced the Holocaust as "the generation after." He emphasized the difficulty of living with his father, whose identity was basically shaped by the Second World War. Mr. D. related his memory of a visit to the concentration camps:

> I can't remember how old I was, but I was relatively young. My father took me to Dachau. We visited the camp. I was so disturbed by the camp because it had been beautified. There were these flower things . . . they planted colorful flowers . . . Even though the Germans had faced the things they did in the war, they made the camps so beautiful. Perhaps it was to impress the tourists . . . My father was actually of the same opinion as me. Both of us found that place over-aestheticized, and not reflecting the dreadfulness of the event . . . I mean, I didn't see what a horrible thing a camp is. I wondered why the Germans had changed it so much that we couldn't see the malignancy. (interview, 14 May, 2012)

One other reason for the impact of Holocaust discourse on Istanbul Jewry were Turkey's harsh policies against minority groups during the Second World War and the anti-Semitic movements which spread rumors about the existence of big ovens in Istanbul ready to exterminate Jewish people. This period had undeniably traumatic effects upon the members of Istanbul Jewry. Also, being nearly the only Jewish community that did not suffer from the Holocaust directly, Istanbul Jewry may also suffer with a sense of the survivor guilt predominant among Holocaust survivors.

Another point about Holocaust discourse in Turkey is that the events are described by a Turkish derivative of the English word "Holocaust," *holokost*, rather than its Turkish equivalent, *soykırım,* or the Hebrew, *shoah*. The word "Holocaust" is calqued because it has a semantic density which sets it apart from

other genocides in history. The word itself taps into a collective memory that endows it with a meaning transcending its physical and geographical realities (Schick, 1999, p. 41). It also shows that Holocaust discourse in Turkey has a foreign source and operates chiefly through the widely spoken English language.

2. Diasporic Existence

Diaspora is a word that has often been used for people living outside their country either voluntarily or as a result of exile. The word is also associated with the Jewish people living outside Israel, and the ancient root of the term has to do with Jewish people. The English word diaspora has a Greek origin; *diaspeirein* (disperse) is formed from *dia* (across) and *speirein* (scatter). According to the *Oxford American Dictionary*, "The term originated in the Septuagint (Deuteronomy 28:25) in the phrase '*esē diaspora en pasais basileias tēs gēs*' (thou shalt be a dispersion in all kingdoms of the earth)" (2010). Moreover, the term was also used by Thucydides in his *History of the Peloponnesian War* (II, 27) to describe the dispersal of the Aeginetans (Sheffer, 2003). Thus, the word dates back to antiquity and refers to the two oldest diasporas—Jewish and Greek—resulting from voluntary and forced migrations (p. 9).

The discourse of Diaspora is necessarily modified as it is translated and adapted for reasons related to global communication, transportation, decolonization and increased immigration (Clifford, 1994, p. 306). The range of experiences covered by the term diaspora is very wide, and the term that was once used for Jewish or Greek dispersion now shares meanings with words like immigrant, expatriate, refugee, guest worker, ethnic community, or exile community (p. 303). It is therefore hard to give a clear-cut definition of modern diaspora. As Mina Rozen argues:

> Diaspora is an equation the factors of which are space, time and memory. The diasporic condition is by definition a dynamic state of affairs. It is a temporary situation, in which a group of people still remembers its migration or displacement. As long as the members of this group manage to hold on to the last shreds of their memory of the past, diaspora is still present, to a lesser or

> greater extent. When memory fades, diaspora ceases to exist. Instead, the migrants come to believe that they have always belonged to their place of residence, that its culture has always existed as such, and even that this culture has been their original creation. In a word, a new *mekhorah* emerges. (2008, p. 81)

It is not possible to examine all diaspora with the same lens, and the scope of the discussion about diaspora should be extended beyond the emergence of nation states. For example, the great expulsion from Spain in 1492 is a diaspora case of its own, which happened long before the formation of nation states and colonial movements. In this respect, as Jonathan Ray points out (2008), this Sephardic diaspora is of unique importance in understanding and analyzing the diasporas of today.

The diasporic existence is not fixed in time and there does not take only one form. Diasporic existence is a form of life that undergoes historical transformation and change. The majority of Jewish people feel themselves at home in the countries where they reside, so this diasporic existence does not necessarily mean living in exile. However, if Jewish people feel a degree of religious or ethnic attachment to other people who have the same roots as them, and if this attachment is reinforced by an imaginary or a providential return to a promised land, it is possible to talk about a diasporic experience. After all, the saying "Next Year in Jerusalem" is still uttered at the conclusion of religious festivals such as Yom Kippur or Passover. However, in this case, it is also necessary to redefine the term Diaspora in order to retrieve it from the sense in which it has been widely used since the birth of the nation states. As Stuart Hall points out:

> Diaspora does not refer us to those scattered tribes whose identity can only be secured in relation to some sacred homeland to which they must at all costs return, even if it means pushing other people into the sea. This is the old, the imperializing, the hegemonizing form of "ethnicity." (1990, p. 235)

The problematic of diaspora entails enormous political, cultural and practical everyday tension between assimilation and return; between becoming like them (the host country or large society) and remaining like us. In addition to that, this problem of assimilation and return raises the question of homeland. In Istanbul

Jewry, these questions revolve around the context of Turkey and the Promised Lands. For Istanbul Jews, both being regarded as strangers by the majority in society and feeling a spiritual connection to Israel as the country of their religion contribute to their perception of living a diasporic existence.

Conceptually, therefore, the problematic of diaspora breaks down into assimilation versus return, which in turn beg the questions "assimilation to what?" and "return to where/return to what?" It thus becomes a complicated question of identity for both sides, not easily resolved into the current dichotomies that label identities. However, the diasporic existence or diasporic cultural identity of Istanbul Jewry does neither manifests itself as a deep and concrete longing for the Promised Land or as making serious plans to settle in Israel. In fact, as Boyarin and Boyarin argue:

> Diasporic cultural identity teaches us that cultures are not preserved by being protected from "mixing" but probably can only continue to exist as a product of such mixing . . . While this is true of all cultures, diasporic Jewish culture lays it bare because of the impossibility of a natural association between this people and a particular land—thus the impossibility of seeing Jewish culture as a self-enclosed, bounded phenomenon . . . In other words, diasporic identity is a disaggregated identity. Jewishness disrupts the very categories of identity because it is not national, not genealogical, not religious, but all of these in dialectical tension with one another. (1993, p. 721)

The idea of diasporic existence also brings to mind questions over the relationship between various Jewish groups and the State of Israel. Naturally, Israel constitutes a reference point in the lives of the Jewish people. In Istanbul Jewry today, most members of the community have a connection with Israel in some way or other. To a great extent, the connection with Israel is through relatives who have migrated there and through visits for religious purposes. Centuries of migration, politics, history, religion and culture put multiple and conflicting meanings upon Israel's position (Aviv & Shneer, 2005, p. 9), not only for Jewish people, but also for non-Jews.

2.1. Where is Home?

The idea of home/homeland also raises questions related to belonging. These questions arise in the lives of Istanbul Jews through interactions with majority society. Since it is generally assumed that the religion of Turkish people can only be Islam, members of Istanbul Jewry are often confronted with questions about their national affiliation and loyalty. On telling some Turks they are Jewish, they may be asked questions such as, "Are you from Israel or do you do your military service in Israel?" For example, Mr. A. complained:

> People say, "You are *Musevi*—aren't you Turkish?" It is very interesting. I say, "Brother, I am Turkish." I have a Turkish identity card. I carried out my military service in Turkey. I pay tax in Turkey. I studied in Turkish schools. Most of my friends are Turkish but my religion is *Musevi* and religion is just a way of believing. (interview, 28 June 2012)

In a similar vein, Mr. M. insisted:

> Belonging to Turkish society is something else. There is no question about it. We are Turkish, and I am one of those who absolutely think and support the idea that commitment to a country is not related to religious belief because religion is a belief. (interview, 19 April 2012)

The existence of Israel and the mass migrations there often create confusion in people—especially non-Jewish people—about the idea of homeland. Moreover, for Jews living in a predominantly Muslim society, having some relationship with Israel or visiting it further complicate the situation. It is thus necessary to ask what Israel and Turkey mean for Istanbul Jewry. The most suggestive answer to this question lies in the relation between the concepts of "space" and "place".

"Place is security, space is freedom" says Yi-Fu Tuan "we are attached to the one and long for the other" (2001, p. 3). Space is the unknown and unidentified; since it has no boundaries it gives people a sense of freedom. Place, on the other hand, is a part of people. Unlike space, which is neutral, place is humanized. However, space does not mean emptiness; on the contrary, space is always full and occupied (Mutman, 1994, pp. 184-187).

The ideal place in people's minds resides in the realm of space. Because of its spatial characteristics, the ideal place cannot come into actual being and always develops, grows bigger and recedes in people's minds, fed through the imagination and a spatial literature of travel narratives, home explorer's journals, letters home, and novels. Narratives about unknown places reinforce the dream of freedom in the ideal place. Information about the ideal place is received in bits and pieces. Space is like a *tabula rasa* on which people can write dreams and create their own reality, and through reading, it turns into a real place. While wandering in space or upon reaching the aimed-for place, the ideal place loses all its charm. The moment a space is made a place, people tend to start searching for another ideal.

For Istanbul Jewry, the idea of the Promised Land, that is to say Israel, is kept in the spatial realm and Turkey, as the country of residence, remains their place. As Schick points out, "Place . . . is a fundamental element of existence and hence of identity; the self unfolds in space, and therefore bears the indelible traces of the place it calls its 'here'" (1999, p. 24).

As the land of religion, Israel gives the Jewish people a sense of freedom. Besides, the relatives, friends or acquaintances that have migrated there also put the country into a special place for Istanbul Jewry, though not special enough to name it as home. In this respect, Mrs. F. described Israel as "that place":

> I will tell you very sincerely. When I go to Israel, [it's] a new country. My aunts, uncles, nephews, and nieces there are so beautiful, but, believe me, when I return I want to speak to the police that check the passports. I mean, well, we are back in Turkey. That's how Turkish we are. This is a very different emotion. I mean, we are moved when we go to the Wailing Wall. I get very emotional there, so emotional. But the fact of belonging is more attached to [Turkey]. After all, nobody binds us [to Turkey]. That place is a country of war. People are so different. We are Turkish, with everything that we have. Our husbands, fathers, and sons do their military service here . . . That place is a society that was educated in a different way because it is a country at war, [and] it is not only war because they came out of a devastating massacre. The ones that came after the Holocaust . . . are more determined in comparison to us. I mean they are very different. (interview, 23 May 2012)

In a similar way, Mrs. S. gave her idea of Israel: “It is the place of my religion, a big prayer house. I mean, it’s not my homeland; it’s a big prayer house for me. I love it. Do you see what I mean?” (interview, 24 June 2012). The affection of Istanbul Jewry for Israel is undeniable, but questioning their citizenship in Turkey because of this affection is problematic as is judging them for the political actions of Israel and making generalizations about them in this respect. Mr. B. pointed this out:

> I am Jewish, but I am not an Israeli. I would like to stress the this first . I do not put religion and nationality together. But, as a result of the events in Israel, when I say [I am] Jewish, the reactions can sometimes be negative. You know, it becomes something like, “You Jewish people kill.” Maybe a child died as a result of an event in Israel, but it turns out to be all the Jewish people that kill children. Maybe someday the head of Israel won’t be Jewish but the same war will continue. Would the Muslims be blamed for all the crimes then? (interview, 16 July 2012)

In old age, people tend to remember the moments of their childhood and youth years more than the recent past. Memories of those early years affect people more deeply and reinforce the idea of rootedness. Tuan explains this phenomenon:

> A young child's experience of time differs from that of an adult . . . To the young child time does not "flow"; he stands as it were outside it, remaining at the same tender age seemingly forever. To the grown person time rushes on, propelling him forward willy-nilly. (2001, p. 185)

Mr. D. who spent many years in the US after his twenties says:

> I could never make the US mine. It always remained a space, but never became a place. And discovering this took me a very long time. For example, I know the US, its streets, but I never felt it . . . The US never gave me the same meaning as the roads, the streets or quarters here. They always remained like points on a map. There was never a totality like here. (interview, 14 May 2012)

Mrs. F., stating that she felt herself absolutely Turkish, shared the following memory:

> In 1970, my elder uncle migrated to Israel because his son and daughter were there. I visited him in 1978. He had a long dresser and at one end of it there was Turkish flag and at the other was a

> bust of Atatürk. I said "What does that mean uncle?" He said, "You cannot know what homesickness means." I'm sorry, but neither of us has a Turkish flag and Ataturk bust at home on top of the dresser. This is an example of how advanced the homesickness is and how Turkish they are. Believe me, [they are] even more [attached to Turkey] than us, the Jews who are here. (interview, 23 May 2012)

Memories of early youth are thus indelible and haunt people from time to time. They also give a sense of security and belonging which is hard to replace. Therefore, for Istanbul Jewry, Turkey is the place they are deeply attached to and call their home.

2.2. Where to Go?

It is always difficult to leave. For Jean-Luc Nancy, when the idea of leaving comes up, people never know what awaits them (2012, pp. 22-29) as it always harbors something uneasy. Deciding to leave permanently is a very brave decision because people always leave a part of themselves behind. The act of leaving is done towards the unknown and unfamiliar. This is what makes it troublesome because people need to feel at ease through the presence of familiar things (p. 24). Leaving is most difficult when the place left behind is where one has grown up.

In Istanbul Jewry, those who worry about the dangers of assimilation into majority society may consider going to Israel. The decline in the Jewish population in Istanbul and the spread of the population around the city are other factors in this decision. The most common opinion among the interviewees was that Israel is not an easy country to live in as it is comprised of so many people from different ethnic backgrounds. Also, since the majority of the population in Israel are Holocaust survivors, it is not that easy for people to meet on common ground in terms of outlook and culture. As a matter of fact, people who migrated from the same countries live in close contact and in close neighborhoods. Therefore, a decision to settle in Israel may not always be successful and returns can occur. Mr. B. has such an experience in his family. When asked why his grandfather went to Israel, Mr. B. said:

> I am not so sure about it . . . Perhaps it is a love for Israel. Because our religion says so . . . It shows Israel as the Promised Land. Everybody has a dream of Israel, actually. When my grandfather first went there, in its founding years, he may have gone with that dream. On his second visit, he may have thought of settling there, but he didn't succeed. The reason for his return to Turkey was economic, I guess. (interview, 16 July 2012)

Age is a determining factor in the decision to leave. For the young, if the idea of emigrating arose, their initial choices would be European countries or the US rather than Israel. For example, twenty-six-year-old Mr. B. says:

> I like foreign countries. I would like to live abroad, but I don't want to set my life there. But the reason has nothing to do with my being Jewish or anything else. It may be about my way of life. I started my life here. There may be happy or unhappy moments here, but I started my life here with this regime. (interview, 16 July 2012)

Unlike Mr. B., Mrs. K., who is over the age of forty, says:

> If you are between eighteen or twenty you can go. After that, it is very difficult; it is very, very difficult. I cannot even think of it now. I mean, for me to go, there would have to be a very serious situation. After all, the ones that migrated did not go complacently. I mean, either their living expenses were cut down completely or they fell into a very bad economic situation. As I said, after this Mavi Marmara incident they said they couldn't do business with the Jews. Going, would be the biggest tragedy for me . . . I cannot change the idea of home for anything. It is impossible. It is a very different emotion. Even so, there are currently one hundred thousand Turks in Israel, but it isn't the same thing. (interview, 22 December 2011)

If deciding to go was an easy decision, there would be no Jewish people left in Turkey after the difficult times they have experienced. "No one binds us here" says Mrs. F., "If we wanted to go, we would go" (interview, 23 May 2012). This has a ring of truth to it. As the old proverb says: *partir, c'est un peu mourir.*[4]

[4] To leave is to die a little.

Conclusion

Starting from the question "What's in a language?" this study tried to draw a picture of the current situation of Istanbul Jewry in a majority Muslim society. The idea of language connects all the historical, social, cultural and political problems Istanbul Jewry have experienced and thus served as a frame for the interview data. Language has been examined both through the theoretical lenses of philosophy and sociology, and the language of Istanbul Jewry has been termed an exilic language in light of the interviews and written sources.

Driven by economic inducements and compelled by the political dominance of the state, Istanbul Jewry has both become a multilingual community and integrated into the Turkish culture, but it has paid a cost in the loss of its native language, Ladino. As Aron Rodrigue and Esther Benbassa point out, the road to integration unavoidably leaves the native language behind (2010, p. 264). The loss of Ladino and the demand for integration into majority society provoke the fear of assimilation and the desire to remain different, and this tension is also reflected in the exilic language.

The idea of identity has been a very controversial topic in recent years. The political atmosphere in Turkey and the relationship between the state and the minorities have put identity matters squarely on the agenda of the country. In this sense, the language changes of Istanbul Jewry and their status as a religious minority group raise questions related to identity politics and the idea of multiculturalism in Turkey. After all the language changes Istanbul Jewry has experienced, it has indeed undergone some integration into majority society, but this has not been a total transformation or assimilation. Their ethnic identity is centred above all on being Jewish in Turkey, which has taken the form of a cultural trait in their ethnic identity. Thus, their ethnic identity is not only related to religion but is complemented by elements from their Sephardic roots and Turkish traditions, and this is reflected both in their manners and in the way they use their languages.

The language changes in Istanbul Jewry also point out a class distinction, both within the community and in relation to wider society. The effects of economic factors on language acquisition and use are very remarkable. For many years, Ladino was regarded as a degraded language, and Ladino speakers were considered a lower class in the Jewish community. For Istanbul Jewry, speaking French and acquiring French culture were symbols of being upper class and also meant new economic opportunities, and the French language maintained its appeal for many years. The class distinction within the Jewish community is also visible in everyday life practices. The middle and upper classes have a progressive character and have almost no connection with the lower class in terms of social, cultural, and linguistic practices. When it comes to majority society, it is possible to classify the majority of Istanbul Jewry as middle class republicans, though of course there are variations.

As mentioned at the very beginning of this study, since there are many definitions of the word "Turk" and many ways of being Turkish, this study has avoided presenting clear-cut categories to define the identities of Istanbul Jewry. As a matter of fact, the idea of identity is a slippery and ever-evolving palimpsest. Thus, what it is to be Turkish is never settled like other forms of nationhood. Moreover, Istanbul Jewry is not a homogenous group and it is possible to see many different patterns within the community, shaped to a great extent by class distinctions. Each individual member of the community has the capacity to problematize any generalisation of Istanbul Jewry.

For the time being, the new generation can speak Turkish very fluently and it is no longer possible to recognize them as Istanbul Jews from the way they speak. They are very well integrated into Turkish culture and do not strictly follow the requirements of Jewish religious laws. However, the older generations generally speak Turkish with an accent and have a visible awareness of their ethnic origin and traditions. Therefore, they may tend to see themselves as different because of their multilingualism and Ladino heritage. In other words, they know their position in Turkish society and they do not try to change it. But the new generation, which is fully adapted into Turkish society with Turkish as its native language, sees little difference between itself and majority society. These

younger Istanbul Jews are well aware that they are Jewish, but they do not see this as a bar to their personal and communal progression, for example, in entering parliament. However, in this they are still at odds with a great many in the majority population.

Although the Jewish community has been living in the current borders of Turkey for five hundred years, they are still regarded as strangers in the country. Furthermore, they are not considered strangers as outsiders but as insiders, and this is related to their exilic existence. According to the state, Istanbul Jews are still "guests" of the country and the state is responsible for their protection and well-being. At this point, it is necessary to ask what it can mean to be a guest in a country for five hundred years. The answer is hidden in the tradition inherited from the Ottoman Empire, where all non-Muslim subjects were treated as *zımmi* (dhimmi).

In majority society, it is possible to talk about a bias against the Jewish population that appears especially in times of crisis in the policies of Israel towards Palestine. However, this bias is mostly observable at the collective level and is not always voiced on the individual level. Thus, in everyday life, the relationship between the two sides does not encounter difficulty. But still, for majority society, the attitude Istanbul Jewry takes to Israel remains a question mark. In the eyes of the Muslim majority, Israel is a cruel state whose political actions towards Palestine cannot be forgiven. Therefore, any connection with Israel is interpreted very negatively. However, since, for Istanbul Jews, Israel is the holy land of their religion, and nearly all of them have relatives or friends there, it occupies a special place in their lives. Thus, the condition of diasporic existence reveals itself explicitly at the point where the collective memories of majority society and of Istanbul Jewry intersect.

As Ladino is being lost, it has started to give way to newly established terms and currents that can remind Istanbul Jewry of their ethnic origin. One of the most important and effective factors in this is Holocaust discourse, which aims to create a collective memory among Jews all over the world. Holocaust discourse claims above all that the Holocaust is the only genocide of its kind and is unique to the Jewish history, and that no one other than Jewish people can benefit from

it. This discourse is reinforced globally through activities like museology, the movie industry and visits to the concentration camps. For Jewish youth in Istanbul, Holocaust discourse serves to protect their ethnic identity, which is threatened by increased assimilation into the large society.

Holocaust discourse is also given ground to develop and reinforced by the denial of anti-Semitism in state discourse in Turkey. The general argument is as follows: all over the world, Jewish people experienced dreadful acts of violence, and only Turkey (and the Ottoman Empire) protected them, and, during the Second World War, it was the clever politics of İsmet Inönü that saved Istanbul Jewry from a potential massacre. Thus, when it comes to the terrible memories of the Holocaust, Turkey positions itself as a savior, despite the fact that during the same period the living conditions of Istanbul Jewry were very unpleasant.

The reasons behind the traditional invisibility of Istanbul Jewry can be traced to their collective memory as a Jewish community. Anything related to the past is re-fictionalized according to the present. The collective memory of Istanbul Jewry is no exception, and carries within itself the traces of the great expulsions in their religious history, the Second World War, the Holocaust, the Thracian Events of the 1930s, the 6-7 September Events, the synagogue bombings in Istanbul in the 2000s, and everyday discrimination. Moreover, the outbreaks of hostility towards Jews in recent history have been followed by migration to Israel or other western countries, and therefore the Jewish population in Turkey is in decline. Also, Jewish people no longer live in specific districts, but are scattered around Istanbul, living alongside members of the majority. Thus, combined with the cautionary tales of collective Jewish memory, their new living conditions motivate them to remain silent, get on well with the majority around them, and take increased security precautions. However, the decision to leave Turkey is still a hard one to take since it always includes leaving a large part of their lives and identity behind. And as a Ladino proverb says, "*Trocar kazal, trocar mazal,"* which means "to change place is to change destiny."

All in all, the language changes that Istanbul Jewry underwent in the name of creating ideal and modern Jews after the model of French culture began a process that continued with their integration into Turkish culture under the

republic and their gaining a European outlook. However, even if they have changed their native language and gained one or more additional languages, their collective memory as a Jewish community has not been radically changed.

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