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Postvernacular Judeo-Spanish in Istanbul: Dynamics, Attitudes, Values

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My own experiences of living as a Romanian in the German and Austrian diaspora since early adulthood have provided me with firsthand insight into what it means to navigate different ideological hierarchies, to be part of a minority within both minority and majority contexts. These experiences were the driving force for my desire to understand the complexities underlying identity negotiations through language between any kind of groupings.

To the girl in the English class

To the girl in English class…
what is funny?
what is hilarious about my painful attempt to communicate
in a language that is not even my own
see, this accent tells a story of survival
tells how my mother tongue endured to this day…
so, I expect you treat my tongue with some respect
every word, every syllable I utter
comes from a riot within my mouth
is a babble between
subconscious
tongue
teeth's
and vocal cord
so excuse you, if my speech does not soothe you
you see, this speech comes from this slaughterhouse I call a mouth
see, my mouth is a battlefield
a clash of unyielding cultures waring for dominance
see, my tongue is a traumatised survivor
lost in this alien fluency
see, this accent is how I find my way home
how I say inikpi without biting my tongue
see my tongue is a forever at war with itself
forever fighting to decolonise itself
fighting to lose and regain itself all at the same time
so cut me some slack!
agbiti megi neke logi ogi shin (Two elephants cannot pass a feeble bridge)
I will not be ashamed, not refrain from saying my name
and NO! I will not apologize for my mother's legacy.
For there is no dignity in denying my identity.
So, to the girl in English class
Ewú shoduwè? (What is your name?)
Is about time you learn my own language too!

(Hafsat Abdullahi (Havfy), 06.11.2022, spoken word poetry on YouTube[1])

[1] https://youtu.be/T2oJ5bk34-M?si=tqayio2qIoRSJ92M, accessed on April 5th, 2024.

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

CA: Community assistant
Ch.: Chapter
Fr.: French
JS.: Judeo-Spanish (used in translation, technical, or analytical contexts)
Hebr.: Hebrew
Tk.: Turkish
AKP: *Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi* 'Justice and Development Party'
AIU: Alliance Israélite Universelle
ANL: Autoridad Nasionala del Ladino
GIDS: Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale
GTM: Grounded Theory Methodology
IY2019: International Year of Indigenous Languages 2019
PTSD: Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
SIT: Social Identity Theory
SKAD: *Sefarad Kültürü Arastirma Merkezi* 'Sephardic Centre of Istanbul'
VLACH: Vanishing Languages and Cultural Heritage Commission
WHO: World Health Organization

Dissertation Roadmap

I Definitions of key concepts

A-language: this term refers to Judeo-Spanish as the heritage language of the Turkish Sephardic community.

B-language: this term refers to Turkish, which is both the majority language and the mother tongue of many consultants in the study. The terms “A-language” and “B-language” have been chosen for discussions of the relation between the two languages in order to avoid potential confusion arising from the use of L1 and L2 (cf. Grenoble 2005: 138). For some speakers, L1 is often not the language they consider their mother tongue(s).

Consultants: In this dissertation, the community members who contributed to the research are referred to as consultants, a term which better reflects their significant role and contribution to this study, highlighting the value of their insights and perspectives.

Identity: the term *identity* will be used in this dissertation interchangeably with ‘identification’, reflecting its current use in social sciences, sociolinguistics, and linguistic anthropology. *Identity* “is expressed through the experiences, emotions, motivations, beliefs, and choices of individuals, shaping their perception of reality and contributing to the construction of a shared present and future” (David & Bar-Tal 2009: 373). Following Bucholtz & Hall (2004), identity is not viewed as static but rather as “acts of identification” or more precisely as manifesting in “tactics of intersubjectivity” (370). In this framework, individuals are seen as active agents in the construction and interpretation of meaning.

Mother tongue: this term is used in this dissertation to refer to the language(s) a consultant learned or was first exposed to while growing up, irrespective of fluency and even identification with the language. I acknowledge that this term is associated with many other implications (cf. Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson 1995). It should especially be recognised that an individual can have more than one mother tongue.

Rhetorical legacy zones is a term that emerged from the data analysis and refers to virtual rhetorical spaces in which individuals feel a sense of belonging and comfort, regardless of geography and of their fluency in Judeo-Spanish**.**

Postvernacular Judeo-Spanish: In line with Shandler’s (2000; 2004; 2005) definition in the context of postvernacular Yiddish, this term refers to a distinct semiotic mode of engaging with the language that does not require fluency. Symbolic engagement with the language arises significantly as a response to a sense of linguistic and cultural loss, embodying a quest to sustain a culture that is threatened with disappearance.

Sephardim: In this dissertation, the term "Sephardim" refers specifically to the Hispanic Sephardim, distinguishing them from the "non-Hispanic Sephardim" in Turkey. While both groups share the Sephardic ritual tradition, the non-Hispanic Sephardim do not share Hispanic heritage nor do they have Judeo-Spanish as their heritage language.

II Consultants' language profiles

Fluent speakers: In this dissertation, fluent speakers are defined as those at the highest proficiency end of a continuum, demonstrating the greatest proficiency and least insecurity in Judeo-Spanish. They actively engage in conversations and are categorised as either "old fluent speakers," who use a more traditional form of the language, or "new fluent speakers," whose language is influenced by Spanish[2].

Semi-speakers: This category is one of the most emblematic of Judeo-Spanish as an endangered language and includes individuals with receptive skills in Judeo-Spanish and varying productive abilities. They may exhibit relatively high fluency in casual conversations but generally lack regular conversation partners and operate mainly in the dominant language. Their speech often contains more modified forms, viewed as mistakes by fluent speakers.

Passive speakers: are those with passive knowledge of Judeo-Spanish and limited active skills. Grinevald and Bert (2011: 50) use the term "rememberers". For some passive speakers, their knowledge of language is unconsciously reduced to passive skills based on traumatic language experiences which inhibits the active use of language.

Neo-speakers: Neo-speakers are those who acquire Judeo-Spanish as adults, primarily through Spanish and community immersion. Their language competence varies, with some reaching higher fluency levels similar to semi-speakers. These individuals often have a strong positive attitude towards the language and actively pursue learning it, sometimes through cultural activities such as Sephardic amateur theatre.

Heritage speakers: Heritage speakers are individuals who have been exposed to Judeo-Spanish to varying degrees during childhood or adulthood. Their primary characteristic is a profound cultural connection to Judeo-Spanish, cultivated mainly through familial and community interactions. All consultants in this study are

[2] Given the ambiguity surrounding the use of non-specific terms for different Spanish varieties, I have opted to use *Spanish* throughout this dissertation to refer to both *Peninsular Spanish* and other varieties, including *Latin American Spanish*. Since participants commonly refer to Judeo-Spanish as *Spanish*, I use *[Judeo-]Spanish* when the term specifically refers to Judeo-Spanish and *[Peninsular] Spanish* when it refers to Peninsular Spanish. The term *Spanish* is retained when participants refer to varieties other than Judeo-Spanish.

fundamentally heritage speakers. When other language profile types are subtracted, the essential heritage speaker remains.

Spanish Speakers: In this dissertation, *Spanish speakers* are identified as individuals who have acquired knowledge of Spanish in adulthood through immersion during Erasmus programs, university courses, or Cervantes language courses. The objectives of this category of speakers include accessing Judeo-Spanish and their heritage culture through their knowledge of Spanish. These individuals demonstrate a keen awareness of the differences between Spanish and Judeo-Spanish, often mixing the two languages in their speech.

Heritage language: this term refers to Judeo-Spanish as part of the Sephardic ethnolinguistic culture (cf. Grenoble 2011; Harrison 2007; Shandler 2004). It goes beyond mere knowledge of or fluency in the language, to encompass the cultural and symbolic value of Judeo-Spanish in its vernacular and postvernacular stage.

III Anonymisation procedure of consultants

This procedure outlines the research timing, context, and main data analysis categories. The procedure was put in place to ensure that the consultants' identities are protected while offering readers a comprehensive understanding of their unique language backgrounds (cf. § 4.7.2). I have used a specific anonymised code for each consultant. This code for each consultant's profile should be read and broken down as follows:

(1) the year of the interview, e.g. [15…] for an interview that was carried out in 2015
(2) the interview unit or units as saved for archival purposes. This unit numbers reflect the number of audio and video files; e.g. [15(1-3)...].
(3) the language community code based on Ethnologue's coding system: *lad* for Judeo-Spanish; e.g. [15(1)-lad...]
(4) the consultant's generation status: 1st, 2nd, 3rd; e.g. [15(1)-lad-1st-…]
(5) the consultant's gender: -f- for female, -m- for male; e.g. [15(1)-lad-1st-f-…]
(6) the consultant's age at the time of interview; e.g. [15(1)-lad-1st-f-88-...]
(7) the consultant's level of education: -E- for elementary (up to 8 years of schooling); -S- for secondary (high school graduates); -H- for consultants with university degree; e.g. [15(1)-lad-1st-f-88-H…]
(8) the consultants' language knowledge profile in Judeo-Spanish fluent speaker; semi-speaker; passive speaker; neo-speaker; heritage speaker; Spanish speaker; e.g. [15(1)-lad-1st-f-88-H-fluent-…

(9) the data type on the basis of which the transcription was carried out: -a for audio; -v for video –a/v for a combination. For technical or practical reasons, the length of the audio and video can differ; e.g. [15(1)-lad-1st-f-88-H-fluent-a/v-…]

(10) Indication of whether the consultant was interviewed as an individual (ind > individual) or as part of a second-generation or third-generation family cluster interview (fam > family); [15(1)-lad-1st-f-88-H-fluent-a/v-fam1]

A typical example of a long coded profile would be [15(1)-lad-1st-f-88-H-fluent-a/v-fam1] for an interview that was: (1) conducted in 2015, (2) the first interview in a series, (3) within the Judeo-Spanish community with a (4) first-generation (5) female consultant, (6) 88 years old, (7) holding a university degree, (8) fluent in Judeo-Spanish, with (9) transcription based on the audio/video files, (10) as part of a family cluster interview.

When citing the consultants' accounts, however, I have implemented a shorter citation code based on the above categorisation that indicates the main categories for analysis, including (4) generation status, (5) gender, (6) age, (8) language proficiency in Judeo-Spanish, and (10) family affiliation: [1st-f-88-fluent-fam1]. Each of the consultants was assigned a pseudonym. For example, the pseudonym corresponding the short citation code [1st-f-88-fluent-fam1] is Perla. Figure 1 lists both the long anonymisation codes and the short citation codes corresponding to the pseudonym of each of the 60 consultants in descending order from the eldest to the youngest participant.

	Pseudonym	Anonymous Consultant Profiles	Citation Codes
1	Jojo	[15(1-3)-lad-1st-m-92-H-fluent-ind]	[1st-m-92-fluent-ind]
2	Perla	[15(7-9)-lad-1st-f-88-S-fluent-fam1]	[1st-f-88-fluent-fam1]
3	Meri	[15(1-14)-lad-1st-f-88-S-fluent-fam4]	[1st-f-88-fluent-fam4]
4	Beri	[16(1-15)-lad-1st-m-88-S-fluent-fam10]	[1st-m-88-fluent-fam10]
5	Lili	[15(3-12)-lad-1st-f-87-E-fluent-fam3]	[1st-f-87-fluent-fam3]
6	Jüdit	[17(17-22)-lad-1st-f-83-S-fluent-fam6]	[1st-f-83-fluent-fam6]
7	Murat	[15(1)-lad-1st-m-82-S-fluent-ind]	[1st-m-82-fluent-ind]
8	Henri	[16(23-31)-lad-1st-m-81-S-fluent-ind]	[1st-m-81-fluent-ind]
9	Moris	[15(8-13)-lad-1st-m-81-E-fluent-fam3]	[1st-m-81-fluent-fam3]
10	Rita	[17(11-17)-lad-1st-f-79-S-fluent-fam5]	[1st-f-79-fluent-fam]
11	Selim	[16(1-4)-lad-1st-m-78-S-fluent-ind]	[1st-m-78-fluent-ind]
12	Sandy	[15(5-7)-lad-1st-f-78-S-fluent-fam3]	[1st-f-78-fluent-fam3]
13	Berta	[15(1)-lad-1st-f-76-E-fluent-fam7]	[1st-f-76-fluent-fam7]
14	Sara	[16(1-12)-lad-1st-f-75-S-fluent-ind]	[1st-f-75-fluent-ind]
15	Jak	[15(1-6)-lad-1st-m-75-H-fluent-fam8]	[1st-m-75-fluent-fam8]
16	Habib	[16(9-24)-lad-1st-m-73-H-fluent-ind]	[1st-m-73-fluent-ind]
17	Lusi	[15(14-20)-lad-1st-f-73-S-fluent-fam2]	[1st-f-73-fluent-fam2]
18	David	[16(5-17)-lad-1st-m-72-S-fluent-ind]	[1st-m-72-fluent-ind]
19	Mendi	[15(4-6)-lad-1st-m-70-H-fluent-ind]	[1st-m-70-fluent-ind]

20	Natan	[16(1-4)-lad-1st-m-69-S-fluent-ind]	[1st-m-69-fluent-ind]
21	Roza	[16(1-13)-lad-1st-f-68-S-fluent-ind]	[1st-f-68-fluent-ind]
22	Rika	[17(1)-lad-1st-f-68-H-fluent-fam12]	[1st-f-68-fluent-fam12]
23	Ester	[16(1-3)-lad-1st-f-62-S-neo-ind]	[1st-f-62-neo-ind]
24	Tal	[17(9-16)-lad-2nd-m-68-H-semi-fam11]	[2nd-m-68-semi-fam11]
25	Michael	[17(13-21)-lad-2nd-m-67-S-fluent-fam5]	[2nd-m-67-fluent-fam5]
26	Yusuf	[15(1-3)-lad-2nd-m-65-H-passive-ind]	[2nd-m-65-passive-ind]
27	Isak	[15(1-2)-lad-2nd-m-65-S-fluent-ind]	[2nd-m-65-fluent-ind]
28	Gözcü	[17(30-31)-lad-2nd-m-65-H-fluent-fam6]	[2nd-m-65-fluent-fam6]
29	Emel	[17(1-6)-lad-2nd-f-64-H-fluent-fam4]	[2nd-f-64-fluent-fam4]
30	Solita	[17(24-27)-lad-2nd-f-63-H-semi-fam6]	[2nd-f-63-semi-fam6]
31	Viki	[16(1-7)-lad-2nd-f-63-S-fluent-fam10]	[2nd-f-63-fluent-fam10]
32	Nina	[17(3-8)-lad-2nd-f-62-H-fluent-ind]	[2nd-f-62-fluent-ind]
33	Bensyon	[15(3-6)-lad-2nd-m-61-S-fluent-ind]	[2nd-m-61-fluent-ind]
34	Lola	[16(9-15)-lad-2nd-f-61-S-fluent-ind]	[2nd-f-61-fluent-ind]
35	Robert	[16(23-29)-lad-2nd-m-61-H-fluent-ind]	[2nd-m-61-fluent-ind]
36	Edna	[16(1-12)-lad-2nd-f-60-S-fluent-fam9]	[2nd-f-60-fluent-fam9]
37	Mordo	[15(1)-lad-2nd-m-59-H-passive-fam1]	[2nd-m-59-passive-fam1]
38	Beki	[15(1-2)-lad-2nd-f-57-H-fluent-ind]	[2nd-f-57-fluent-ind]
39	Luna	[15(1-3)-lad-2nd-f-55-H-fluent-ind]	[2nd-f-55-fluent-ind]
40	Ezra	[15(7-10)-lad-2nd-f-53-H-passive-fam2]	[2nd-f-53-passive-fam2]
41	Zelda	[17(9-10)-lad-2nd-f-53-S-semi-fam13]	[2nd-f-53-semi-fam13]
42	Neama	[17(5-8)-lad-2nd-f-49-H-semi-fam3]	[2nd-f-49-semi-fam3]
43	Meyir	[15(1-6)-lad-2nd-m-45-H-semi-fam8]	[2nd-m-45-semi-fam8]
44	Naftali	[17(10-20)-lad-2nd-m-45-H-fluent-fam12]	[2nd-m-45-fluent-fam12]
45	Moshe	[16(1-8)-lad-2nd-m-42-H-semi-fam7]	[2nd-m-42-semi-fam7]
46	Salamon	[16(1-9)-lad-3rd-m-43-H-fluent-ind]	[3rd-m-43-fluent-ind]
47	Treysi	[17(1-3)-lad-3rd-f-40-H-passive-fam11]	[3rd-f-40-passive-fam11]
48	Milen	[16(1-8)-lad-3rd-f-38-H-neo-ind]	[3rd-f-38-neo-ind]
49	Albert	[16(13-24)-lad-3rd-m-35-H-passive-ind]	[3rd-m-35-passive-ind]
50	Kaden	[17(28-29)-lad-3rd-f-33-H-Spanish-fam6]	[3rd-f-33-Spanish-fam6]
51	Metin	[16(1-5)-lad-3rd-m-30-S-Spanish-ind]	[3rd-m-30-Spanish-ind]
52	Berk	[15(4-10)-lad-3rd-m-30-H-heritage-ind]	[3rd-m-30-heritage-ind]
53	Yıldız	[17(11-15)-lad-3rd-f-30-H-Spanish-fam13]	[3rd-f-30-Spanish-fam13]
54	Fani	[16(12-14)-lad-3rd-f-27-H-Spanish-fam9]	[3rd-f-27-Spanish-fam9]
55	Elias	[15(7-12)-lad-3rd-m-26-H-heritage-fam2]	[3rd-m-26-heritage-fam2]
56	Reysi	[17(1-12)-lad-3rd-f-25-H-heritage-ind]	[3rd-f-25-heritage-ind]
57	Suzan	[15(7-9)-lad-3rd-f-22-H-Spanish-fam1]	[3rd-f-22-Spanish-fam1]
58	Rafi	[16(1-6)-lad-3rd-m-22-H-neo-fam3]	[3rd-m-22-neo-fam3]
59	Binyamin	[16(1-7)-lad-3rd-m-22-H-heritage-fam5]	[3rd-m-22-heritage-fam5]
60	Beti	[16(2-4)-lad-3rd-f-21-H-Spanish-ind]	[3rd-f-21-Spanish-ind]

Figure 1. Dissertation Roadmap: *Consultants' anonymised profiles and citation codes*

IV Transcription system

The transcription of Judeo-Spanish in this dissertation is based on an enhanced version of the *Aki Yerushalayim*[3] script, the most commonly used orthographic convention for transcribing Judeo-Spanish (Shaul 1979–2016). This script is supplemented with additional signs (ã /ɑ̃/; ä /æ/; ƀ /β/; d /ð/; ɣ /ɣ/; kh /x/; ɪ /ɨ/; ɬ /ɬ/; ö /œ/; õ /õ/; ɾ /ɾ/) and symbols, and both regular and non-regular stresses are marked to improve transcription accuracy (cf. § 4.9.1).

IPA	Grampheme	Description	Judeo-Spanish	English
ɑ	a	near-open central unrounded	***a**rvoléz*	trees
ɑ̃	ã	nasal open front unrounded vowel	*frã**n**sé*	French
æ	ä	near-open front unrounded vowel	*p**ä**ndjeré*	window
b	b	voiced bilabial plosive	***b**ivír*	to live
β	ƀ	voiced bilabial fricative	*aƀ**l**ámos*	we speak
d	d	voiced alveolar dental	***d**ezír*	to say
ð	d	voiced dental fricative	*vé**d**re*	green/Muslim
ʤ	dj	voiced palato-alveolar affricate	***dj**ústo*	right
e	e	close-mid front unrounded	***e**rmuéra*	daughter-in law
f	f	voiceless labiodental fricative	***f**ostán*	dress
g	g	velar voiced plosive	*a**g**óra*	now
ɣ	ɣ	voiced velar fricative	*ava**ɣ**ár*	slowly / gradually
h	h	voiceless glottal fricative	***h**abér*	news
x	kh	voiceless velar fricative	***kh**azinúra*	disease
i	i	close front unrounded vowel	***ij**íko*	boy
ɨ	i	close central unrounded vowel	*karishtɪreár*	to mix
ʒ	j	voiced palate-alveolar sibilant	*ój**o***	eye
k	k	voiceless velar plosive	***k**uálo*	which
l	l	alveolar lateral approximant	***l**avóro*	work
ɬ	ɬ	voiceless alveolar lateral fricative	***aɬ**mán*	German
m	m	bilabial nasal	***m**eldár*	to read
n	n	alveolar nasal	***n**atúra*	nature
ɲ	ny	palatal nasal	*anyáda*	year
o	o	close-mid back rounded vowel	*kávz**o***	reason/cause
œ	ö	open-mid front rounded vowel	*ebr**ő***	Hebrew
õ	õ	open-mid back rounded vowel	***õ**nkl*	uncle
p	p	voiceless bilabial plosive	***p**lazér*	pleasure

[3] *Aki Yerushalayim*, Grafia del Djudeo-Espanyol, https://yerushalayimaki.wixsite.com/ladino/grafia-del-djudeo-espanyol, accessed July 22, 2024.

r	r	alveolar trill	***r**iyír*	to laugh
ɾ	r	alveolar tap	*avlá**r***	to talk
ʁ	rr	voiced uvular fricative	*pé**rr**o*	war
s	s	voiceless alveolar sibilant	***s**ínko*	five
ʃ	sh	voiceless palato-alveolar sibilant	*lé**sh**os*	far
t	t	voiceless alveolar plosive	***t**ádre*	late
ʦ	ʦ	voiceless alveolar sibilant affricate	***ts**adikero*	compassionate
tʃ	ch	voiceless palato-alveolar affricate	*mún**ch**o*	much/a lot
u	u	close back rounded vowel	*djudyó*	Jewish
y	ü	close front rounded vowel	*repü**ü**blík*	republic
v	v	voiced labiodental fricative	*si**v**dád*	city
z	z	voiced alveolar sibilant	*a**z**ér*	to do
ʝ/j	yy	voiced palatal fricative /palatal approximant	*k**y**éro*	I want

Figure 2. Dissertation Roadmap: *Transcription system*

V Additional Symbols

Symbol	Description
´	main stress
< >	direct speech
[?]	segment that could not be be deciphered
[...]	omission of irrelevant segment
[ ]	comments of the annotator in the original text or the translation
--	unfinished word, e.g. *en Ba--, en Khásköy* 'in Ba--, in Hasköy
---	unfinished idea and sentence, e.g. . *I por ésto no se puéde* --- 'And that's why one cannot ---'

Figure 3. Dissertation Roadmap: *Transcription system – additional symbols*

VI Consultants' narratives and quotations

Languages of quotations

All quotations have been rendered in the original interview languages, including Judeo-Spanish, Spanish, Turkish, English, and French. Interviews with the third generation were predominantly conducted in English. Original quotations in all languages have not been altered, and I have not used [sic.] to indicate deviations from standard spelling and wording, as exemplified below:

Translation of quotations

I have striven to provide literal translations of Judeo-Spanish to offer readers insight into the level of language attrition, imagery, and attentional control of users, as well as an approximation of the organisation of information in sentences: e.g. *"presyáđo de káza"* 'precious [one] of the house'.

Presentation of quotations

a. Consultants' quotations are marked in the following ways:

Single words in the text: *avláva* 'spoke'

Single sentences in the text: "*sentence in Judeo-Spanish*" ('English')

b. The use of double marking, italics, and double quotation marks aims to differentiate the consultants' accounts (cf. Example 1) from other types of quotations (cf. Example 2):

Example 1: The consultant articulates a sense of disappointment while recognising that his own generation bears responsibility for the current state of affairs*: "Buén karár lo kulpámos"* ('We are to blame a great deal').

Example 2: Sallabank (2013: 60) begins her chapter on language attitudes and ideologies by noting that "the very fact of studying minority languages raises awareness of that language".

c. When presenting multiple sentences from the same source, they are set apart form the text and numbered. For example, the numbering 5-01. Habib indicates the chapter (5-), the specific narrative (-01), and the narrator (Habib).

5-1. Habib: Si en avlándo túrko podémos enkashár byérvos en espanyól, amá no avlámos en espanyól.

('While speaking Turkish we can sprinkle in a few words in [Judeo-]Spanish, but we don't converse in [Judeo-]Spanish') [1st-m-73-fluent-ind]

Interpretation and analysis of naratives

The interpretation and analysis of data in different chapters has been carried out with a primary focus in mind. For example, in Section 6.4, where the focus is on attitudes, parts of the accounts that shed light on intergenerational dynamics or language use are not examined more in depth, as these topics are covered in Section 5.3.

Chapter 1: Overview of the study

In this chapter, I provide an introductory outline of the dissertation, offering the reader an overview of the aims and objectives, methodologies, structure and relevance of the investigation.

1.1 Introduction

Judeo-Spanish represents a group of distinct varieties of Spanish that evolved in the Jewish diaspora following the expulsion of the Iberian Jewish communities from the Iberian Peninsula. These Jewish communities are referred to as Sephardim in this dissertation. Judeo-Spanish evolved through a process of koineization of the various Ibero-Romance languages and varieties spoken by Iberian Jews in their diverse regions of origin. It was also shaped by language contact during the migration of the Sephardim and in their new places of settlement in North Africa, Portugal, Italy, Northern Europe, and various regions of the Ottoman Empire.

In the 16th century, the Ottoman Empire witnessed the flourishing of a vibrant Sephardic culture. The establishment of a unified Judeo-Spanish vernacular across the empire was pivotal in uniting various Jewish communities into a cohesive ethnic and regional entity. This linguistic unification catalysed a period of cultural prosperity and rich literary production among the Sephardim, which reached its zenith in the 19th century. Judeo-Spanish varieties thrived during this period, particularly around two main regional centres: Thessaloniki and Istanbul.

The formation of nation-states in the Balkans during the 19th and 20th centuries, along with shifting borders and the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, heralded a new era of geopolitical upheaval at the turn of the 20th century. These changes significantly impacted Sephardic communities throughout the Balkans and parts of the former Ottoman Empire, including present day Turkey, affecting their existence and their language practices. This period marked the end of the cultural and economic stability previously enjoyed by the Sephardim and initiated an era of persecution and discrimination. Following the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923, the Sephardim faced increased pressure to assimilate both linguistically and culturally, further challenging their position inside the Turkish majority as well as the Judeo-Spanish language and accelerating the process of language shift which continues today.

Over the fifty-year span between the 1920s and the 1970s, the Sephardic community in Turkey underwent significant linguistic transformations caused by internal

migration, emigration, assimilationist pressures, and shifting ideologies. Once characterised as a coherent group of fluent native speakers of Judeo-Spanish, many of them monolingual, the community gradually transitioned to a postvernacular mode of engaging with the language. In this mode, the symbolic value of the language takes precedence over its primary vernacular function and "every utterance is enveloped in a performative aura, heightened with significance as a speech act" (Shandler 2004: 20), with the primary focus on reinforcing cultural distinctiveness. This shift not only altered the linguistic fabric of the community but also mirrored broader cultural changes and adaptations both within Turkey's rapidly evolving societal landscape and internationally among the global Sephardic diaspora. Today, Judeo-Spanish is a severely endangered language (Moseley 2010). At first glance, it appears that the older generations have competence in the language but rarely speak it, while the younger generations aspire to speak it but possess only limited knowledge, often limited to a few fixed expressions.

However, despite the significant shifts in language practices among the Turkish Sephardim and the pressures of linguistic assimilation, and despite nearly a century of predictions of its imminent disappearance (Benbassa & Rodrigue 2000: xxiii), Judeo-Spanish has shown remarkable resilience in Turkey, particularly in Istanbul. Studies suggest that, to varying extents, Judeo-Spanish still plays a crucial role in the formation of Sephardic identification (Altabev 2003; Brink-Danan 2011a; 2011b; 2011c; Christodouleas 2008; Gerson Şarhon 2011; Rock 2019; Şaul 2021). It continues to exist and manifest as a postvernacular language, in various forms and at different levels of competence. Following my initial pilot studies with the Turkish Sephardim in 2012 and 2014, it became evident that the dynamics of language shift, competence, and the role that Judeo-Spanish still plays among the Turkish Sephardim necessitated a more nuanced exploration.

This dissertation introduces a new perspective on the link between language and social identification processes among the Turkish Sephardim, emphasising a symbolic relationship with the language as a *rhetorical legacy zone* (cf. § 5.4.5). *Rhetorical legacy zones* are virtual rhetorical spaces within which individuals feel a sense of belonging and comfort, regardless of geography or their fluency in Judeo-Spanish. In these zones, the third generation of heritage speakers and the first and second generations of fluent speakers and semi-speakers[4] skilfully navigate their language use and interactions despite differing levels of language proficiency, thus ensuring the continuity of their

[4] For definitions of the various speaker profiles, see Dissertation Roadmap. A more detailed discussion of these profiles can be found in Section 5.2.

linguistic cultural identification even in the face of language shift and changing linguistic competence.

1.2 Aims and Objectives

Firstly, this dissertation seeks to contribute to the existing frameworks at the intersection of language and social identification processes by examining the perceived causes and effects of language shift on individuals' well-being and the role of Judeo-Spanish as an endangered postvernacular language in the social identification processes of the Sephardim. It seeks to provide empirical evidence on the causes and consequences of diminishing ethno-linguistic diversity worldwide (Bernard 1996: 141).

Secondly, by exploring the perspectives of three different generations of Sephardim with varying levels of language competence, this study seeks to enhance the understanding of the interconnection between ideology, attitudes, and language practices within the endangered Judeo-Spanish language community. It endeavours to understand how these interconnected elements shape the relationship between language and social identification processes. It also aims to complement recent research in this field (Kroskrity & Field 2009; Urla 2012). Previous research on minority and endangered languages has largely focused on the "last" speakers and their relationship to language vitality (Dorian 1981; Pauwels 2016; Sallabank 2013). Regarding Turkey's Sephardim, Harris (2011: 57) notes that "it is not clear how well the language is being spoken and if the young people have the skills or even the desire to transmit Ladino[5] to their children as the language of primary socialisation". The experiences and attitudes of non-speakers and passive speakers, with varying degrees of reported and actual language knowledge, as well as their attitudes towards their heritage language and its connection to their social identification, have barely been explored. This dissertation strives to close that gap.

Thirdly, this dissertation aims to investigate whether there has been a shift in attitudes towards Judeo-Spanish, in light of global improvements in attitudes towards heritage languages and the endorsement of ethnic diversity (Astorga 2012; Harris 2011). Previous attitudinal research on Judeo-Spanish (Altabev 1996; Farhi 1937; Harris 2011; Malinowski 1982; Seloni & Sarfati 2013) indicated that the Sephardim often held negative

[5] Harris refers to *Ladino* as a spoken vernacular, which in this dissertation is termed Judeo-Spanish. Historically, the glottonym Ladino has been used to denote calqued translations — word-for-word renditions into the colloquial vernacular that preserve Hebrew syntax (cf. Harris 2011: 57).

views of their heritage language, considering it inferior to the majority languages or other languages spoken within the Jewish community. This study explores whether these perceptions have evolved over time.

1.3 Method

Drawing on qualitative analysis of data from 60 interviews conducted in Istanbul between 2012 and 2017, this study engages three generations of Sephardim (8 families where two generations were interviewed, 5 families where three generations were interviewed, and 26 individual consultants[6] not belonging to any family cluster). The sampling criteria ensured gender balance as well as representation across generations and educational backgrounds to capture diverse language ideologies, attitudes and practices. For data elicitation, I used both primary (participant observation, guided in-depth interviews, expert interviews) and supplemental (life histories, involvement of community assistants, field notes, document review) data collection techniques. My analysis embeds the consultants' subjective interpretations of their experiences within the interpretative and theoretical framework of this study.

This dissertation employs a multi-dimensional methodological and theoretical framework, incorporating *Grounded Theory Methodology* (GTM) (cf. § 4.9.2) at the descriptive level and *Language and Identity Research* at the interpretative level (cf. § 3.1). GTM is employed as a work-process-oriented approach to methods and methodology. The interpretative level draws on *Social Identity Theories* (cf. § 3.2)*, Core Value Theories* (cf. § 3.3.3)*, Communication Accommodation Theory* (Giles & Coupland 1991; Giles & Smith 1979), *Language Ideology* and *Attitude Theory* (cf. § 3.3.6)*,* and *the Language and Trauma* framework (cf. § 3.4.2) and *Theories on Postvernacularism* (cf. § 3.4.2).

This research attempts to elucidate the relationship between postvernacular Judeo-Spanish and Sephardic ethnic identity as a complex interplay of four semiotic processes: *practice, performance, indexicality,* and *ideology* (Bucholtz & Hall 2004; Ehala 2018; Kroskrity 2004). The semiotic perspective enables an understanding of linguistic identity as a reflection of dynamic contexts and overlapping factors on both the micro and macro levels.

[6] In this dissertation, the community members who contributed to the research are referred to as consultants (cf. Dissertation Roadmap, § 4.7).

1. On the macro level, this study explores how, beginning in the first half of the 20th century, the socio-historical context in Turkey gave rise to language ideologies that influenced language attitudes and practices at the group level.
2. On the micro level, I examine how these ideologies are internalised and reproduced through both overt and covert attitudes towards, and practices in, Judeo-Spanish across three different generations. It considers how individual language experiences and practices reflect broader ideological currents.

The objective of this analysis is to understand how these macro and micro levels intersect, influencing the value that different generations attribute to Judeo-Spanish, both in its vernacular and postvernacular stages, and how this value shapes individual and group identities.

1.4 Structure

Chapter 2 provides an introduction to the history of the Sephardim, outlining the background of their migration and the context of their community life within the Ottoman and Turkish diaspora. Additionally, the chapter gives an overview of extralinguistic factors that have contributed to the development of Judeo-Spanish as a pluricentric language characterised by a dialect continuum with considerable intralinguistic variation. Moreover, it explores the significant historical and political events that have shaped the group's language ideologies, attitudes, and practices.

Chapter 3 explores the theoretical framework employed for the investigation of the role of Judeo-Spanish within the Turkish Sephardic community. It begins by discussing the broader contexts of social, ethnic, and national identities, gradually focusing on their significance in a minority postvernacular context: the Eastern Sephardic and more specifically Turkish Sephardic context. This progressive approach is essential to situate Judeo-Spanish within the larger framework of Jewish languages. The chapter draws on Harman's concept of the unifying element of interdependence among diverse Jewish groups, highlighting how changes within any part of the Jewish community impact the rest of the community (Harman 1977: 43).

Chapter 4 delineates the methodological framework adopted in this dissertation. It explores the rationale behind the choice of languages used in data collection and addresses the challenges encountered in data sampling, along with the strategies employed to overcome them. Furthermore, the chapter elaborates on the specific steps and techniques of data elicitation, offering justifications for each method. It also outlines the ethical framework applied, emphasising principles of reciprocity and participatory research. Additionally, the chapter details the steps taken for data archiving,

documentation, and dissemination beyond this dissertation. Finally, it presents a thorough overview of the data analysis process, ensuring the highest level of transparency and reliability in the research findings.

Chapter 5 presents the study results on the current dynamics of language practices and the specific domains in which Judeo-Spanish is still used today. The chapter explores the significance attached to these domains by speakers, examining intergenerational perspectives on the effects of interrupted intergenerational transmission of Judeo-Spanish and the language's role for different generations. It also delves into the importance of Judeo-Spanish in religious practices and performance arts. Finally, the chapter addresses the challenges of maintaining the language and evolving attitudes towards Judeo-Spanish across generations, reflecting broader societal changes.

Chapter 6 explores the complex interplay between interrelated ideologies and their impact on attitudes, language practices, and identification with Judeo-Spanish among the Sephardim. It delves into how national language policies geared towards modernisation, homogenisation, and Turkification, alongside historical traumas and traumatic language experiences, fostered a pervasive fear of speaking Judeo-Spanish. This chapter also emphasises generational shifts in coping with these traumas and examines how these shifts have influenced evolving attitudes towards Judeo-Spanish over time.

1.5 Relevance

By investigating the complex interplay between ideology, attitude, and behaviour regarding Judeo-Spanish, this study aims to offer a nuanced perspective on the dynamics of language shift and its impact across various generations and speaker profiles. It explores how these factors influence identification with postvernacular Judeo-Spanish. The study also aspires to lay a foundation for future comparative research, with a particular emphasis on the often-overlooked yet critical role of fear in shaping language practices among the Sephardim.

Additionally, this study offers empirical evidence that may guide other efforts to preserve and promote Judeo-Spanish as an endangered language within a diaspora context. It seeks not only to serve as a tool for community empowerment and introspection, illuminating the processes of language shift and change in attitudes towards the language, but also to reflect community members’ often unconscious efforts to reconnect with their linguistic heritage. By investigating the current state of Judeo-Spanish and its symbolic significance, this research highlights the historical experiences

and contemporary challenges faced by the Sephardim in Turkey, thereby contributing to broader discussions of multilingualism, multiculturalism, and social cohesion.

Finally, addressing Myhill's (2003: 95) view that "Jews in general find it more convenient, advantageous, and natural to speak as their native language the majority language of the country they live in", this study provides concrete evidence of how language shift affects individuals and the Sephardim as a group. It demonstrates the language's crucial role in negotiating group boundaries both within the Jewish community and in relation to the majority society. Thus, it may offer valuable insights and relevance for understanding the relationship between language and identity among other Jewish groups in the diaspora.

Chapter 2: Introduction to the Judeo-Spanish language community in Turkey

2.1 Overview

In this chapter, I provide an introductory overview of the Judeo-Spanish language community, with particular emphasis on aspects relevant to the current investigation: language ideologies and policies, multilingualism, recurring episodes of language shift and the development of Judeo-Spanish as a pluricentric language in the Ottoman Empire. The overview spans from the expulsion of the Sephardim from the Iberian Peninsula in 1492 to the present day, tracing their migration paths and the formation of a cohesive community within the Ottoman Empire. The chapter explores the historical context of linguistic developments among the Sephardim, outlining the late Ottoman period and extending into the post-Ottoman era, with a primary emphasis on the 20th century in present-day Turkey. Moving through the phases of the community's development, attention is drawn to pivotal events that precipitated shifts in public discourse regarding Jews in Turkey (§ 2.1.1). Notable among these is the 500th anniversary of Jewish settlement in the Ottoman Empire, along with intensified contacts with Spain, including discussions surrounding the *Law of Return* and its implications for language behaviour (§ 2.1.2).

Transitioning from the historical context to linguistic inquiry, I explore the various terminologies used to refer to Judeo-Spanish (§ 2.3.1) and provide a concise overview of its historical development and evolution (§ 2.3.2). I further address the geographic distribution of Judeo-Spanish varieties and the multilingual practices of the Sephardim (§ 2.3.3). Additionally, I outline its typological classification and affiliation (§ 2.3.4) and discuss the issues related to changing graphic systems for Judeo-Spanish and their impact on language shift (§ 2.3.5). Given that a distribution and a discussion of the linguistic features characterising Eastern Judeo-Spanish and its subvarieties is beyond the scope of this dissertation, the focus is on presenting the geographic boundaries of these varieties and the developments that contributed to Judeo-Spanish emerging as a pluricentric language with a high degree of variation at all levels of grammar.

The introduction then shifts to the examination of 20th-century language policies that significantly influenced the status of Judeo-Spanish, particularly the *Citizen, speak Turkish!* campaign, as viewed through the lens of language and trauma and their implications for intergenerational language transmission, attitudes and practice among the Sephardim (§ 2.3.6). I subsequently discuss the proactive efforts aimed at revitalising and preserving Judeo-Spanish that emerged in the 1990s, marking a significant shift in the ideologies surrounding Judeo-Spanish the attitudes towards it (§ 2.3.7).

Finally, I delve into the current dynamics of Judeo-Spanish as a vanishing language in a postvernacular phase, introducing a discussion of the distribution of postvernacular domains in which Judeo-Spanish is still preserved today (§ 2.3.8). Given the inherent interconnectedness of social and linguistic phenomena, the division of these topics into separate sections (social and linguistic) risks disrupting the continuity of events. However, to provide a more in-depth analysis of specific events and aspects, this division appeared to be necessary.

2.2 The Sephardic community

2.2.1 Historical development

A significant chapter in the history of Iberian Jews, commonly referred to as *Hispanic Sephardim* or simply *Sephardim* (Hebr. *Sefaradim,* 'The Jews of Spain')[7] unfolded with the expulsion from Spain in 1492 and from Portugal in 1497. This expulsion marked the beginning of different waves of migration towards North Africa, Portugal, Italy, Northern Europe, and different regions of the Ottoman Empire, as shown in Figure 1. Ch. 2. below.

[7] Initially coined after the expulsion of Jews from the Iberian Peninsula, the term *Sephardim* is now used colloquially in Israel to refer not only to Iberian Peninsula descendants but also to Jews from various other regions including Syria, Morocco, Yemen, Iraq, Turkey, Greece, and Iran. In this dissertation, however, I employ the term *Sephardic* or *Sephardim* exclusively to refer to Jews of Iberian lineage, often referred to simply as *Hispanic Sephardim* or *Spanish Jews.* More on the debate regarding the denomination *Sephardim* can be found in Díaz-Mas (1997), Malka (2002) und Olszewska & Twardowska (2016).

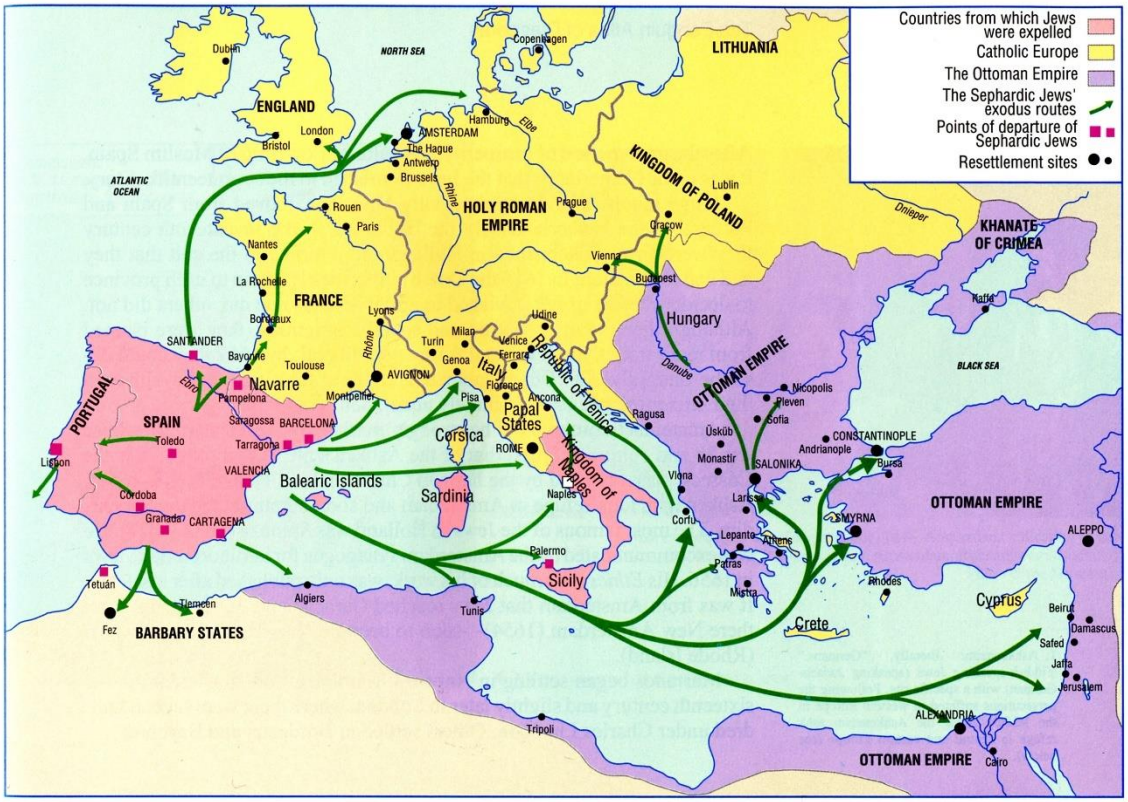

Figure 1. Ch. 2: *Map of Sephardic expulsions and resettlements post-1492*

Source: Chaliand & Rageau (1995: 31)

Historical estimates suggest that between 50,000 and 90,000 Jews were obligated to leave the kingdoms of Castile and Aragon (1492), Portugal (1497), and Navarra (1498) at the turn of the 15th and 16th centuries, with the Ottoman Empire alone receiving approximately 60,000 (Benbassa & Rodrigue 2000: xxxvii). This forced migration led to the establishment of vibrant Sephardi communities in cities like Constantinople, Thessaloniki, Trikala, Belgrade, Kastoria, Damascus, Aleppo, Badda, and Jerusalem. Constantinople and Thessaloniki emerged as major hub of Sephardic culture and education (Bossong 2008: 93).

Upon their arrival in the Ottoman Empire, the Iberian Jews encountered well-established Greek-speaking Byzantine Romaniot communities, alongside Jewish immigrants from German-speaking regions and Italy (Hacker 2017: 834; Hualde & Şaul 2011: 89). The legal distinctions between the Romaniot Jewish communities, characterised by serfdom and restricted travel and economic rights, and Iberian refugees

free of such limitations[8], coupled with the challenges of divisions and the necessity for unified representation and self-governing structures, prompted the gradual assimilation of these Byzantine and Ashkenazi Jewish groups into the Sephardi communities through a process often referred to as *Sephardisation* (Hacker 2017: 845; Lleal 1992: 26; Şaul & Hualde 2016: 8-9). Beginning in the early 16th century, this assimilation marked the onset of a vibrant Ottoman Sephardic culture.

The political consolidation within the Ottoman Empire facilitated the gradual homogenisation of Sephardic culture and language (Lleal, 1992: 26). This process gave rise to an independent linguistic register, a *koiné*, (2000), implied a shift from a variety of regional vernaculars spoken by the Iberian Jews in their places of origin before their expulsion (Minervini 2006; Quintana 2023; Révah 1965) (cf. § 2.3.2; 2.3.3). The emergence of a common Judeo-Spanish vernacular across the Ottoman Empire played a pivotal role in uniting disparate Jewish communities into a cohesive ethnic and regional entity. The mobility of traders and artisans within the Balkan Ottoman area, as well as the mobility of rabbis preaching in different communities and their exchanges of writing across different communities, greatly contributed to linguistic homogenisation. Furthermore, linguistic uniformity was reinforced by Rabbi Joseph Caro's (1488-1585) compilation and systematic arrangement of Jewish laws and religious interpretations in the Sephardic tradition in the *Beit Yosef*, first published in 1555 (Shaw 1991: 102). Embraced by Jewish congregations throughout the Ottoman Empire, this authoritative text addressed the challenges that arose as religious practices diverged in the Sephardic diaspora following the expulsion, ensuring stability in both the legal and ritual aspects of Judaism (Shaw 1991: 102-103).

Following the establishment of printing presses by Iberian Jews in Istanbul and other key urban centres, Judeo-Spanish, written in the Rashi[9] print style (cf. § 2.3.5), experienced a period of flourishing. Sephardic literature proliferated across vast

[8] Greek-speaking Byzantine Romaniot had the status of *serfs* (> Tk. *sürgün* 'exile,' 'banishment') in the Ottoman hierarchy. They were forcibly resettled individuals brought to Constantinople from Macedonia and other Balkan regions by royal decree issued by Mehmet II after the city's conquest in 1453, aimed at repopulating and revitalising the dwindling population. In contrast, the Iberian immigrants were free subjects who arrived "voluntarily" (> Tk. *kendi gelen* 'self-arrived'). This legal disparity played a significant role in their eventual disintegration as a cohesive group (Hacker 2017: 844-846; Karmi 2010: 2-3; Şaul & Hualde 2016: 8-9).

[9] Sephardic texts have traditionally been written using Hebrew characters, mainly in the *Rashi* cursive script, with occasional use of the Meruba-block characters. In the Ottoman Empire and later Turkey, this practice continued until the Latin alphabet was introduced in Turkey in 1928 (García Moreno 2023: 409-410).

expanses of the Ottoman Empire and beyond, reaching its zenith in the mid-nineteenth century (Romero 1992).

The emergence of the Turkish nationalist movement alongside the *Tanzimat* ('Reorganisation') reforms (1839-76), planned during the reign of Sultan Mahmud II (1808-39) and issued during the reign of Sultans Abdulmecid (1839-61) and Abdulaziz (1861-76) aimed at rectifying legal and political disparities between Muslim and non-Muslim residents across various spheres of life (e.g. *Gülhane Hatt-ı Şerif* 'Supreme Edict of the Rosehouse', 3rd November 1839). The subsequent *Hatt-i Hümayûn* decree ('The Sultan's script', 18th February 1856) sought to establish equality before the law for all subjects, facilitating non-Muslim integration into the education system and governmental administration, thereby abolishing the *dhimmi*[10] status and the *millet*[11] system which implied, among others, equal taxation and extension of the military draft to non-Muslims (Giesel 2014: 6). These reforms sparked a renaissance among confessional groups within the Empire, fostering cultural, educational, and religious freedoms (Hacker 2017: 832-833).

For the Jews of the Ottoman Empire, these reforms ushered in a revitalisation of the community. They enabled the construction and restoration of synagogues and other significant structures, along with the reorganisation of the Jewish community, highlighted by the appointment of Grand Rabbi Abraham ha-Levi as the first Jewish Grand Rabbi since the passing of Grand Rabbi Elijah Mizrahi in 1535 (Shaw 1991: 149-156). Affluent members of the Jewish community started relocating to the European districts of Galata and Beyoğlu, as well as to the European Bosporus neighbourhoods of Ortaköy and Arnavutköy, along with the Marmara islands (Shaw 1991: 50). In this period, new literary genres such as theatre and novels emerged, diversifying the literary landscape (Romero 1979; Romero 1992) and founding a tradition of amateur theatre in Judeo-Spanish that continues today.

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[10] Based on Islamic legal principles, the *dhimmi* status designated non-Muslim subjects of the Ottoman Empire who were granted protection by the state and exempted from military service in exchange for specific taxes. This status was officially abolished in 1839 with the imperial edict *Gülhane Hatt-ı Şerif* ('Supreme Edict of the Rosehouse') and later codified into law with the 1869 *Ottoman Law of Nationality* as part of the broader reforms and reorganization reforms (*Tanzimat*) (Hanioğlu, 2008).

[11] The term *millet* in the Ottoman Empire denoted a non-Muslim religious community that had a degree of autonomy to manage its own internal matters while remaining under the overarching authority of the Ottoman administration through trusted intermediaries and community leaders (Barkey & Gavrilis 2016: 24).

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Further significant changes in the lives of the Balkan Sephardim occurred with the emergence of new nation-states such as Serbia, Greece, and Bulgaria and border shifts that limited the Ottoman Empire's power. Moreover, the Balkan Wars (1912-1913) ended Ottoman hegemony in the region, marking the beginning of a new chapter of persecution and discrimination affecting the existence and language behaviour of the Sephardim across the Balkans. This period marked the end of the cultural and economic stability enjoyed by the Sephardim, with periodic exceptions, since their arrival in the Ottoman Empire.

The anti-minority sentiments that prevailed during the first half of the 20th century provided fertile ground for the dissemination of antisemitic policies in the late 1930s, echoing the sentiments of the European Nazi movement (Lamprou 2022). This period, preceding World War II, dealt a devastating blow to the Sephardi communities. In the aftermath of the Second World War, Sephardi communities in southeastern Europe, including cities like Thessaloniki, Belgrade, and Sarajevo, were almost completely eradicated. In countries such as Serbia, Macedonia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Sephardic population suffered extensive losses (Rodrigue 2011: 210). Estimates suggest that between 120,000 and 160,000 Sephardic Jews from Western Europe and the Balkans fell victim to the atrocities of Nazism (Barouhiel 2010: 30). Other sources (Kowallik 1993: 22) indicate a total of 180,000 victims, including 50,000 from Greece, 55,000 from Yugoslavia, 15,000 from Romania, and 60,000 from other European countries.

In Thessaloniki, which had been predominantly Jewish and Judeo-Spanish-speaking (60%) until 1912, when the Greeks took over the city, the Sephardic community was decimated, losing around 60,000 Jews. Only approximately 1,000 Sephardim remained in Thessaloniki by 1945 (Busse 1994: 84). Even in places where Sephardi communities managed to survive, their existence was hindered by antisemitic laws, discrimination, hostility from both their fellow citizens and the post-war regime, and severe impoverishment due to escalating fiscal burdens. Consequently, waves of massive emigration to Israel began in 1948 and continue to this day for various reasons.

In the Turkish context, this "voluntary" migration of the Sephardim to Israel since its foundation in 1948, coupled with internal migration within Turkey (cf. § 6.2.2) and inside Istanbul, which began with the birth of the Turkish Republic, has had a very large impact on community communication dynamics and intergenerational language transmission among the Turkish Sephardim (Morvan 2011; Morvan 2013; Morvan 2017).

By the 1960s, the global Sephardic population was estimated at 360,000, with the majority (300,000) residing in Israel and smaller populations in Turkey (20,000),

Greece (5,000), and the USA (15,000) (Hetzer 2004: 241). Despite the adversities of the 20th century, Turkey remains the country with the largest Sephardic population in Europe counting 14,200 Sephardim as of 1 March 2024[12]. Against all odds and predictions to the contrary, Sephardic culture and language continue to persist in Turkey to this day.

2.2.2 Shifts in public discourse regarding Jews

Since the establishment of the Turkish Republic, Turkish Jews have been officially recognised as a minority (Giesel 2015: 67). However, the new republic's political reforms and assimilationist policies pressured all minorities in Turkey to downplay their ethnic, cultural, and linguistic distinctiveness in public. Consequently, Jews, like other minorities, maintained a low profile and limited their public presence (Brink-Danan 2011a; 2011b; 2011c). However, in the early 1990s, amidst overtures to European Union membership and evolving diplomatic relations with Israel, Turkey embarked on a campaign commemorating the 500th anniversary of the Sephardic Jews' arrival in the Ottoman Empire. The prevailing discourse around this campaign portrayed Turkey as the "saviour of European Judaism", drawing on its Ottoman heritage of multi-ethnic, multicultural, multilingual, and multireligious tolerance (Seni 2015: 87).

The *Quincentennial Foundation*[13], established in 1989 by a group of 113 Jewish and Muslim Turkish citizens, aimed primarily to enhance Turkey's international image. It was founded with the goal of enabling Jewish and Muslim Turkish business elites to raise international awareness about Turkey's hospitality (Brink-Danan 2011: ix; Seni 2015: 87). According to official press releases of the *General Agenda* in 1991, the commemoration

> […] not only celebrates the 500th anniversary of the arrival of the Sephardic [Spanish] Jews on Turkish soil in 1492, but also the remarkable spirit of tolerance and acceptance which has characterized the entire Jewish experience in Turkey. This spirit is not an insulated instance of humanitarianism; throughout its history, Turkey has welcomed people of different creeds, cultures and backgrounds. The Jewish community of Turkey is a part of this tradition. (Brink-Danan 2011: ix)

As highlighted by Brink-Danan (2011) in the preface to her book, Jews in Turkish society became symbolic representations of the tolerated "Other". Following decades of assimilationist policies, there was a notable shift in public discourse concerning Jews,

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[12] These figures were last verified with officials of the *Jewish Community of Turkey* in Istanbul on March 1, 2024.

[13] In 2001, *the Quincentennial Foundation Museum of Turkish Jews* was founded on the premises of *Zulfaris* Synagogue in Karaköy. It was moved to the compound of *Neve Shalom* Synagogue in Galata in 2016.

who were now “called upon to perform publicly the very differences (languages, accents, rituals, beliefs, musical traditions, and so on) they had endeavoured to keep private for so long” (Brink-Danan 2011: xi).

This sudden change in the public role and discourse surrounding the Jewish minority in Turkey, coupled with the friendlier relations between Turkey and Israel in the 1990s, particularly in the military sphere, took a dramatic turn following the outbreak of the Gaza war in December 2008 (Seni 2015: 88). This shift was underscored by the Prime Minister’s expression of regret regarding the welcoming of Spanish Jews 500 years earlier (Seni, 2015: 88), which left a lasting impact on the Jewish community. Today, the Sephardim in Turkey live with a heightened awareness and vigilance, in the knowledge that any escalation of conflict in the Middle East could have devastating consequences for the Jewish population in Turkey. The awareness of potential risks in Turkey coupled with the perceived rise in antisemitism in the past decades has led to a significant increase in emigration to Israel and other countries, reaching a historical peak of 380 applications per in 2016[14].

2.2.3 “The Law of Return”

Less than a decade ago, another significant shift occurred within the Sephardic community of Turkey due to historic nationality laws enacted by Spain and Portugal. The Spanish Parliament approved *Law 12/2015 of 24 June Granting Spanish Nationality to Sephardi Jews Native to Spain*[15]. This law granted dual non-residential citizenship to descendants of Iberian Jews who faced expulsion or forced conversion during the 15th and 16th centuries. These individuals could now reclaim their nationality rights through their ancestral lineage, with no requirement to renounce their current citizenship or establish residency (Benmayor & Kandiyoti 2023: 1). McDonald (2021: 723) suggests that the novelty of this law primarily lay in the symbolic message it aimed to convey, rather than in the “limited conditions under which Sephardi descendants could apply for Spanish citizenship”.

The Spanish government described this law as the long-awaited “return” of Sephardic descendants to Spain, portraying them as “exiled Spaniards with deep attachments to the country transmitted through language, culture, and blood” (Mcdonald

[14] These figures were last verified with officials of the *Jewish Community of Türkiye* in Istanbul on March 1, 2024.
[15] Ley 12/2015, de 24 de junio, en materia de concesión de la nacionalidad española a los sefardíes originarios de España,” Boletín Oficial del Estado (BOE), 51, 25.06.2015, pp. 52557–52664, https://www.boe.es/eli/es/l/2015/06/24/12/dof/spa/pdf.

2021: 722-723), rhetoric reminiscent of Ángel Pulido Fernández' "espanyoles sin patria" (cf. § 3.5.2). Following the enactment of these laws, the enthusiastic response from Sephardi communities worldwide was demonstrated by the large number of applicants, totalling around 300,000 for both Spain and Portugal (Benmayor & Kandiyoti 2023: 3). In the absence of a formal apology for the sufferings endured during the expulsion and Inquisition, this law represents at least a recognition of expulsion. It therefore has both legal and deeply symbolic reparative effects (Benmayor and Kandiyoti, 2023).

Although this is not the first time Sephardic Jews have been granted Spanish citizenship (Benmayor and Kandiyoti 2023; Linhard 2014)[16], it is the most far-reaching to date due to its simplified requirements for citizenship acquisition and its significant media coverage. However, the enactment of this law has also generated mixed reactions regarding the conditions that the Sephardim were required to meet in order to acquire citizenship. Section 6.2.5 will explore these conditions and their reception among community members.

2.3 The Judeo-Spanish language

2.3.1 Terms referring to Judeo-Spanish

The plethora of terms used to refer to Judeo-Spanish highlights the complexity surrounding its nomenclature. Harris (1994: 20) has identified over 80 different terms used to describe the language spoken by the Sephardim. Common glottonyms include *Ladino, Judeo-Spanish, Espanyol, Spanyol, Djudyo,* and *Hakitía/Haketia*, among others. Today, three terms are frequently employed to refer to the language spoken by the Jewish communities of the Ottoman Empire: *Judeo-Spanish, Ladino,* and *(E)spanyol*. This linguistic diversity has sparked significant debate among both scholars and native speakers.

> Not even native speakers agree on what to call what, in the academic world, is generally known as Judeo-Spanish; there are those who refer to it as 'Ladino', 'Judezmo', 'Spanyolit', 'El Kasteyano Muestro', and even simply 'Espaniol'. (Zucker 2001: 4)

The terms used within the community itself can differ significantly from those used externally. The most common self-designations of the language among Sephardim are *Espanyol (lo muestro)* ('our Spanish'), *Ladino*, and *Djudyo*. The term *Judeo-Spanish* emerged in the 20th century as a scholarly term to denote the written and spoken

[16] For a historical overview of the citizenship question among Sephardi Jews, see Benmayor & Kandiyoti (2023: introduction) and Linhard (2014).

language of the Sephardim. This term is considered the most neutral and self-explanatory term (Harris 1982a: 5), which is why I adopted it in this dissertation.

The glottonym *Ladino* stands out as one of the most intricate in terms of its evolution through different historical contexts. In the medieval period, it denoted both the spoken Romance language *ladino* (Hebrew *la'az*), in contrast to the *lashon [akodesh]* (Hebr. *leshon ha-qodesh,* 'Holy Tongue'), and the literal translation of the sacred texts; it was thus also used to refer to 'translation' or 'meaning'. (Bunis 2018: 186). The term *Ladino* also denoted the ability of non-Christian Spaniards to speak Latin or Castilian fluently (Attig 2012). Moreover, it is believed that during the Middle Ages, *Ladino* simply meant *Spanish* (Kowallik 1993: 38), as Medieval Spanish was sometimes referred to as *nuestro latín* 'our Latin' (Bossong 2008: 88). *Ladinar* or *latinar* therefore denoted the process of translating the Bible from Arabic or Hebrew into Latin or its dialects (Busse 1994: 38). These translations were also termed *enladinamientos*, 'latinisations' (Bossong 2008: 88). In Balkan Judeo-Spanish, *ladinar* denoted translations from Hebrew into any vernacular.

The meaning of the term *Ladino* gradually evolved following the expulsion of the Jewish community in 1492. Initially, *Ladino* referred to translations of sacred texts, serving as a secondary sacral language (Kowallik 1993: 145). *Ladino* is described as "incomprehensible archaic Spanish" (Kramer 2003/2004: 341) or a "hebraico romanceado", 'romanised Hebrew', characterised by strong references to Hebrew in semantics, phraseology, and syntax (Kowallik 1993: 144). Initially developed for didactic purposes, *ladino* aimed to render the "holy language" accessible to a community whose proficiency in Hebrew had declined (Busse 1994: 48).

Since the 1980s, amidst increased efforts to document Judeo-Spanish worldwide, *Ladino* has become the commonly accepted endonym for the spoken vernacular of the Sephardim (Șaul 2013: 185). The term has garnered popularity among speakers in Turkey, Israel, the USA, and online communities, establishing itself as the primary glottonym outside of linguistic circles. In contrast to its historical complexity, *Ladino* now serves as a unifying term for the Sephardic community, representing both linguistic and cultural heritage. Sephardic music, for example, is commonly referred to as *Ladino* music (Cohen 2010; Nechiti 2015).

2.3.2 Historical development

The historical development of Judeo-Spanish can be broadly categorised into Old, Middle, and Modern phases, as outlined by Bunis (1992; 2021)[17].

Old stage. With the onset of the Reconquista, Jewish communities in Spain gradually transitioned from speaking Arabic[18]—previously the dominant language among them—to Ibero-Romance varieties. However, early texts from the 13th century indicate that Ibero-Romance varieties had already begun to be adopted as vernacular languages among some Sephardic Jews, while elements of Arabic persisted well into the 14th century (Patai 1977: 7-8; 101). According to Bunis (1992; 2021), Jewish Ibero-Romance texts predating the expulsions from Castilla and Aragón in 1492 and Portugal in 1497 suggest the presence of a medieval Jewish Ibero-Romance dialect geography. During this era, Sephardic Jews likely cultivated distinct lexical and phraseological features tied to their Jewish religious identity, echoing the linguistic diversity observed among Spanish Christians and Muslims (Kowallik 1993: 9). Benor (2009; 2010) refers to these features as *ethnolinguistic repertoires*, "a fluid set of linguistic resources that members of an ethnic group may use variably as they index their ethnic identities" (Benor 2010: 159).

Middle Stage: Bunis (2021) further divides this period into an Early Middle (1493–1728) and a Late Middle Period (1729–1810)[19]. The subsequent diaspora of Sephardic Jews to the Ottoman Empire, Israel, and North Africa marked the middle stage in the development of Judeo-Spanish. Following the Sephardim's arrival in these diaspora territories, an independent linguistic register emerged through a process of linguistic levelling of the various Ibero-Romance varieties and repertoires (cf. Benor 2009) spoken by Jews in their different regions of origin (Bunis 2018; Minervini 2006;

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[17] A similar periodization is employed by Bürki, Schmid & Schwegler (2006), who suggest grouping linguistic developments into Sefarad I (Medieval Judeo-Spanish Culture in the Iberian Peninsula), Sefarad II (Post-expulsion developments into the 19th century) and Sefarad III (late 19th century through today).

[18] According to Patai (1977: 7), the adoption of new languages has played a key role in the development of "the Jewish Mind" throughout history. Patai identifies: (1) the shift from Aramaic to Biblical Hebrew (seventeenth century to 586 B.C.E.); (2) the encounter with Hellenism and Greek (late fourth century B.C.E. to second century C.E.); (3) the encounter with Arabic in southwest Asia and North Africa (7th-15th century), making Arabic the language of the majority of "Spanish" Jewry; (4) the encounter with the Renaissance and Italian (14th-17th century); (5) the encounter between European Jews and Christian sectarian movements in Poland and Ukraine, influencing the development of Hasidism and Yiddish in the 18th century; (6) the encounter with modern Western culture in the 18th century and the adoption of national languages in each country. Patai views the latter as "more crucial, more transfigurative, and potentially fraught with more dangers than any of the preceding five" (Patai 1977: 8).

[19] For an in-depth analysis of the linguistic paradigms associated with this temporal and geographic categorization, see Bunis (1992; 2021).

Penny 2012). This linguistic *koiné*, as noted by Penny (2012: 340-341), must have emerged among the third generation of Sephardim born in the diaspora around the second half of the 16th century. The early Sephardic diaspora was thus most likely marked by a diglossic scenario in which Castilian, the variety of Jewish Ibero-Romance with the largest number of speakers, became the predominant spoken and written language, while communication within the community continued to use diverse regional varieties from different parts of Spain where Jews had resided (Bunis 2021: 185). The gradual amalgamation of Sephardic communities from diverse backgrounds gave rise to a common Castilian-based *koiné* (Lleal 1992; Quintana 2012)[20].

It is believed that the divergence from the contemporary Castilian spoken in the Iberian Peninsula occurred towards the late 17th and early 18th centuries due to the interruption of contact between Sephardic communities in Ottoman territories and those scattered across North Africa (Kowallik 1993: 116). Sephardic Jews became increasingly multilingual during this period, with proficiency distributed unevenly across several languages. For instance, by the end of the 19th century, Sephardim in Bulgaria could read Hebrew script without speaking it, spoke Turkish without writing it, and could neither speak nor write Bulgarian (Münch 1994: 214).

Modern Stage. The modern era of Judeo-Spanish development emerged during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, coinciding with the Ottoman *Tanzimat*[21] reforms which shaped the linguistic practices of the era, and continues to this day (Bunis 1994: 10-11). This stage coincided with a dynamic period marked by significant national and international shifts in language discourse and ideologies in the context of nation-building endeavours. Descendants of Iberian Jews had preserved Judeo-Spanish for over four centuries without needing to learn to read or write Turkish, while simultaneously occupying elite positions within Ottoman society. According to Harris (1994: 40), one of the primary reasons for this language preservation was the religious, educational, and legal autonomy granted to non-Muslim minorities under the Ottoman Empire. Patai (1977) attributes the continuation of Judeo-Spanish in the Ottoman diaspora to the high social status and prestige enjoyed by Sephardic Jews until the emergence of nationalism

[20] By 1570, Castilian was declared the official vernacular language of Thessaloniki, leading to the production of chronicles in Castilian during the 16th century, regardless of whether the author's origins lay in Spain LLEAL, COLOMA, El dialecto sefardí y su historia. Barcelona 1992, 18..

[21] The Turkish term *Tanzimat* 'Reorganisation' refers to a period of reform in the Ottoman Empire that began in 1839 and ended with the First Constitutional Era in 1876. These reforms were intended to modernise and consolidate the social and political foundations of the Ottoman Empire. Among the strategies employed in the reforms was the integration of non-Turks into Ottoman society, granting them liberty and equality within the empire.

in the 19th century. Throughout the Ottoman Empire, it was not uncommon for even non-Jews to have knowledge of Judeo-Spanish for practical purposes (Myhill 2004: 125). However, the latter half of the 19th century witnessed the onset of the decline of Judeo-Spanish, influenced by internal measures within the Jewish community as well as significant socio-political changes in Turkey during the first half of the 20th century.

2.3.3 Geographic distribution of Judeo-Spanish varieties

As discussed in Section 2.3.2, after the Jews were expelled from the Iberian Peninsula in the late 15th century, Judeo-Spanish emerged and solidified as a distinct vernacular (Münch 1994: 174). In the new diaspora environments, two main varieties emerged: Western Judeo-Spanish, or Haketia, spoken by Iberian Jews who settled in North Africa, particularly in regions of Morocco, Ceuta, and Melilla; and Eastern Judeo-Spanish, spoken by the descendants of Iberian Jews who migrated to the Ottoman Empire (Busse 1994: 38). Haketia remained in use until the late 19th century, when Spain's territorial conquests in Morocco led to its decline as a spoken vernacular (Hetzer 2004: 240). While the development of Haketia in North African communities involved continuous contact with Southern Spanish varieties, the Eastern Judeo-Spanish variety is characterised by the absence of such contact, "which led to the formation of an autonomous diasystem during the two centuries following the expulsion" (Quintana 2023: 330-331).

The geographic distribution of the Sephardim in the Ottoman Empire, along with their constant migration and the trade, kinship networks, and religious and cultural exchanges between different Sephardic communities within the empire, led to the levelling of dialectal differences and the development of a relative uniformity in the Judeo-Spanish language (Penny 1996: 56). This uniformity was consolidated by the formation of economic, cultural, and religious centres for the Sephardim around cities like Istanbul and Thessaloniki. Beyond dialect levelling, this uniformity led to the emergence of linguistic innovations and new varieties (Quintana 2006a; Quintana 2006b).

By the 18th century, Judeo-Spanish had evolved into a pluricentric language, characterised by a dialect continuum with two main regional standards centred around Thessaloniki and Istanbul. Quintana notes that the relatively weak influence exerted by these regional standards allowed for greater variation within Eastern Judeo-Spanish as compared to the more standardised varieties of Peninsular and Latin American Spanish (Quintana 2023: 333). In the 19th and 20th centuries, the formation of nation states in the Balkans and the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire led to the emergence of new isoglosses as a result of the intense contact with Slavic languages and a greater linguistic

hiatus between these and the more conservative central areas around Thessaloniki and Istanbul. Based on a bundle of isoglosses, mainly phonetic traits, Quintana (2023: 334-336) identifies two main varieties of Judeo-Spanish: *Central Judeo-Spanish* (ranging from Skopje in the northwest to Cairo in the south and Ankara in the east) and *Peripheral Judeo-Spanish* (extending from Ploiești in the north to Plovdiv in the south, and from Zadar in the west to Burgas and Varna in the east) (Quintana 2023: 333). However, as Quintana notes, these distinguishing features do not strictly correspond to geographic boundaries, as they often intersect across regions.

2.3.4. Linguistic classification and affiliation

In terms of typological classification and linguistic affiliation, the development of Judeo-Spanish into distinct varieties of Spanish has led this set of varieties to be considered a distinct language in its own right (Mensching & Savelsberg 2023: 1). Judeo-Spanish exhibits archaic features compared to contemporary Spanish and has undergone numerous independent innovations — both extra-linguistic and intra-linguistic — on the morphological, lexical, and syntactic levels compared to the Castilian of the 15th century (Kowallik 1993: 10)[22]. Moreover, Judeo-Spanish shares characteristics with other languages spoken by Jewish communities. This commonality arises from a history of continuous language shift from Old Hebrew, the ethno-religious identity of its speakers (Wexler 1981: 137), and the dynamics of linguistic distinctions within the diaspora. The exploration of these phenomena has given rise to the field of *Jewish Interlinguistics*, as articulated by Wexler (1981). Fishman's (1985) definition of what constitutes a Jewish language includes the psychological, sociological, and linguistic dimensions of language:

> I define as "Jewish" any language that is phonologically, morpho-syntactically, lexico-semantically or orthographically different from that of non-Jewish sociocultural networks and that has some demonstrably unique function in the role-repertoire of a Jewish sociocultural network, which function is not normatively present in the role-repertoire of non-Jews and/ or is not normally discharged via varieties identical with those utilized by non-Jews (Fishman 1985a: 4).

Given the subjective nature of these parameters, the attitudes and perceptions of both Jews and non-Jews towards the vernacular in question play a pivotal role in defining what constitutes a 'Jewish language'.

[22] For an in-depth analysis of Judeo-Spanish from a historical perspective, see Bunis (2018), Minervini (2006, 2023). For a comprehensive linguistic description of Judeo-Spanish, see the different articles in the recently published edited book *Manual of Judaeo-Romance Linguistics and Philology* by Mensching & Savelsberg (2023).

Judeo-Spanish, like other Jewish languages and varieties, is characterised as a *mixed language* (Altabev 1998; Altabev 2003; Harris 1979) or *fusion language*, with Hebrew playing a determining role in this fusion to varying degrees across all Jewish languages (Haarmann 1986: 76; Weinreich, 2008 [1980]: 166). According to Weinreich (2008 [1980]), the analysis of this fusion extends beyond the typical distinction between foreign words and loanwords. The composition of these languages follows an "arithmetic" order, with Hebrew being the most stable and oldest component (Weinreich, 2008: 166). The other components are generated by language contact and may number three or four languages depending on the linguistic environment.

In the case of Judeo-Spanish in the Ottoman Empire and later Turkey, Hebrew and Aramaic influences have been preserved for religious purposes, Turkish and Greek have been part of daily life, and French was the language of education for nearly a century (mid-19th to mid-20th century). Italian influences, particularly in vocabulary, stem from trade relationships with Jews in Italian port cities and efforts by the Italian government in the Balkans (Bornes Varol 2008; Minervini 2014). Additionally, Judeo-Spanish has been influenced by surrounding languages such as Romanian (Sala 1976) and Serbo-Croatian (Bunis 2001), among others.

Throughout the Balkans, Ottoman Turkish vocabulary strongly influenced Judeo-Spanish (Bunis 1994: 23), with loanwords adapted both phonologically and morphologically, e.g. *tach-in-earse* 'to move, to relocate', (> Tk. ***taşınmak*** 'to move') (Bornes Varol 2006: 101). The number of lexical borrowings from Turkish increased among the Turkish Sephardim in the second half of the 20th century, when language shift was considerably accelerated and the impact of French had started to diminish (cf. § 2.3.6).

When examined through the lens of language purism, complex and multilayered linguistic contact across all grammatical levels, along with the prevalent code-mixing and code-switching practices typical of multilingual Sephardic individuals, as well as the high degree of linguistic variation, emerged as significant factors contributing to negative language attitudes towards Judeo-Spanish. Another major element influencing the perception of Judeo-Spanish as a low-status mixed language can be found in the changes that have occurred in its writing system, which are briefly outlined in Section 2.3.5.

2.3.5 Graphic systems

Due to its widespread geographical distribution, Judeo-Spanish has adopted various graphic systems over time, influenced by the period and regions of use. The absence of

a standardised international graphic system for Judeo-Spanish has been a significant factor in accelerating language shift. In the 16th century, with the rise of Jewish printing in the Ottoman Empire, early Judeo-Spanish texts aimed at the general public were printed using vocalised square letters, similar to those found in the Hebrew Bible and prayer books (Bunis 2018: 209). From the 16th to the 19th century, religious and ethnic texts were translated from Hebrew into Judeo-Spanish and printed in the *Rashi*[23] script, while vernacular texts were handwritten in the semi-cursive Solitreo version of the *Rashi* script (Münch 1994: 212). Until the Second World War, Sephardi communities predominantly used *Solitreo* for correspondence and exclusively employed Hebrew *Rashi* script for printing books and newspapers. The last Sephardic journals to use this script until their closure was *El Mesajero* (until in 1941) in Thessaloniki (Rodrigue 2011: 211) and *La Vara* (employing *Meruba* characters, until 1948) in New York (Ben-Ur 1998).

Since the mid-19th century, the establishment of state schools in various Balkan countries, along with enrolment in foreign-language courses, particularly in *Alliance Israélite Universelle* schools (cf. § 2.3.6), led to a gradual transition from the Hebrew letter system to Roman and Cyrillic orthographies based on French, Serbian, Bulgarian, and romanised Turkish (1928)[24] (Bunis 2018: 210). With the introduction of the Latin alphabet in Turkey in 1928, the written heritage of the Sephardim in *Rashi* script became inaccessible. Consequently, the community lost access to a significant period of their literary output, including books, religious texts, and newspapers, which further accelerated language shift.

In the latter half of the 20th century, various graphic systems were used to transcribe Judeo-Spanish across different countries. In France, a script centred around French norms was used, while in other regions such as Turkey, scripts were influenced by or based on the majority language requirements, with or without accentuation. During this period, Moshé Shaul, the publisher of *Aki Yerushalayim* magazine, introduced a romanised script intended to be accessible to both Sephardim and non-Sephardim worldwide. This initiative marked the first instance of an internationally recognised writing system for Judeo-Spanish. This transcription model, which uses a phonemic approach with optional stress marking, has been widely recognised as a standard in both academic

[23] This script was named after the famous medieval Bible commentator Rabbi Shlomo ben Yitzhak of Troyes, who first used the angular *Meruba* characters in his comments. *Meruba* is a semi-italic font, originally used mainly for book manuscripts. Publishers in Thessaloniki and Constantinople, where the majority of the Sephardic Diaspora lived in the Ottoman Empire, adopted this writing system.

[24] Before 1928, Anatolian Turkish (the language that is official in Turkey today) was written using the Arabic script.

and non-academic circles (Shaul 2003). In Turkey, except for academic works and publications such as *Şalom* and *El Amaneser*, which use the script, Judeo-Spanish continues to be written by a majority of the consultants[25] in this study using the Turkish alphabet. Among the study *consultants*, I have recorded great individual variation and confusion regarding writing in Judeo-Spanish.

The upcoming Section 2.3.6 explores key language policies and ideologies that have led to the decline of Judeo-Spanish to a postvernacular language (cf. Shandler 2004)[26].

2.3.6 Language policies of the 20th century

By the 19th century, Sephardic Jews experienced a decline in their economic and cultural influence, compounded by the instability faced by all minorities during the dissolution of Ottoman Empire. Moreover, the evolving educational opportunities available to Jewish communities in Western countries widened the gap between them and their Eastern counterparts. Sephardic men, who were involved in professions and trade, often enjoyed better education than the general population, partly due to greater financial means and partly due to the emphasis on studying Jewish scriptures. However, educational access in the Ottoman Empire remained restricted to affluent Jewish circles until the latter half of the century, with women excluded from these opportunities. Only girls from wealthy or rabbinical families had access to education (Benbassa & Rodrigue 2000). To address this disparity, the *Alliance Israélite Universelle* (AIU), an international Jewish organisation based in Paris, embarked on a mission to promote human rights for Jews worldwide and to improve educational access for Jewish children across the Mediterranean, Iran, and the former Ottoman Empire throughout the 19th and 20th centuries.

This large-scale initiative was initiated by Adolphe Crémieux and a cohort of six prominent young intellectuals representing French Jewry. Guided by the motto that “all Jews are responsible for one another”, the AIU drew inspiration from the ideals of the European Enlightenment and the French Revolution (Bossong 2008: 103). The

[25] The community members who were willing to help me to carry out this study are referred to in this work as *consultants* in an endeavour to semantically mark their contribution to this study and to empower those from whom I learned and who granted me an insight into their personal lives and perspectives (cf. Rice 2006: 142).

[26] Busse (1994: 83) the postvernacular Judeo-Spanish as a “residual language”.

organisation aimed to achieve Jewish emancipation, education, and equality, along with language standardisation, modernisation, and the promotion of human rights.

Throughout the Ottoman Empire, approximately 115 AIU schools, 52 on the European side and 62 on the Asian side (Gerson Şarhon 2019), were established between 1864 and 1920, fostering a generation proficient in French, which came to symbolise civilisation and intellectualism (Gerson Şarhon 2011: 63). The expansion of Alliance institutions was rapid, spanning from Tetouan in 1862 to Thessaloniki in 1873 (Kowallik 1993: 21). By the first half of the 20th century, French had become the most prestigious vernacular among educated Sephardim, to the extent that it supplanted Judeo-Spanish as the primary language for many (Münch 1994: 215).

The decline in the prestige of Judeo-Spanish continued with the signing of the *Lausanne Peace Treaty* in 1924, which delineated the borders of the modern Turkish Republic. Following the treaty, minority groups were given the option to use their minority languages for education. However, unlike other non-Muslim communities such as the Armenian or Greek communities, the Jewish community failed to acquire special rights as a minority while accepting full Turkish citizenship. As noted by Seloni & Sarfati (2013: 17) and Gerson Şarhon (2011: 63), the Jewish community was facing an impasse.

> They could not choose Hebrew because at that time Hebrew was not a language used for communication in everyday life. They could not choose Ladino because they did not have the means of teaching in that language as it had never been used as such. They were not allowed to continue using French as the medium of education because French was not a Jewish language per se. That is why Turkish was chosen as the language for education. (Gerson Şarhon 2011: 63)

Given the constraints outlined by Gerson Şarhon, opting for Turkish as the language of instruction was a pragmatic response to the challenges confronting the Jewish community at that time. This decision also marked the cessation of French instruction in elementary schools that had formerly been under the purview of the by-then nationalised AIU schools (Benbassa & Rodrigue 2000: 102).

In 1924, just a year after the establishment of the Turkish Republic (1923) under Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, a series of reforms and policies were implemented, affecting all minority groups in the country and promoting a vision of a monolingual, monoethnic state. The slogans from this period, such as *Ne mutlu Türk'üm diyene* ('Happy is the one who calls himself Turk'), can still be seen today in abbreviated form across Turkey, appearing on bridges, in village squares, and at airports. Identifying as a Turk meant adhering to the expectation of exclusively using the Turkish language within the shared social space. Against the backdrop of broader linguistic homogenisation efforts, one of the most significant Turkification initiatives was the *Vatandaş Türkçe konuş!* ('Citizen, speak Turkish!', henceforth the English translation will be used) campaign. Originating with law

students in 1928 and backed by the Republican People's Party, this campaign lasted until 1940, experiencing revivals in the 1950s and 1960s. It transformed the public linguistic environment through the widespread distribution of Turkish-centred posters and placards (Seloni & Sarfati, 2013:17). Its consequences included instilling a sense of fear among linguistic minorities (Bali 2008b: 268-269). Individuals conversing in languages other than Turkish in public areas faced fines and constraints on accessing public services and were often subjected to public humiliation, verbal abuse, and even physical harassment, as described by Aslan (2007).

> Citizen, do not make friends with or shop from those so-called Turkish citizens who do not speak Turkish. We request from our lady citizens who work as telephone operators: Please immediately cut off conversations in Greek and Ladino. (Aslan 2007: 245)

As examined in Section 6.3, these events deeply traumatised the Sephardim and instilled a broad spectrum of trauma coping mechanisms which, in longer term, resulted in negative attitudes towards their *heritage language*[27]. During this period, Turkish newspapers commonly echoed a call to establish a clear Turkish national identity within the context of the Ottoman Empire's multi-ethnic, multiconfessional, and multilingual heritage. The first population census of the Republic of November 28, 1927[28], revealed that 2 million individuals out of 13.6 million did not speak Turkish (cf. Aslan 2007: 245). As illustrated in the figures below, 28 percent of Istanbul's population spoke languages other than Turkish, with Ladino representing 5 percent of the languages spoken in the city.

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[27] *Heritage language* refers to Judeo-Spanish as part of the Sephardic ethnolinguistic culture. It goes beyond mere knowledge of or fluency in the language, to encompass the cultural and symbolic value of Judeo-Spanish in its vernacular and postvernacular stage (repeated here for convenience from Dissertation Roadmap)*.*

[28] *General Directorate of Statistics*, 1929, https://kutuphane.ttk.gov.tr/resource?itemId=265164&dkymId=59995, accessed February 2, 2024.

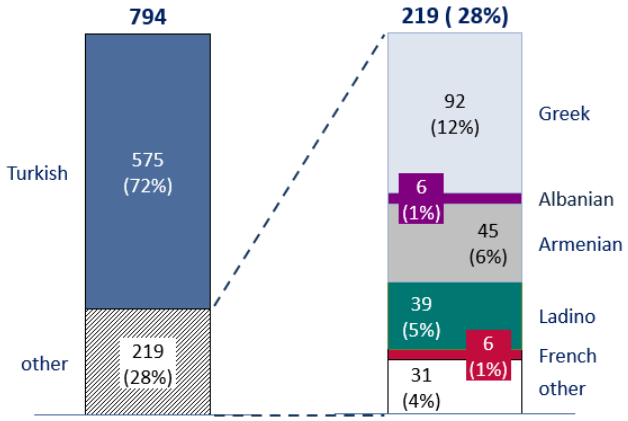

Figure 2. Ch. 2: *Language distribution in Turkey* Figure 3. Ch. 2: *Language distribution in Istanbul*

Source: *General Directorate of Statistics*, 1929 cited in Aslan (2007: 245-2466)

One of the pivotal measures in the Turkification process aimed to eradicate all these languages and impose Turkish alone in the public sphere. Turkifikation efforts proved remarkably successful, largely due to the bottom-up active involvement of Turkish social actors as "missionaries of the new regime", as noted by Aslan (2007: 246). This campaign for linguistic homogenisation, endorsed by the state, emerged as an interpretation by the Turkish intellectual elite of the imperative for national unity. This "new linguistic order" further enhanced negative attitudes and significant tensions in areas with substantial minority populations, such as Galata, Balat, Hasköy, and the Islands. Consequently, the Jewish population became dispersed across different districts of Istanbul, including Şişli and Kurtuluş, while the character of the "Latin District" underwent a drastic transformation. Greek and Jewish establishments were supplanted by Turkish businesses, resulting in the gradual dissolution of the Jewish and Greek cultural presence in the area (Morvan 2011; Morvan 2017).

The uninterrupted transmission of Judeo-Spanish was possible until the first half of the 20th century due to the community's life in a demographically concentrated space in which intergenerational language transmission could take place in a cohesive offline Judeo-Spanish community. The changing of settlement patterns in Istanbul in the second half of the 20th century resulted in the social-spatial fragmentation of the Sephardim across different districts in Istanbul. This fragmentation led to a rupture in the close social exchanges of the community, weakening its linguistic communicative norms (cf. Gumperz 1972; Milroy 1980) and language transmission. Consequently, the first half of the 20th century ushered in a new phase in Sephardic language behaviour, one which

lasted until approximately the 1990s, when discourse surrounding Judeo-Spanish started to undergo a new shift towards the positive spectrum.

2.3.7 Shifts in ideologies and attitudes

Over the course of five decades, spanning from the 1920s to the 1970s, the Sephardic community underwent a significant linguistic transition, evolving from primarily non-Turkish speakers to mostly non-Judeo-Spanish speakers, as noted by Gerson Şarhon (2011: 62-63). This shift was accompanied by a marked increase in negative attitudes towards Judeo-Spanish, which reached their nadir around the 1970s. During this period, the prevailing perception among the Sephardim was that Judeo-Spanish represented a "deformed mixture of languages" spoken primarily by the "uneducated" (Gerson Şarhon 2011: 62). As detailed in the preceding section, one contributing factor to the formation of these negative attitudes was the implicit language policy of the AIU schools, which promoted a hierarchy of languages with Judeo-Spanish occupying the lowest rung in terms of prestige and recognition. Judeo-Spanish newspapers sponsored by the AIU, such as *El Tiempo*, depicted Ladino as "shameful", a "jargon", a "bastard" language, and even a "dying" language (Stein 2004: 56) long before its eventual decline was even realised. However, perhaps the most significant catalyst for negative perceptions of the heritage language was the more complex and less publicly visible fear of reprisals stemming from the *Citizen speak Turkish!* campaign, which initiated a cycle of reactions to and manifestations against Judeo-Spanish. While these negative attitudes persisted until approximately the 1990s, the discourses that gave rise to them are still remembered and reproduced today.

As discussed in Section 2.2.1, the 1990s marked a transformative period for the Sephardim in Istanbul, characterised by shifts not only in political but also in cultural and linguistic discourse. As a result of these shifts, community members took proactive steps to "revive" Judeo-Spanish, achieving notable milestones in the preservation and documentation of Judeo-Spanish during a period in which, as Seni (2015) noted, language assimilation was completed.

> Aujourd'hui, alors que le volet linguistique et éducatif de la politique de « turquification » mené par l'Etat a bel et bien abouti, que les juifs de Turquie s'expriment parfaitement en turc ceux-ci prennent des initiatives concernant la préservation de leur patrimoine culturel. (Seni 2015: 89)

Among the longer-lasting initiatives were the introduction of a Judeo-Spanish supplement called *El Amaneser* (2003) in the weekly newspaper *Şalom* and the establishment of *Sephardic Center of Istanbul* (SKAD)[29] in Istanbul (2003) (cf. § 5.6).

These initiatives reflect broader international efforts to preserve Judeo-Spanish. Over the past two to three decades, significant endeavours have been undertaken to safeguard Judeo-Spanish, particularly in Israel. In 1997, under the leadership of Israel's fifth President, Yitzhak Navon, a Sephardi himself, the Knesset, the unicameral parliament of Israel, enacted legislation establishing the *Autoridad Nasionala del Ladino* (ANL). This institution aimed to disseminate and promote Sephardic life in Israel through various means, including the publication of the journal *Aki Yerushalayim* and the provision of instruction in Judeo-Spanish. Additionally, the ANL was tasked with preserving Sephardic language and culture by collecting, archiving, and evaluating Sephardic cultural heritage. Following its dissolution in 2010, plans were announced in 2015 by the *Royal Spanish Academy* (RAE) to establish a Ladino academy in Israel, with the aim of preserving the language and its cultural heritage. The constitution of the *Akademia Nasionala del Ladino* was drafted on February 20, 2018, and unanimously ratified on October 3, 2019. The new ANL's inaugural public event took place in Jerusalem on December 9, 2020, with Spain's Foreign Minister Arancha González Laya and Israeli President Reuven Rivlin in attendance.

These measures represent a significant step forward in the recognition and commitment to preserving what is left of the Judeo-Spanish language through instruction, cultural programs, and research both in Israel and internationally, not least with the goal of enhancing speakers' confidence in a language that has been gradually suppressed for more than a century.

2.3.8 Current dynamics of language use in Istanbul

Despite intensified efforts to preserve Judeo-Spanish, the language is currently categorised as a vanishing language in a postvernacular phase, in which individuals interact in it despite lacking fluency (Shandler, 2004). The Judeo-Spanish language has a reduced communicative and increasingly performative function (cf. § 56). Estimates of the worldwide Judeo-Spanish-speaking population vary widely, ranging from as low as

[29] Acronym based on the Turkish Name *Sefarad Kültürü Arastirma Merkezi* ('Sephardic Culture Research Center').

11,000 (Harris, 2011: 58)[30] to 100,000 (Bunin Benor 2020) and up to 400,000 (Hetzer, 2004: 237), highlighting the challenges in accurately assessing its vitality. The huge disparities among different estimates arise from the absence of linguistic criteria for precisely delineating consultants' language profiles (Kirschen, 2018). Today, except for one recorded case of a monolingual Judeo-Spanish speaker in Israel (Kirschen 2020), bilingualism and multilingualism are the norm among the Sephardim. Fluent speakers of the language are predominantly over the age of 60 (cf. Harris 2011: 52). In a small-scale study, Gerson Şarhon (2011: 65) identifies the birth year of the last native speaker in Turkey as approximately 1945. In the current study, the youngest individual reporting Judeo-Spanish as their mother tongue was born in 1955 (cf. Figure 1. Dissertation Roadmap).

The transmission of Judeo-Spanish to the generations born in the second half of the 20th century is the exception rather than the rule. Despite a surge in interest in developing Judeo-Spanish teaching materials since the 1990s (Bornes Varol 1998; Gattegno & Refael 1995; Koén-Sarano 1999a; Koén-Sarano 1999b) these resources have seen limited to no utilisation in teaching practices in Turkey. Apart from private courses for Sephardic Jews initiated in 2006 by the Instituto Cervantes in Istanbul, there have been no teaching initiatives in the city at an institutional level.

At the community level, the transmission of Judeo-Spanish is facilitated through a variety of initiatives. These include a children's choir, youth activities, and theatre performances, as well as printed media outlets in Judeo-Spanish, *Ladino Day*, and Judeo-Spanish language courses. Additionally, activities organised under the auspices of the *Sephardic Center of Istanbul* (SKAD) play a significant role in promoting and preserving Judeo-Spanish heritage within the community (cf. Chapter 5 for a detailed analysis).

The Sephardic community in Istanbul today finds its strongest cohesion online (Brink-Danan 2011c; Bunin Benor 2011), particularly on social media platforms like Facebook, YouTube, and WhatsApp (cf. § 5.8). These digital spaces are shared with Sephardim from the global diaspora, creating a virtual hub for cultural exchange and connection.

Today, traditional intergenerational transmission of the language within families has ceased. However, Judeo-Spanish persists as a postvernacular language, serving various functions such as intra-ethnic communication within Jewish summer clubs, as a

[30] Harris (2015) estimated around 3,000 speakers in the U.S. and about 8,000 speakers in Israel and Turkey, and even these speakers have a questionable level of fluency.

code language, and as a source of humour, often blended with Turkish. As I have shown in § 5.5 and § 5.9, the third generation often resorts to humorous phrases like *el vapor **yanash**eyo al **kyupri*** (the boat approached the bridge) and *mozotros no mos **karish**eyamos en los **mesele**s del **hukumet*** (we do not get involved in matters of government), highlighting the perceived "impurity" of Judeo-Spanish due to its mixture with Turkish influences (in bold) (Gerson Şarhon 2011: 62). Furthermore, it continues to play a vital role in specific Jewish rituals, notably the Haggadah (Harris 2006: 120). These multifaceted functions extend beyond the typical domains of language use and transmission, a topic I explore in detail in Chapter 5 of the analysis.

2.4 Summary

This chapter started with an exploration of the historical journey of the Sephardic community, from their expulsion from the Iberian Peninsula in the late 15th century to their flourishing settlements across the Ottoman Empire. It shed light on the process of unifying diverse Jewish groups into a cohesive cultural and religious entity, the Sephardic community, enhanced by the emergence of a shared vernacular: Judeo-Spanish. Despite grappling with extreme challenges including economic downturns, persecution, and pressure to assimilate, particularly during the first half of the 20th century, followed by the Holocaust, the Judeo-Spanish community in Turkey has demonstrated extraordinary resilience, both linguistically and culturally, numbering 14,200 members as of March 2024.

To pave the way for discussing language ideologies and attitudes, I further trace the evolution of public discourse concerning Jews in Turkey throughout the 20th century, elucidating a journey marked by a transition from imposed minimal visibility to a significant commemorative campaign honouring their heritage, particularly during the 500th anniversary of Sephardic Jewish settlement in the Ottoman Empire. This attention underscored Turkey's position as the "saviour of European Judaism" and its commitment to its inherited cosmopolitan and multicultural identity, aligning with its international agendas at the time. However, this narrative was disrupted by shifting political dynamics in the Middle East, which triggered heightened awareness of insecurity and rising antisemitism following significant geopolitical events. Consequently, these developments spurred increased emigration among the Sephardim. The impact of historic nationality laws enacted by Spain and Portugal on Turkey's Sephardic community was explored, shedding light on the contentious debates and controversies ignited by the linguistic and legal prerequisites imposed on applicants.

The subsequent sections transition from the historical context of the community's development to a brief description of the Judeo-Spanish language. I first scrutinised the diverse terminology used to refer to Judeo-Spanish, reflecting scholarly debates and community preferences, but also the evolving language practices among the Sephardim and their relationship with and competence in Hebrew, as well as the complex domain distribution between Hebrew, Ladino, and the spoken vernacular. An overview of the linguistic development of Judeo-Spanish elucidates its evolution from medieval Spanish, characterised by distinct features influenced by Hebrew, Turkish, and other contact languages. This linguistic journey was further examined through the lens of various graphic systems used for transcription, from Hebrew to Roman orthographies, highlighting challenges posed by individual variation and confusion among speakers.

I then delved into the 20th-century language policies that significantly impacted the status of Judeo-Spanish, particularly the "Citizen, speak Turkish!" campaign, which had traumatic effects on the Sephardim and very largely contributed to negative attitudes towards the language. Moreover, I showed how proactive efforts in the 1990s aimed to revive and preserve Judeo-Spanish, marking a notable shift in Sephardic discourse.

The final section is dedicated to current dynamics, portraying Judeo-Spanish as a vanishing language in a postvernacular phase, with efforts to preserve it evident through various community initiatives and media outlets, but also enhanced by an international online community of practice. However, challenges persist in terms of transmission and the absence of institutional frameworks and infrastructure that could involve different generations and levels of proficiency. Although Judeo-Spanish faces hurdles in terms of vitality and transmission, I show how ongoing efforts within the Sephardic community and internationally to preserve and promote the language underscore its enduring cultural significance and invest it with increased symbolic value.

Chapter 3: State of the art

3.1 Overview

“The language we use forms an important part of our sense of who we are – of our identity” (Edwards 2009: foreword). While this statement is widely accepted, it raises complex questions regarding the role that language plays in the formation of individual and group identity, as well as the power mechanisms that allow individuals to feel part of a group and differentiate themselves from others in social interaction (Bucholtz & Hall 2004: 369). This chapter explores key concepts and complementary perspectives that form the basis of analysis of the relationship between language and identity among the Sephardim in Turkey. Specifically, I aim to address these inquiries by investigating the role of Judeo-Spanish in its postvernacular stage. I propose that through examining the interrelations between language ideologies, language attitudes, and language practices, one can gain a comprehensive perspective on the factors that influence the position of Judeo-Spanish within the core value hierarchy of the Sephardim.

The multi-dimensional interpretation framework adopted in this dissertation is structured across two distinct levels, the *description* level with the use of *Grounded Theory Methodology* (GTM) (cf. § 4.9.2), and the *interpretation* level, as illustrated in Figure 1. Ch. 4. (cf. § 4.1). To provide a thorough understanding of the role that language plays among the Sephardim at the interpretation level it is essential to begin by examining fundamental aspects of identity formation within the social sciences. In line with Bucholtz & Hall (2004), this examination is guided by two key concepts: *sameness* and *difference*, around which the understanding of language and identity revolves. I then delve into the specific linguistic dimension of this identity in the minority context in general and the Sephardic context in particular. This approach helps illuminate how Judeo-Spanish, despite its decline as a spoken vernacular, continues to shape and reflect Sephardic identity and values in contemporary Turkey.

Section 3.2 begins by elucidating key aspects of social identity, encompassing ethnic and national identities, and highlighting the dynamics of “identity-as-sameness” and “identity-as-uniqueness”, as proposed by Joseph (2004). I further explore the transition from an essentialist perspective (cf. § 3.2.1) on language and identity to a constructivist understanding (cf. § 3.2.2). Moreover, I introduce the ‘strategic essentialist’ approach (cf. § 3.2.3), which I incorporate into my analysis of Judeo-Spanish as a postvernacular language. This approach enables the language community to authentically represent its own language, encompassing all the unique characteristics that shape it. In alignment with the constructivist approach, I introduce the

multidisciplinary sociopsychological perspective on identity proposed by David & Bar-Tal (2009), which provides the foundation for analysing processes of identification on both the micro and macro levels within the Sephardic community (cf. § 3.2.4). Drawing on the constructivist anthropological linguistic perspective of Bucholtz & Hall (2004) and Ehala's (2018) approach, Section 3.2.5 presents the way in which I explore identity as a multifaceted interplay of semiotic processes, including *practice*, *performance*, *indexicality*, and *ideology*, that offer valuable insights into the connections between ideological constructs, language attitudes, language practices, and the role that language plays within the Sephardic community. The semiotic perspective on language and identity redirects attention from viewing (linguistic) identity solely as attributes of individuals or groups to considering it as reflecting dynamic situations. Within these contexts, individuals and groups assume agency in ongoing, situated, and strategic social and political processes (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004).

Section 3.3 provides a comprehensive theoretical framework for examining the intricate relationship between ethnic identity and language in a broader context. Beginning with a historical overview of major language ideologies (cf. § 3.3.1) I highlight their enduring influence on contemporary discourse and local language cultures. The exploration of constructivist perspectives (cf. § 3.3.2) underscores the evolving nature of ethnic identity, where language does not always hold a central position. Drawing on Barth's (Barth 1998 [1969]; Barth 2000), insights into ethnic boundary maintenance and Tajfel's (1981) research on group membership, I lay the groundwork for investigating the hierarchy of core values that shape ethnic identity (cf. § 3.3.3).

Throughout this discussion, I identify limitations in the *Core Value Theory* (Smolicz 1981; Smolicz, Secombe & Hudson 2001) and introduce counterexamples and additional theoretical developments that challenge certain essentialist assumptions in its initial versions. In the subsequent section (cf. § 3.3.4), the focus shifts to religion, a core value of Jewish identity in general and Sephardic identity in particular. By examining discourses on the interplay between language and religion from a diachronic perspective, I seek to elucidate the role of Hebrew as a sacred language and its impact on attitudes towards vernacular languages like Judeo-Spanish. Additionally, Section 3.3.5 examines authenticity as a meta core value in understanding the complexities of identity formation. Section 3.3.6 discusses attitudes and ideologies as a continuum, ranging from broad overarching ideologies to more specific attitudes.

Section 3.4 explores the relationship between language, identity, and acculturation processes within minority communities. Emphasising the unique dynamics of minority group identification, which are influenced by power differentials, ideological

rankings, and experiences of discrimination, I explore how ideologies and historical events, such as the rise of nation-states and Republican egalitarianism, have shaped attitudes towards minority languages, often resulting in their marginalisation. Examining a spectrum of acculturation processes, I discuss Haarmann's (1986) concepts of ethnic 'fusion' and 'fission', alongside Sussman's (2000) notion of 'conglomeration', which is particularly relevant to the Judeo-Spanish community. Transitioning to the role of situational factors in shaping linguistic identity and representation (cf. § 3.4.1), I underscore the enduring impact of historical and situational traumas coupled with *Spracherleben* (Busch 2015; Busch 2016) on intergenerational language transmission. Through the lens of the language and trauma framework, I explore how traumatic events influence attitudes towards heritage languages and language practices within minority communities. Through an analysis of the postvernacular state of Jewish languages, particularly Yiddish and Judeo-Spanish (cf. § 3.4.2), I examine how symbolic ethnicity and the symbolic significance of language contribute to a multi-layered linguistic identity that transcends geographical boundaries. Furthermore (cf. § 3.4.3), explores the symbolic significance of language in delineating group boundaries and identity against the backdrop of globalisation and evolving ideologies surrounding endangered languages, and the investigation of these new phenomena in the context of communities of practice.

Section 3.5 offers a brief review of recent developments in research contributing to the understanding of the relationship between Jewish, Sephardic and Turkish Sephardic ethnic identity and language. Section 3.5.1 begins by exploring broader concepts related to Jewish groups and their language practices, focusing on discourses of perceived Jewish 'distinctiveness' and 'loyalty'. Transitioning from these broader concepts, I explore core values of Jewish identity which have remained constant despite socio-political, economic, geographical and linguistic shifts. Within the context of the Balkan Sephardim, I narrow the focus to Sephardic language and identity, highlighting the simultaneous evolution of language ideologies associated with Judeo-Spanish across diverse regions. The rationale behind adopting a contrasting perspective in the literature review discussion stems from the concurrent evolution of language ideologies associated with Judeo-Spanish across diverse regions of the former Ottoman Empire and beyond (cf. Kirschen 2013). Furthermore, I explore a shift in the discourse surrounding Judeo-Spanish, emphasising the symbolic significance of language in delineating Sephardic ethnicity and serving as a cultural artefact or a means to reconnect with cultural heritage.

In Section 3.5.2 I examine the resurgence of scholarly interest in Sephardic history, culture, and language in the 1990s. I show how the early encounters with Judeo-Spanish, notably leading to what became known as ‘philosephardism’, intertwined with the Hispanism movement set the tone of negative attitudes towards Judeo-Spanish influenced by ideologies of language purism and assimilation. The evolving dynamics of language ideologies linked to Judeo-Spanish across diverse regions underscore the complex interplay between societal language ideologies and internal family language practices, revealing how language serves as both a marker of ethnic identity and a site of ideological negotiation and contestation among Sephardi communities.

3.2 Identity and belonging

Belonging to a social entity is one of the primary needs of the human species. Social belonging is a source of self-value for individuals, meets a basic need for protection, and is tied to the desire for continuity beyond the lifespan of an individual and in the organisation of the social environment. To understand belonging and identity, one must examine the phenomenon from the perspective of a wide range of disciplines. Section 3.2 provides a general outline of various approaches to identity and the mechanisms underlying it. It also serves as a theoretical foundation for the sections that explore the relationship between language and identity (cf. § 3.3).

Before delving deeper into the major research on identity that proved relevant to this investigation, I will establish the terminology that I will use to discuss identity in general. Throughout this chapter, I will employ the term ‘social identity’ (David & Bar-Tal 2009; Deaux 2013), which has been proposed by social psychologists as a more comprehensive concept that encompasses both ‘ethnic’ and ‘national identities’. The term ‘social identity’ is broader and less specific than the aforementioned two terms ‘ethnic’ or ‘national’ identity with reference to the common characteristics shared by an individual with other members of a group. This approach allows for broader generalisations at this stage, unconstrained by terminological boundaries that apply only to specific social groups and structures. Ethnic identity, defined as “the ethnic component of social identity” (Liebkind 1999: 141), will be explored separately in a subsequent section (§ 3.3.2) in connection with the relationship between language and ethnicity.

The exploration and conceptual analysis of identity gained prominence in response to interactions among new social groups resulting from increased worldwide migration. This increase in migration was driven by factors such as conflicts, wars, poverty, famine, environmental changes, and improved means of long-distance travel, all of which have become more prevalent since beginning of the modern era (David &

Bar-Tal 2009: 354). Issues of social identity have played a pivotal role in shaping national identities and in the formation of nation-states. Additionally, social identity is a central element in the development of transnational identities in an increasingly globalised world. It also plays a crucial role in delineating local sub-identities that have emerged in response to globalisation phenomena (Deaux 2006). In the following sections, I will explore how language practices mirror these external societal developments via language ideologies. On this basis, I will then examine the consequences of this relationship for individuals spanning three generations of Sephardim with varying language profiles ranging from fluent speakers to *heritage speakers*[31] (cf. Dissertation Roadmap; § 5.2).

Social identity consists of two layers: (1) the *personal layer* constituted by the properties of individuals and (2) the *social layer* which entails "that part of the self-concept of the individual that derives from his knowledge about his membership in a social group(s), and from the value and the emotional meaning that accompany this membership" (Tajfel 1981: 255). According to Joseph (2004: 37), social identity is shaped by two main processes: "identity-as-sameness", which involves categorising individuals into groups based on similarities, and "identity-as-uniqueness", which arises in opposition to and through the intersection of the "identity-as-sameness" categories.

The identity of a group thus emerges from constant contact with other groups from which it can differ (Barth 1998 [1969]; Tajfel 1981). Differentiation gives rise to a "systematic preference for the norms, values, and behaviours of one's own group over those of external groups" (David & Bar-Tal 2009: 355). As Ehala (2017: 130) notes, "all group identities grow out of differences between individuals: differences in speech, style, behaviour, ways of dressing and eating and many other things that usually are not even perceived". The desire for differentiation and contrast is also reflected in the linguistic behaviour of individuals and national/ethnic/religious/other groups seeking linguistic diversification (Joseph 2004: 191). Individuals are in permanent negotiation between the principles of similarity, attraction, and identification with a certain group, a process which Giles (2008) theorised in the *Communication Accommodation Theory* developed in the 1970s.

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[31] *Heritage speakers* are individuals who have been exposed to Judeo-Spanish to varying degrees during childhood or adulthood. Their primary characteristic is a profound cultural connection to Judeo-Spanish, cultivated mainly through familial and community interactions. All consultants in this study are fundamentally *heritage speakers*. When other language profile types are subtracted, the essential *heritage speaker* remains (repeated here for convenience from Dissertation Roadmap).

Social identity thus lays the foundation for synchronised behaviour of individuals and groups towards the fulfilment of perceived shared values. I will refer to such values I will refer to such values throughout the book as 'core values' (cf. § 3.3.3).

The turn of the 20th century brought about a significant shift in the understanding of intergroup behaviour, particularly with the growing emphasis on the right to self-determination for various peoples and the solidification of national identity. This evolving concept of nationhood has had a profound influence on perspectives on intergroup interactions and relationships. It has also elevated the importance of the ethnic-linguistic criterion, regarded as "the decisive, or even the only criterion of potential nationhood" (Hobsbawm 2012: 102).

Starting in the 1980s, there was significant shift in the approach to social identity, a transition from an *essentialist*, static, and fixed concept of identity to a *constructivist* understanding of identity that is subject to continuous change (Anderson 2006 [1983]; Castells 2010 [1997]; Heller 2006; Hobsbawm 2012; Said 1983). The constructivist approach views nations as 'interpretative communities' that have agency in making sense of their the past and history (Said 1983). This shift in perspectives on identity, from essentialist to constructivist, mirrors similar debates regarding the relationship between language and identity. While the essentialist perspective emphasises the essential role of language in both individual and collective identity, the constructivist perspective acknowledges that language may play a significant role for some communities while being less representative for others. In the following two sections, I will briefly outline the key characteristics of the essentialist and constructivist approaches to language and identity.

3.2.1 The essentialist approach

The essentialist objectivist approach perceives language as beyond human reach and influence, operating in a realm that transcends individual will or social group dynamics (Joseph 2004: 84). Within the essentialist tradition, social categories are considered internally homogeneous and distinctly separate from each other, leading to clear-cut categories (e.g. 'female language' versus 'male language'). Bucholtz (2003: 400) defines essentialism as an ideology that relies on two core assumptions: "(1) that groups can be clearly delimited; and (2) that group members are more or less alike". During the nineteenth century, the rise of Romanticism and the emergence of nationalism in Western Europe solidified the connection between language and ethnicity "in a quasi-biological fashion" (Bucholtz & Hall 2004: 374). Intellectuals of this era regarded national languages as a core value of national belonging (Hobsbawm 1990: 93). Within the

essentialist approach, language serves as the linchpin connecting a group of speakers to a sense of ethnicity across space and time, a connection considered vital for preserving the identity of that group.

The dichotomy between essentialist and constructivist perspectives is not as easy to delineate in contemporary research. Despite the criticism it has faced in more recent decades, essentialism is still considered a vital social tool that may facilitate categorisation and analysis (Bucholtz 2003: 401). Today, the linguistic concern with the relationship between language and identity is predominantly addressed by linguists working in the field of endangered languages and varieties (Edwards 2009: introduction). Their goal is to demonstrate that "language is essential, not accidental, to cultural formation, cohesion and transmission" (Joseph 2004: 56).

Admittedly, it is impossible to make a case for language maintenance or revitalisation without taking an essentialist stance on language. In recent years, significant attention has been given to supporting local and regional languages, a movement that resonates widely with essentialist narratives. A notable example is UNESCO's designation of 2019 as the *International Year of Indigenous Languages* (IY2019), an initiative embraced by UNESCO's members and partners globally. At the heart of the IY2019 theme is the argument emphasising the importance of preserving and promoting small languages due to their significant role in shaping speakers' identities. Those who see language as essential to a group's ethnic identity construct their argument around the phenomenon of 'authenticity'. This stance is perhaps best reflected in Fishman's claims that one "cannot be Xish through language Y" (Fishman 1991) and in the claims expressed in his later volume *In Praise of the Beloved Language* (Fishman 1997):

> The perceived essentiality of language to identity is obviously implied by many of the above citations, for ethnocultural distinctiveness and authenticity, totally perspectival though they be, are viewed as building blocks of national identity. (Fishman 1997: 42)

Language is considered the binding element between the individual's personal and collective identity (Liebkind 1999: 143). The significance of language in this type of connection primarily lies in the way ethnic/racial groups speak (Joseph 2004: 170). Using examples such as German-speaking Jews and Nazi propaganda, Joseph illustrates how the 'authentic' way in which Jews spoke German became a primary motivator for inciting hatred. This occurred in a context in which language was deemed the 'cultural essence'. The discourse on authenticity is a complex sociopsychological construct that, due to its prominence in the study of identity and language, will be addressed separately in Section 3.3.5.

3.2.2 The constructivist approach

The constructivist perspective posits that individuals acquire language systematically and invest it with symbolic meaning. This approach emphasises that each community constructs its own meaning for language, which can evolve over time and in varying contexts. Within this constructivist framework, language may play a pivotal role in shaping identity. However, there are divergent views among scholars regarding the specific role of language in this context. Silverstein (2000) asserts that language is a discursive construction that is intricately linked to the formation of national identities. In contrast, Anderson (2006) contends that language serves as an enduring foundation for constructing national identity. Edwards (2009: 30) further highlights that linguistic choices are not only influenced by context but can also impact the social-psychological context.

In his examination of East African ethnic groups, Dimmendaal (1989: 28-29) presents compelling evidence that refutes the notion of language as a static aspect of group identity. He demonstrates that a single cultural area can encompass multiple languages. Nearly three decades later, Kirsten (2017: 187) arrived at a similar conclusion in her case study of Afrikaans, emphasising that linguistic essentialism fosters prejudice and obstructs our understanding of the varied language repertoires and their associations with diverse group affiliations.

In the context of Jewish languages, Myhill (2003) also challenges the ideology he refers to as the essentialist "ideology of native-language-and-identity", arguing that it functions as a mechanism for hierarchising authenticity.

> The overwhelming majority of Jews living in the diaspora, for example, are not native speakers of a distinctive Jewish language, have no interest in having their children be native speakers of a Jewish language, and see this as completely irrelevant to whether they are 'true' Jews; however, they are extremely concerned about whether they and their children are Jewish. The same is true of, e.g. many Christians, Muslims, Buddhists, and Bahais; while it cannot be said that their native language is of no significance to them, they would not consider this to be at the same level of importance as their religion. (Myhill 2003: 82)

According to Myhill (2003), language will mould itself to a cultural habitus rather than the latter being shaped by it. Myhill's explanation of the prioritisation of core values within the identity hierarchy raises a significant question in the study of language and identity: whether language can be culturally 'neutral' (Joseph 2004: 167). In the constructivist tradition, Joseph (2004) argues that

> […] a given language is capable of sustaining more than one culture. Even the Arabic language, with its intense cultural bonds to Islam, has sustained Christian cultures for centuries, and has the potential to sustain any number of cultures. The same is true of every language, and in that sense, language is culturally 'neutral'. Joseph (2004: 167)

For Joseph, the communicative and representational functions of language, as well as the form and content of language, are shaped by the "imperatives of identity" (Joseph 2004: 224). In his view, the communication process itself is guided by our perception of the interlocutor's identity.

> A full account of linguistic communication would have to start with, not a message, but again the speakers themselves, and their interpretation of each other that determines, interactively, their interpretation of what is said. (Joseph 2004: 226)

Joseph (2004) adopts a moderate Whorfian perspective in his understanding of linguistic identity as multi-layered, with each language playing a significant role on its respective level.

3.2.3 Strategic essentialism

As the aforementioned perspectives on language and identity make abundantly clear, it is challenging to firmly demarcate the boundaries between the essentialist and constructivist approaches to identity. Hence, I have regarded them as inclinations and varying viewpoints that intersect with one another. In the process of conceptualising and conducting the research, including data coding and analysis, I have incorporated both essentialist and structuralist perspectives, and flagged them accordingly in my discussion.

This approach aligns with Sallabank's (2013: 79) observation that the reality of fieldwork may diverge significantly from the essentialist vs. constructivist dichotomy discussed above. Speakers of endangered languages may position themselves outside these frameworks of categorisation and ideologies concerning the connection between language and identity. Sallabank (2013: 79) observes that postmodern concepts regarding the constructed and fluid nature of languages and identities are not widely recognized among 'lay' people and that respondents tend to hold more traditional, even 'essentialist', views on these topics which are not necessarily linked to individuals' language proficiency or their ability to speak the language.

Bucholtz & Hall (2004: 375-376) draw from Spivak's (1988) concept of 'strategic essentialism', introduced later to sociolinguistics by McElhinny (1996), to caution against simplifying the distinction between essentialist and non-essentialist perspectives. Converging with Sallabank's view, described above, they emphasise that in research practice, these two ideologies may not always be easily separable, especially when essentialism continues to hold significance in the lives of the individuals being studied.

3.2.4 Conceptions of identity on the micro and macro level

Within the constructivist approach, David & Bar-Tal's (2009) research significantly enriched my understanding of the concept of identity at both the micro and macro levels of analysis. The authors state that

> [i]dentity is conceptualized as a socio-psychological construct that manifests its continuous dynamics across a broad spectrum of cultures in which individuals are born. It is expressed through the experiences, emotions, motivations, beliefs, and choices of individuals, shaping their perception of reality and contributing to the construction of a shared present and future. (David & Bar-Tal 2009: 373)

This definition embraces a multidisciplinary sociopsychological approach to identity, encompassing both individual and collective dimensions. While their research primarily focuses on national identity, the model they present has broader applicability to the analysis of various large-scale collectives (David & Bar-Tal 2009: 370).

At the micro-sociopsychological level, attention is directed towards individual processes of self-categorisation and identification. This level explores how individuals organise their sense of belonging in the social world, including considerations of which group they perceive themselves as belonging to, their thoughts about it, and their emotional attachment to it (David & Bar-Tal 2009: 358). These individual processes lay the foundation for the emergence of the macro-sociopsychological level, "*that denotes shared awareness and recognition that members of a collective share the same social identity*" [formatting as in the original citation] (David & Bar-Tal 2009: 358). Notably, their approach is innovative not only in its comprehensive consideration of both the micro and macro levels but also in its unique organisation of the macro level.

On the micro level, David & Bar-Tal (2009: 359) approach the phenomenon of individual identification beyond membership in a collective from a multidimensional perspective, as a psychological process with three different layers:

(1) *cognitive* (self-categorisation and the importance that individuals attribute to their identification with the collective),

(2) *emotional* (feelings towards the collective, e.g. patriotism, nationalism), and

(3) *motivational* (a desire to belong to the collective).

Considering identification through the prism of these three layers leads to a different perception of social mobilisation and action (David & Bar-Tal 2009: 361).

The macro level is, according to (David & Bar-Tal 2009), structured in two distinct pillars:

(1) a first pillar comprises *6 generic features* shared by all macro-level collectives and

(2) a second, group-specific, pillar represents *content characteristics* unique to a particular group, imparting meaning to collective identity.

The differentiation between *generic features* and *content characteristics* is of paramount importance for the research conducted in this study. It offers a versatile framework for categorising different groups and facilitates comparisons across generations, allowing for the incorporation of various perspectives on the significance of Judeo-Spanish within the Sephardic community.

According to David & Bar-Tal (2009), the six generic features that make up the macro level, the collective identity, are the following: (1) *A sense of a common fate* (cf. Tajfel 1978); (2) *The perception of the uniqueness of the collective and its distinction from other collectives*; (3) *Coordinated activity of the collective's members*; (4) *Commonality of beliefs, attitudes, norms, and values*; (5) *Concern for the welfare of the collective and mobilisation and sacrifice for its sake* and (6) *Continuity and consecutiveness in the dimension of time.*

1) *A sense of a common fate*. The concept of a shared destiny linking individuals to the collective is not a novel idea (Gurin & Townsend 1986)[32]. What distinguishes this belief, as articulated by David & Bar-Tal (2009: 361), is the notion "that the fate of each one of the collective's individuals is perceived as dependent on the fate of the whole". In the context of Jewish identity, this facet of collective identity seems to be especially prominent, as highlighted in Herman's (1977) social psychological study on Israeli youth. According to Herman, despite differences among Jewish groups, whether in Israel or elsewhere, there exists a unifying element of 'interdependence', characterised by "a change in the state of any part affecting all the other parts" (Herman 1977: 43). Herman argues that the sense of a shared destiny is the most cohesive factor in the formation of Jewish collective identity. As revealed in this study, the notion of a shared destiny, particularly in the context of language practices, is articulated through the prevailing linguistic accommodation rhetoric within the Sephardic community.

2) *The perception of the uniqueness of the collective and its distinction from other collectives*. This category involves a combination of factors that contribute to the distinct character of a social group as compared to others. David & Bar-Tal (2009: 362) assert that this distinctiveness may encompass cultural beliefs, values, norms, symbols, territory, language, and more. For dispersed groups like the Sephardim, two particularly noteworthy characteristics in delineating their unique identity are the 'myth of the nation' and the 'divine electedness of its territory' (David & Bar-Tal 2009: 362). Smith (1999)

[32] *The sense of the common fate* is a salient feature of identity, especially among minority groups where individual expression is directly linked to group consciousness and perception in view of the threat that is posed to both the individual and the group (Gurin & Townsend 1986: 147).

finds that the ethno-symbolic power of myth and memory are at the core of national identities. 'The myth of ethnic election' is a salient feature among the Sephardim, who align themselves with the Jewish myth of belonging to a chosen people with a strong consciousness of being different from other groups (cf. § 6.3.2).

3) Coordinated activity of the collective's members. This category concerns the ability of individuals to place 'superordinate' goals above their own interest, which is reflected in their behaviour towards the achievement of such goals. This category is the weakest of the 6 features in the Sephardic context, where minority actions are – directly or indirectly – strongly undermined or constrained by the Turkish state apparatus.

4) *Commonality of beliefs, attitudes, norms, and values.* Members of a group share these features as a result of a depersonalisation process (David & Bar-Tal 2009: 364; Liebkind 1999: 141-142). Language, along with religious beliefs and other symbols that represent the group's spirit, falls within this spectrum of features. In this regard, the authors point to the power that common experiences in the past have in the process of identification with a group, giving the example of the Holocaust and its symbolic value for the foundation of Jewish identity in Israel.

5) *Concern for the welfare of the collective and mobilisation and sacrifice for its sake*. This feature reflects individuals' awareness of and readiness to participate in coordinated activities that prioritise the collective's interests over their own personal concerns, especially in response to external threats. In the case of the Sephardim, this is translated in the mobilization towards language shift as a way to ensure the continuity of the group.

6) *Continuity and consecutiveness in the dimension of time***.** Here, the authors address the question of the linearity and immutability of collective identity over time: "Is identity founded on a consecutive, stable, and unchanging consciousness, or do identity components change among past, present, and future, creating a social reality where new identities replace, at least in part, the old?" (David & Bar-Tal 2009: 365) Identity is perceived here as a dynamic process of "interaction between the three [temporal] dimensions" (David & Bar-Tal 2009: 366). This question is essential for the understanding of the effects of language shift and the extent to which it shapes an updated collective identity, possibly with reprioritised core values. The Sephardim have repeatedly changed territory at different times. Moreover, they have also undergone repeated language shifts since the Jewish exile into Babylon in 597 BCE, when the Jews first switched from Hebrew to Aramaic and Greek (Spolsky 2014). Throughout the past two millennia, Jews have adopted the language of their neighbours as their spoken

language to different extents and in different forms (for a closer categorisation, see Myhill 2004: 26).

> The statement that 'Jews have switched from one spoken language to another through history' as a feature of Jewish behaviour must be understood in the context of the Jewish conceptualization of identity. Jews can 'switch languages' because, even if they change their everyday language, it has been understood that they remain Jews, since everyday language is not a primary component of Jewish identity. (Myhill 2004: 26)

Myhill (2004) and Şaul (2021) underline, however, that these repeated language shift processes throughout history must be understood through the lenses of the continuity in the Jewish perception of identity.

While David & Bar-Tal's (2009) model provides a comprehensive framework for understanding social categorisation at both micro and macro levels, it primarily focuses on the awareness and recognition of identity formation. However, it does not thoroughly explore the mechanisms through which power hierarchies are formed, leading to homogenisation through the deliberate erasure of differences. The subsequent chapter aims to offer a complementary perspective on identity through a semiotic model. While the former model addresses the 'what', the semiotic model delves into the 'how' of identity formation.

3.2.5 Conceptions of language and identity in a semiotic model

In this section, I explore the interplay of ideologies, language practices, and group identification within the Sephardic community by referencing several studies that employ semiotic models to investigate the relationship between language and identity.

The idea of perceiving identity as a sign is implicit in the studies of Barth (1998 [1969]) and Bourdieu (1984). Joseph (2004) explicitly links language and identity as a semiotic process. In his study, specific linguistic traits serve as cues or signs that are used to associate individuals with particular social categories or identities. The theoretical framework underpinning the exploration of the relationship between language and identity through semiotic signs in this dissertation is drawn from the anthropological linguistic perspective articulated by Bucholtz & Hall (2004). Within their framework, the relationship between language and identity emerges from the interplay of four semiotic processes: *practice, performance, indexicality, and ideology*.

> Ideology is the level at which practice enters the field of representation. Indexicality mediates between ideology and practice, producing the former through the latter. Performance is the highlighting of ideology through the foregrounding of practice. (Bucholtz & Hall 2004: 381)

The concept of *practice* in this context extends beyond Bourdieu's (1991) notion of *habitus*, to encompass both *habitual* and *deliberate* actions. An example of deliberate action, may involve speakers actively choosing to engage in specific language practices and communities of practice in the online space (cf. Lave & Wenger 1991).

Indexicality, as outlined by Bucholtz & Hall (2004: 378), is characterised as "the semiotic operation of juxtaposition, whereby one entity or event points to another". This association relies on repeated co-occurrences to establish significance. Consequently, practice becomes indispensable in the interpretation of indexes, as it facilitates the recognition and understanding of these contextual connections. An illustrative example of *indexicality* in action is evident in the association between the use of Judeo-Spanish and lower social class categories among Sephardim migrating from other parts of Turkey to Istanbul in the 1940s and 1950s. During this period, the prevailing trend among higher-class Sephardim was to transition to either French or Turkish in the public sphere. Consequently, a lack of proficiency in these languages and a higher proficiency in Judeo-Spanish became indicative of 'uneducated' individuals belonging to lower social status through a chain of semiotic associations. These associations give rise to stereotypes and discrepancies of power between individuals, communities of practice and social groups.

Stereotypes and power differentials play a pivotal role in the subsequent semiotic process of *ideology*. For Bucholtz & Hall (2004: 379), ideology is a mechanism that "organises and facilitates all cultural beliefs and practices, as well as the ensuing power dynamics". Building on the work of Irvine & Gal (2000), Bucholtz & Hall (2004: 380) integrate in their model the processes of *erasure*, involving the omission of details incongruent with a particular ideological stance, and *iconization*, which entails establishing a naturalised association between linguistic elements and social categories. The authors explain the relationship between elements of ideology, stating that "iconization and indexicality are converse processes of identity formation: indexicality generates ideology through practice, while iconization represents practice through ideology" (Bucholtz & Hall 2004: 380).

In essence, they propose that ideologies construct culturally intelligible identities based on the habitual practices of social actors. However, these constructed practices may diverge from the actual behaviours observed, as ideologies often rely on metaphorical resemblances between language and social organisation. Thus, the processes through which ideology operates remain somehow obscure. Ideological mechanisms can however, be exposed through the fourth semiotic process of *performance* as "highly deliberate and self-aware" marked speech events. (Bucholtz &

Hall 2004: 380) (cf. § 5.6). Within this semiotic model, language assumes a crucial role in reflecting but not constituting identity, encompassing both its *social* (pragmatic or contextual) and *referential* (semantic) dimensions (Bucholtz & Hall 2004: 382).

The four semiotic processes offer insights into *how* identity is shaped, yet they do not provide an explanation for *why* these identities are shaped as they are. In an effort to address this gap, Bucholtz & Hall (2004: 382) introduce the concept of 'tactics of intersubjectivity' as a conceptual framework. This framework encompasses three pairs of tactics employed in the formation of identities: *adequation*[33] and *distinction*, *authentication* and *denaturalisation*, and *authorisation* and *illegitimation*[34](cf. Chapter 7). These pairs of tactics are linked to three fundamental concepts central to identity: *markedness*, *essentialism*, and *institutional power* (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004: 382).

Gal and Irvine (2019: 1-2) converge with and complement Bucholtz & Hall's (2004) investigation of ideologies through the lens of semiotic signs.

> […] [W]e take it as fundamental that social action requires a semiotic basis. That is, it requires orientations to the world that rely on signs, which have multiple capacities to represent aspects of our social lives and experiences, not only by labeling them. Those orientations to the world are positioned – that is, they incorporate a point of view – and they are organized in metadiscourses and regimes of value. Such semiotic organizations are aptly called *ideologies* because they are locally and historically specific framings, suffused with the political and moral interests of the social positions and projects in which they are embedded. (Gal & Irvine 2019: 2)

In his interdisciplinary examination of micro- and macro-level identity research, Martin Ehala (2018) draws further parallels between identity and language from a semiotic perspective. He introduces the notion of a "grammar of identity", suggesting that identity operates akin to linguistic signs, consisting of a signal component (*signifier*) and a meaning component (*the signified*). In this framework, individuals decode identity signals sent by others to infer beliefs, attitudes, and likely behaviours, shaping their understanding of identities within society. The "grammar of identity" is akin to a "blueprint of the social space of a particular society," regulating "the moral worth and power relationships between different identities based on the main value system (the core values) of that society" (Ehala 2018: 3-7). Ehala's constructivist approach characterises identity signs as conventional and subject to variability within distinct groups of people, where social properties serve as mere signals of these identity signs (Ehala 2018: 8).

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[33] These tactics partially intersect with David & Bar-Tal's (2009: 359) psychological processes of identification at a micro level, which encompass *cognitive*, *emotional*, and *motivational* aspects, as described in section 3.1.5.

[34] For a deeper understanding of how these pairs function, see Bucholtz & Hall (2004: 383-387).

This perspective contrasts with the essentialist viewpoint, which considers characteristics of individuals within a society as indexes of pre-existing social entities.

Viewing identity signs as symbols within a system of meaning, subject to collective interpretation, underscores the dynamic nature of core values. This perspective acknowledges that the significance attributed to these values can fluctuate among individuals and groups, contingent upon contextual factors and evolving socio-cultural dynamics.

3.3 Language and identity

This section begins with a diachronic overview of contemporary studies on language and identity, primarily focusing on works from the 21st century. Rather than aiming for an exhaustive survey, its goal is to evaluate and scrutinise key theories in the field, particularly highlighting the emergence of constructivist perspectives and criteria for ethnic identity. Additionally, it examines the impact of heightened ethnic consciousness within the 'ethnic revival' movement on the re-evaluation of 'ethnic languages'. Subsequently, the discussion delves into paradigm shifts in constructivist viewpoints regarding the role of language in identity formation and boundary delineation, drawing upon the *Core Value Theory*. The emphasis lies on studies elucidating the symbolic significance of language as a marker of both individual and group identity. Ultimately, the section illustrates how the ideology-attitude-practices continuum establishes structured hierarchies of difference and similarities, underscored by power dynamics among individuals, groups, and languages.

Traditionally, language has been viewed through a dichotomy, serving as a *system of communication* as well as a *representation* of the world (Joseph 2004: 15). This distinction extends to the concept of *mother tongue* as compared to other languages. While communication can occur in any language, the crucial difference lies in the way each language shapes our perceptions of the world. Language, particularly one's mother tongue, has historically been a key factor in distinguishing between different communities, often influencing our preconceptions about people (Joseph 2004: 3). As Dorian (1999: 39) highlights, it can establish a profound connection between a community and its cultural heritage that cannot be easily replaced.

According to Edwards (2009: 30), the choice of language, including dialect, accent, or style, can significantly impact social and psychological dynamics within relationships and communication. Language often serves as the primary marker for identifying an individual's group membership, regardless of other factors such as ethnicity, gender, political beliefs, or religious affiliation (Edwards 2009: 21). It can also

embody a cultural reality, shaping and reflecting the lived experiences of those who speak it (Kramsch 1998: 4). In the process of representing reality, language itself becomes valued. Proficiency in a language, eloquence, and versatility are often esteemed qualities in their own right, beyond the content or purposes of communication (Fishman 1989: 32). Moreover, language is regarded as both the gateway to and vehicle of culture, tradition, and continuity (Steiner 2013), while also having the potential to harbour secrecy (Edwards 2009: 54).

The current comprehension of the mechanisms governing the interpretation and adoption of language ideologies, as well as the significance of language within the Judeo-Spanish community, has been profoundly influenced by the evolution of ideologies of language over the centuries. This influence has been particularly pronounced in the context of the rise of the nation-state and the phenomenon of nationalism, which has impacted Turkey since the foundation of the Turkish Republic (cf. § 2.3.6; 6.1). To establish a solid foundation for the subsequent discussion on the intricate interplay among ideologies, language practices, and the value the Sephardim associates with Judeo-Spanish within the Judeo-Spanish community, section 3.3.1 offers a concise historical overview to refresh the reader's understanding. This succinct survey will shed light on the key theories and influential figures whose contributions have collectively shaped the understanding of the intricate relationship between language and collective identity.

3.3.1 Diachronic overview of studies on language and identity

The Romantic era: pioneering the connection. Since the era of Romanticism and the surge of nationalism, the notion of 'mother tongue' has been at the core of both individual and group values. Romantic thinkers like Johann Georg Hamann (1730-1788) and Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803) emphasised the interconnectedness of climate, landscape, race, national character, and language. For Herder, universality thrived on the authenticity of separate ethnic groups, each deeply rooted in their unique languages (cf. Fishman 1989: 570-571). This perspective downplayed the conventional nature of language, focusing on its deep cultural significance (Joseph 2004: 44).

Nationalism and language: forging a sacred bond. Throughout the discourse of nationalism that has unfolded since the emergence of modern states, language has taken on a profoundly significant role. In the 18th and 19th centuries, scholars like Alexander von Humboldt (1836) and Friedrich Max Müller (Müller 2013: 369) underscored the significance of language in shaping the mind, culture, and identity of a people. Languaage was invested with a sacred and unifying power, representing the very

essence of a nation's distinctiveness and fostering a deep emotional connection with the homeland. This elevation of language to a sacred status highlights its crucial role in shaping the narratives and aspirations of modern nations. Language often served as both a justification for territorial Appendixations — such as Germany's Appendixation of Austria in 1938 — and as a marker of national boundaries and identity (Fichte 2008 [1808]: 211; Martyn 1997: 303).

Saussure's structuralism: a paradigm shift. In the 20th century, Ferdinand de Saussure introduced a structuralist perspective that emphasised the arbitrary nature of language and its detachment from individual consciousness (Jakobson 1965: 24). This shift in focus minimised the language-identity relationship that had been prominent in earlier perspectives. Saussure interpreted *langue* as a 'social fact' that cannot be altered by individuals. By contrast, *parole* is subject to constant changes, which, if accepted by a speech community, lead to a new *langue.* Saussure steered the focus of the era's linguistic study towards the study of *langue* in and for itself (De Saussure 1916).

The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis: rekindling the human element. Edward Sapir (1915) and Benjamin Lee Whorf (1956) brought the individual and 'human personality' back into the focus of language study, proposing the *Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis*, also known as the *Linguistic Relativity Hypothesis*, which suggests that language structure influences a speaker's worldview. Contemporary linguistics investigating the connection between language and thought plead for a 'weak' version of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis (Harrison 2007). Edwards (2009: 57-61), for instance, sees the differences between different languages through the prism of the speakers' physical, social, and psychological environments. According to Edwards (2009: 61), "language *influences* our *habitual* ways of thinking" but is not to be understood as a relationship which leads to cognitive rigidity.

Social Identity Theory (SIT): embracing emotional significance. Henri Tajfel's (1981) SIT shifted the focus to the emotional significance of individuals' belonging to a social group and how this emotional connection relates to language use.

William Labov's challenge: redefining perceptions. William Labov's (1966) ground-breaking work challenged perceptions of language and identity and our understanding of the relationship between language and race or social class. His research on stigmatised varieties of English demonstrated their validity and rule-governed nature, reshaping how these varieties and their speakers were viewed.

Language as a social tool: a theatrical perspective. Throughout the 20th century, different disciplines have approached the language-and-identity connection from different perspectives. Worth mentioning is the work of the sociologist Erving Goffman, who in the 1950s advanced the idea of a functional relationship between the

structure of the self and the structure of linguistic interactions. Goffman (1956) conceived social interaction as an act performed by actors on a stage, where each individual performs a role aimed towards "impression management", which dictates the extent to which an individual reveals or conceals aspects of the self. These ideas are reflected in Bell's (1984: 197) "audience design", the view that speakers compose their speech styles based on their audience. I will draw on these studies, particularly in Section 5.6, which deals with the role and function of Judeo-Spanish in everyday performances of humour, theatre, music, and ritualistic performances. Wallace Lambert's studies on language attitudes further highlighted the role of language in interpersonal relationships (Lambert 1963; Lambert, Hodgson et al. 1960).

Shaping Social Identity*: Ethnolinguistic Identity Theory* and *Communication Accommodation Theory* (CAT). Giles & Johnson's (1987) *Ethnolinguistic Identity Theory* proposed that individuals with a high esteem for their language employ strategies of psycholinguistic distinctiveness (e.g. accentuation of speech styles, switching to in-group language) to enhance a positive social identity. On the contrary, members with low esteem for their heritage language might resort to strategies of assimilation into the more dominant group. These ideas laid the foundations for the development of the *Communication Accommodation Theory* (CAT) by Giles (2008) and by Giles and his colleagues (Giles & Coupland 1991). The authors explored how individuals adjust their speech based on their perceptions of interlocutors.

Foucault and Bourdieu: unveiling power and habit. In the 1960s, Michel Foucault viewed language as a powerful manifestation of both power and knowledge. His work explored how language shapes societal structures and serves as a reflection of prevailing power dynamics. Within Foucault's power-knowledge paradigm, 'human subjects' are perceived as mere manifestations of power, lacking the agency to alter the course of events. However, Bourdieu (1991) challenged this perspective by repositioning the 'human subject' from a passive disposition to an active role. He introduced the concept of 'habitus', which consists of a set of dispositions that significantly influence individuals' actions and social identities. This influence, especially in the context of language transmission, underscores the dynamic role of individuals in shaping their own linguistic experiences and identities. Of particular significance is the role of language transmission, which emerges as a fundamental practice that shapes the habitus of individuals from early childhood onwards (cf. § 5.3).

Contemporary perspectives: a multilayered and simultaneous perspective. Contemporary perspectives on linguistic identity, as articulated by Spencer & Taylor (2004), Bucholtz & Hall (2004), Pavlenko & Blackledge (2004), and Omoniyi & Goodith

(2006) among others depict identity, particularly linguistic identity as manifold, layered, and simultaneous. This conceptualisation resonates with Fishman's idea of ethnicity as variable and individuals possessing multiple loyalties and identities (Fishman 1989 [1977]: 39).

This brief overview provides a background for how language ideologies have influenced regions such as Europe and locales like Turkey over time. Understanding the evolution of ideas and perspectives has allowed me to thoroughly analyse the mechanisms underlying the linguistic ideologies, attitudes and practices of speakers across generations.

Consistent with the contemporary perspective outlined earlier, this dissertation posits that linguistic identity is multifaceted and dynamic, rejecting the notion of linearity or unilateralism. Furthermore, it argues that the emergence of new linguistic allegiances does not necessitate the abandonment of existing ones. In the following chapter, I will explore the role of ethnicity as one type of possible identities in connection with language.

3.3.2 Language, ethnicity, and boundaries

Ethnic identity holds a central position within social identity (Liebkind 1999: 140) as a basic attribute of self-identification (Castells 2010 [1997]: preface xxv; Liebkind 1999: 140). It is often regarded as "the most powerful type of identity claim that one can make". While ethnic identity is relatively easy to interpret, it is also highly susceptible to prejudice and stereotyping.

Essential to understanding ethnic and linguistic identity is the concept of "the new ethnicity movement" or "ethnic revival" movement, terms coined by Fishman (1973), which emerged in the late 1960s in the U.S. This movement saw a resurgence of interest in ethnic culture among fourth-generation Americans, leading to a rediscovery of their heritage. This trend, known as the rediscovery of ethnicity, spread globally in the 1970s, often accompanied by heightened ethnic consciousness and a renewed focus on and re-evaluation of ethnic languages (Dorian 1999: 36; Liebkind 1999: 150). Dorian (1999) cites examples such as Greenlandic, Basque in northern Spain, and Maori in New Zealand, noting that increased ethnic sentiment can bolster the survival of a language. This interest is evidenced by the establishment of language centres, changes in school curricula, university language courses, language clubs, festivals, concerts, and theatre productions. However, as Dorian (1999) emphasises, in the postvernacular stage (cf. § 3.4.2), these activities often prioritise the consolidation of ethnic identity over language proficiency.

The relationship between ethnicity and language is often examined through the lens of the dichotomy between the essentialist and constructivist perspectives. At the essentialist end of the spectrum lies the perspective of Fishman. Fishman's work, as presented in his anthology (1989) and subsequent edited volume (1999a), emphasises the essential role of language in ethnic identity. According to Fishman (1999: 4), while language is not equated with the entirety of ethnicity, it has been prioritised within certain historical, regional, and disciplinary contexts.

The second perspective, representing the constructivist end of the spectrum, is exemplified by Haarmann's (1986: 257-258) approach to language and ethnicity. Haarmann (1986: 37) describes ethnic identity as "a phenomenon that cannot be characterised in any single feature but must be described as a cluster of features which are different in kind and which include language oriented as well as non-language oriented criteria". Haarmann (1986: 257) challenges the notion that language invariably occupies a central role in ethnic processes. He argues against overstating the significance of language in ethnicity, observing that in certain ecological contexts, language may play a minor or even negligible role in shaping ethnic identity. Using examples such as Russian-speaking Ashkenazi Jews in the Soviet Union and Arabic-speaking Copts in Egypt, Haarmann illustrates instances in which language does not serve as a primary marker of ethnicity, in contrast to markers like religion and ancestry. He emphasises the relativism of language in ethnicity, suggesting that its role varies depending on contextual factors.

Haarmann posits that while language may contribute to boundary marking in some cases, it is not an indispensable criterion of ethnicity, underscoring its role as an "elementary but not necessary criterion of ethnicity" (Haarmann 1986: 59). For Haarman, the only constant feature in the relation between language and ethnicity is the following: "wherever language is involved in boundary marking of ethnic groups, it is definitely related to ethnicity" (Haarmann 1986: 261). Haarmann's findings align with the conclusions drawn by Tabouret-Keller & Le Page (1985: 238-240), who observed that ethnic identity can persist independently of language shift.

In a seminal collection of essays, Barth (1998 [1969]-b) and his colleagues challenge conventional views on ethnic group boundaries. They refute the idea that geographical or social isolation is necessary for maintaining cultural diversity, asserting instead that cultural differences can persist even amidst inter-ethnic contact and interdependence (Barth 1998 [1969]: 10). Barth's work represents a paradigm shift, reconceptualising ethnicity as a dynamic process centred on the persistence and maintenance of ethnic boundaries rather than static cultural features.

> The cultural features that signal the boundary may change, and the cultural characteristics of the members may likewise be transformed, indeed, even the organizational form of the group may change - yet the fact of continuing dichotomization between members and outsiders allows us to specify the nature of continuity, and investigate the changing cultural form and content. (Barth 1998 [1969]: 14)

According to Barth (1998 [1969]: 14), ethnic identity can persist even when groups assimilate behaviourally on various levels. Individual self-awareness in the context of belonging is pivotal in identity formation. Boundaries between groups, which may have territorial counterparts, mirror individuals' perceptions of social boundaries (cultural, racial, etc.) as demarcations between inclusion and exclusion.

In contrast to Barth's (1998 [1969]) idea that boundaries emerge after a social group coalesces, Tajfel (1978) explored the formation and maintenance of *minimal groups*, revealing the significance of group membership even when members are randomly assigned. Tajfel's (1978) work indicates that the creation of boundaries reinforces a sense of belonging (Edwards 2009: 26). The perception of boundaries is therefore crucial in shaping any kind of identity, including linguistic identity. Boundaries between ethnic groups are established based on two types of criteria: **objective** and **subjective**.

Objective criteria include *biological, geographical, linguistic, cultural, and religious factors*. For example, Haarmann (1986: 40) observed that in Europe, group boundaries are predominantly marked by language distinctions.

Territoriality, like other aspects of ethnic identity, varies among different ethnic groups. Dorian (1999) suggests that the closer an ethnic group's ties to its traditional territory, the stronger the link between ethnicity and language.

> Traditional stories that relate high points in the group's history usually abound, and traditional tales that convey spiritual beliefs and mythological lore will probably be even more plentiful. These stories, so fundamental to a people's sense of themselves, will be unavoidably stripped of a good deal of their original character if the language in which they were originally told is replaced by a different language. Other sorts of material with major cultural significance face the same stripping process: sacred chants, hero tales, rhetorical performances, genealogical recitations. (Dorian 1999: 32)

Language encapsulates the group's narratives, myths, and cultural elements associated with its indigenous territory. However, the replacement of the original language may dilute the cultural significance of these elements. This raises questions about the impact of a weaker connection between an ethnic group and its territory of origin on the link between language and ethnicity.

The interaction between territorial criteria and the connection between language and ethnicity deserves further exploration, especially in the context of diaspora groups

like the Sephardim. Boyarin (1994: 3) contends that Jewish geography, for instance, is shaped by social and cultural factors rather than being an objective locus. This characteristic applies not only to Jews but also to other highly mobile groups. The emergence and proliferation of online communities over the past two decades demand a re-evaluation of the traditional notions of territoriality, particularly in light of the concept of "Digital Home-Lands" (Held 2010) as discussed in Section 5.7. Given the mobility of the Sephardim, understanding the intersection of territoriality with other core values is crucial.

Subjective criteria include elements such as ethnicity, which Liebkind (1999: 140) defines as a "subjective belief in common ancestry". Additionally, subjective criteria can encompass 'imagined' or 'recreated' symbolic traditions, as exemplified by the concept of symbolic ethnicity advanced by Gans (1979) which characterises groups with a long history of acculturation.[35]

Building on the preceding discussion, exploring individual perceptions and attitudes towards the position of language within distinct boundary categories becomes imperative for grasping how language shapes the formation of group boundaries among the Sephardim. Furthermore, in line with the constructivist approach, I acknowledge that each ethnic group manifests unique behaviours and establishes particular hierarchies of objective or subjective criteria and values that constitute their ethnic identity. In the upcoming chapter, I will explore contrasting perspectives on the role of language within these hierarchies: whether it serves as a core value of ethnic identity or occupies a subordinate position.

3.3.3 Core values of identity

The essentialist and constructivist perspectives discussed in Sections 3.2.1, 3.2.2 and 3.3.3 offer two overarching frameworks for understanding the relationship between a vernacular and its speakers (Dorian 1999: 31). In the first framework, language plays a central role as a carrier of cultural content, shaping the community's identity and defining its boundaries, while in the second, language serves as just one of many markers of identity. In both cases, tools for classification are essential to individuals in navigating their social environment and understanding their place within it. Building upon the *Core Value Theory*, I delve into a discussion on the applicability of core values in a general

[35] Gans (1979) provides the example of the recreation of rites of passage among American Jewry like the *bat mitzvah* for girls (a ceremony parallel to the *bar mitzvah* for 13 years old boys).

sense and subsequently explore its application to Jewish communities, highlighting the challenges that have arisen from this perspective.

Smolicz (1979) introduced the concept of “core values”, defined as “those values that are regarded as forming the most fundamental components of a group’s culture, symbolic of the group and its membership” (Smolicz, Secombe & Hudson 2001: 166). These core values not only define group membership but also establish boundaries between different communities. When core values are threatened, the distinct identity of a group as a separate community may be threatened.

In a series of studies focusing on minority groups in Australia, including Chinese, Greek, Croatian, Indian, Latvian, Polish, Ukrainian, and various Jewish groups, Smolicz, Secombe, and their colleagues (Secombe 2016; Smolicz 1980; 1991; 1992; Smolicz & Lean 1979; Smolicz, Secombe & Hudson 2001) examined the significance of language as a core value and its implications for language maintenance and shift. According to *Core Value Theory*, the degree to which a group assigns core value to its language influences its efforts towards language maintenance and the preservation of its distinctive identity (cf. Pauwels 2016: 106). For communities such as the Greek and Chinese, language is highly valued, prompting proactive measures for its preservation. In contrast, communities like the Dutch experience a more rapid language shift because they do not view language as essential for maintaining their ethnic identity.

According to Ehala (2018: 11) shared core values foster trust, serving as “the glue that makes social capital possible” (Ehala 2018: 11). Ehala argues that core values not only facilitate social capital but also underpin it, even in individualist societies, which historically have exhibited strong national identities rooted in hegemonic core values. Gal & Irvine (2019) view ideologies as a “regime of value” (Gal & Irvine 2019: 13) that help individuals interpret and navigate their socio-political environment.

In the context of Jewish groups, Smolicz & Lean (1979: 61-62) propose that language plays a peripheral role in the expression of ‘Jewish culture’, with Hebrew in Israel being an exception, although it does arise indirectly as a core value, as a consequence of other core values. In a more recent comparative study among four minority groups in Australia (Greek, Latvian, Italian, and Chinese), Smolicz (2001) identified ethno-specific language, family structure, religious beliefs, and love of the homeland as markers of group identity.

Myhill (2004: 13) proposes four categories of core values by which people can define their identity: (1) personal ancestry/race; (2) religious affiliation/beliefs/tradition/lifestyle; (3) native/everyday language and (4) citizenship/living place. Myhill emphasises that categories (1) and (2) are paramount for Jewish identity,

while (3) and (4) serve as supplementary elements in boundary delineation processes. Furthermore, Myhill (2003: 83) acknowledges the existence of Jewish groups who speak languages distinct from those of the surrounding populations, citing Yiddish and Ladino[36]. However, he argues that even in these cases "Jews cannot really be considered to be linguistically 'authentic'" and that in these groups' own perception, these languages were considered either not distinct languages as in the case of Yiddish, or simply 'Spanish in the case of Ladino (Myhill 2003: 84). Myhill (2003: 84) concludes that for these communities, e.g. for Yiddish-speaking Ultra-Orthodox communities, religion is a far more important determining factor for the group's collective identity. He argues that this is a reason why many Jewish languages disappear in the diaspora.

> […] with the only surviving languages recognized as Jewish being Hebrew in Israel and Yiddish in Ultra-Orthodox communities, in both of which cases native language is a distant second in terms of centrality to identity. (Myhill 2003: 84)

While *Core Value Theory* has garnered considerable attention from researchers for its simplicity and its ability to predict the relationship between language attitudes and behaviour, particularly in interethnic contexts, Pauwels (2016) notes that the methodological approach used to investigate core values does not always lead to reliable results. Clyne (1991b) and Kennedy (2015) have raised concerns about the weaknesses of Smolicz's theory and the associated risks. A decade later, following Smolicz's introduction of the 'language in cultural value system' theory, Clyne (1991a: 92) identified three primary areas of concern regarding the 'core value' proposal in a study on community languages in Australia. These concerns have greatly informed the approach taken in the present study.

First and foremost, Clyne critiques Smolicz's *Core Value Theory* for its ambiguity in differentiating between various types of groups, such as cultural and ethnic groups. This lack of clarity is particularly evident in a case study of the German language in Australia, where Clyne delineates the distinction between a 'speech community' and an 'ethnic group' (Clyne 1991a: 100).

> So, while the German language is certainly not the core value of a unified and homogeneous 'ethnic German-speaking group', the language gives a heterogeneous collection of people a sense of cultural unity. (Clyne 1991a: 100)

A second limitation of *Core Value Theory* is its failure to address the issue of multiple group membership, impacting the perception of language as an identity marker. Clyne illustrates this with the example of the German-speaking Jewish community in Australia,

[36] Myhill refers to Judeo-Spanish as *Ladino*.

where different groups of different origins and migration periods display dual or multiple identities and language loyalties. For instance, while Hebrew has become a symbolic identification language for third-generation German-origin Jews, Russian remains dominant among Russian Jewish emigrants of the 1980s. For this generation, “Russian is the bearer of culture of a group that sees itself as culturally Russian and ethnically Jewish” (Clyne 1991a: 103-104).

Finally, Clyne observes that *Core Value Theory* overlooks attitudinal changes, particularly in cases of ethnic revivals. Clyne notes a disparity between language behaviour and attitudes among Polish-Australian informants, who, despite valuing language highly, do not score well in language maintenance compared to Italians (Clyne 1991). These valid concerns and criticisms of the *Core Value Theory* align with recent advances in the study of language and identity within minority groups.

The next two sections will examine the core values of religion and authenticity, and how these values shape the positioning of the Judeo-Spanish within the Sephardim’s social identity profile.

3.3.4 Language and religion

Religion occupies a central position at the crossroads of language and identity, as highlighted by Omoniyi and Fishman (2006: 3). Particularly in minority and immigration contexts, religion emerges as a key domain for the preservation and transmission of cultural and linguistic heritage. Within the Judeo-Spanish community under examination, it assumes particular significance, forming an integral aspect of what is identified as language culture in this dissertation. The relationship between language and religion significantly shapes the organisation of the community’s core values and influences the dynamic between language and ethnic identity.

Communication with the ‘supernatural’ through language and imagery has been fundamental to religions since their inception, culminating with the development of writing systems (Haarmann 2015: 14). In Christianity, language holds a central place, with the *Book of Genesis* (I: 3) depicting God creating light through speech, illustrating the power of language in shaping reality (Stam 1976: 205). Language is viewed as a divine gift, enabling humans, starting with Adam, to name and understand creation. The wrath of God was manifested through the disruption of language unity according to the narrative of the Tower of Babel. Gods were seen as the creators of speech in many other religions and foundation myths, from Egyptian mythology to the Icelandic sagas (Mühleisen 2007: 459). The language through which the divine communicates is crucial for defining the ‘right religion’, with certain languages deemed sacred (e.g. Koranic Arabic, Biblical

Hebrew, Syriac, Coptic, Old Church Slavonic, etc.) and integral to a group's identity, conveying divine messages that are considered unalterable and untranslatable (García, Peltz & Schiffman 2006: 31).

The profound link between languages and religions has been a consistent aspect of human development, alongside kinship and technology (Darquennes, 2011: 5). Prior to the emergence of national identities, individuals often identified more strongly with their religious beliefs than with a racial or ethnic identity (Joseph, 2004: 173). Languages have historically played a crucial role in the dissemination of religions worldwide. Arabic and Latin, for instance, owe much of their widespread adoption to the religions they represented (Mühleisen 2007). Until the late Middle Ages and the Reformation, languages were closely associated with specific religions, such as Latin with Western Christianity, Hebrew with Judaism, and Arabic with Islam (Joseph, 2004: 73). Sectarian divisions within religions such as Islam and Christianity often mirrored dialectal differences (Joseph, 2004: 73). Before the French Revolution, religion served as the primary marker of ethnonational identity, gradually giving way to language (Safran 2008: 178). For centuries, literacy was often acquired through religious texts, not only for missionaries (Pennycook 2005) but also for many ordinary individuals, as religious literature was often the only available reading material (Davis 2015: 1095). Indeed, the first steps towards standardising vernacular languages in the 15th century involved translating the Bible. Thus, the intertwining of language acquisition or preservation with religious beliefs often implies a deep connection to and positive attitudes towards the language in question.

In the Jewish context, Rubin (1998: 312) highlights the emergence of the concept of the 'primordial language' during the *Hasmonaean Period* (~ 140 BCE to ~ 37 BCE), coinciding with the Jews' assertion of themselves as a "a separate nation with its own religion, culture, customs and land". Hebrew, during this period, served as both an ideological tool and a group symbol, considered superior to the languages of other peoples. This elevated status of Hebrew was "part of the cultural and political reaction to the Hellenistic rule and culture which prevailed among segments of Jewish society and culture at the time" (Rubin 1998: 313). Even after Jews stopped speaking Hebrew, its symbolic significance endured for nearly 2,000 years, serving as a language of prayer and religious study, which contributed to its revival in the 20th century (Spolsky 2010)[37].

[37] For a deeper insight into the sociology of Jewish language and religion see Spolsky (1983; 1991; 2003; 2006; 2010).

Spolsky (2010: 16-22) provides invaluable insights into the relationship between language and identity as well as the role of multilingualism among Jews across history outlining three main periods in the history of Hebrew use in sacred texts:

1. Before the Babylonian exile (7th century BCE), Hebrew was the common language spoken in Judah, while Aramaic was confined to diplomatic circles.
2. Following the Babylonian exile, it became customary to accompany public readings of Hebrew sacred texts with Aramaic translations or interpretations. By the turn of the millennium, Jews in Palestine were typically multilingual, using Hebrew for religious purposes, Greek for governmental administration, and their vernacular language, Aramaic, for daily communication (Spolsky 1983).
3. After the Roman expulsion of the Jews from Palestine, Jews in the diaspora adopted a "new multilingual pattern". Internal community communication was conducted in Jewish variants of the local vernacular like Judeo-Spanish, Judeo-Arabic, and Yiddish, while the local language was used for interactions with non-Jews. Hebrew and Aramaic remained reserved for religious purposes.

Spolsky emphasises that Jewish groups has been multilingual for nearly three millennia, with languages distributed across various domains of use, a pattern that has largely persisted to this day. The Sephardim in Istanbul exemplify this enduring multilingual tradition (cf. § 5.2.2).

The adoption of a "new multilingual pattern" by Jews in the diaspora, where internal community communication transitioned to Jewish variants of local vernaculars while maintaining Hebrew and Aramaic for religious contexts, vividly illustrates the adaptive and enduring nature of Jewish linguistic traditions across diverse cultural and geographic landscapes.

Turkish Sephardim today are undergoing modernisation and secularisation. As religion becomes increasingly privatised, languages are becoming more prominent cultural markers of social identity (cf. Brubaker 2015: 32). In the same vein, postvernacular Judeo-Spanish is increasingly seen as a symbol of Sephardic 'authenticity'. To understand this phenomenon, the following section will examine the crucial aspects of the discourse on linguistic 'authenticity', providing a foundation for my analysis.

3.3.5 Language as a reflection of authenticity

Identities emerge, are negotiated, and are shaped in the process of communication with the goal of finding one's place and being accepted in the social space as an authentic representative of a certain identity (Ehala 2017: 125). Ehala (2018: 100) identifies two

meta-level universal core values: (1) *unity* (a value incorporating all other core values of a community and for their unified representation and manifestation) and *authenticity* (the coordinating and cohesive element between the identity sign and its manifestation). Authenticity, as a meta-core value,

> […] is expressed as resistance or at least resentment to attempts to modify or redefine a particular identity as a sign. It may be manifested as a teenager's protest against wearing the clothing that parents prefer, a nation's obsession with linguistic and cultural purity, religious believers' resistance to female priests, or a political party's reluctance to form a coalition with a particular partner. (Ehala: 2018: 104)

However, authenticity does not exclude change and innovation. Authenticity allows changes only to the extent that the core values connecting the sign of identity and its signal are not compromised beyond clear recognition (Ehala 2018: 104). Authenticity serves as a mechanism for structuring the social space, distinguishing true members from non-members.

> In this sense, performing an identity is like speaking a language. If one performs an identity authentically, he is like a native speaker; if not quite authentically, he is like a speaker of a foreign language. And this parallel with language can be extended further. (Ehala 2018: 7)

As in the case of bilinguals who display similar proficiency in two languages, one can develop an authentic relationship with two ethnic identities (Ehala 2018: 120). Beyond the outward manifestation of identity, group members undergo a process of internalising the meaning of the identity sign to be perceived as authentic members of a particular social group (Ehala 2018: 77; 115). If authenticity mechanisms in identity building represent the macro level, the relationship between *authenticity* and language is understood as its micro-level counterpart.

Since the rise of mass nationalism, languages have played a central role in discourses of authenticity, serving as indicators of uniqueness. The link between national cohesion and language operates both directly, with language regarded as a core national value, and indirectly, as language forms the symbolic foundation for the formulation of other values associated with national coherence.

Authenticity discourses, as noted by Bucholtz & Hall (2004: 385), are inherently essentialist, often privileging certain identities and languages as more 'real' than others. Bucholtz (2003: 398) defines 'real' language as "[the] language produced in authentic contexts by authentic speakers". Understanding processes of authenticity is crucial for grasping identity as a whole, which is defined by Bucholtz & Hall (2004) as

> "an outcome of cultural semiotics that is accomplished through the production of contextually relevant sociopolitical relations of similarity and difference, authenticity and inauthenticity, and legitimacy and illegitimacy". (Bucholtz & Hall 2004: 382)

In line with Bucholtz & Hall (2004), Myhill (2003: 78) cautions against the blanket application of authenticity discourses, noting that while this ideology can be beneficial in some contexts, it can also foster unwarranted suspicion towards individuals from ethnic groups such as Jews, Chinese, Indians, Armenians, and Gypsies. These individuals may choose not to use their ancestral language in daily life yet still maintain a distinct identity. While Myhill (2003: 78) acknowledges that authenticity is often a typical motivation in efforts to preserve endangered languages, he argues that the ideology linking language to individual and collective identity can actually undermine language preservation efforts (Myhill 1999).

In discussions surrounding minority and endangered languages, authenticity does usually not pertain to the connection between language and identity but covertly encompasses the profiles of speakers, who are often categorised on a continuum from the most authentic to the least authentic. As noted by Sallabank (2013: 125), in the case of vanishing and postvernacular languages it is mostly the elderly that are in command of what is considered the most 'authentic' version of that language, even if their language is already strongly influenced by the majority language. As a consequence, less 'fluent' speakers may develop a sense of insecurity over not speaking the language correctly (Abtahian & Quinn 2017: 143; Lee 2009).

The loss of cultural authenticity often accompanies language shift, a phenomenon extensively discussed by scholars focusing on minority and endangered languages (Edwards 2010; Fishman 1964; Fishman 1985b; Harris 1985). They contend that language shift undermines the group's authenticity, although it may not necessarily lead to a shift in ethnic identity if other core values remain strong and coherent. According to Fishman (1985a), while the replacement of one language by another does impact ethnocultural authenticity and continuity, the extent of this impact depends on the group's ability to manage and control the change process internally (Fishman 1985b: 507). Similarly, Edwards (1985: 96-98) found that cultures and ethnic identity can survive language shift. Nevertheless, expressing them through the language of the majority will induce a shift of the kind that Crystal (2000: 121-122) compares to a "heart-attack" in a culture.

As Crystal (2000: 121-122) notes, just as people can survive heart attacks, cultures can endure, and languages can also persist beyond their instrumental function. Even when a language is no longer actively spoken, individuals and groups can preserve a connection to their heritage language, finding new ways to invest symbolic meaning which is reflective of or influencing their social, cultural, and identity practices during its

postvernacular stage. These facets will be examined within the context of language and identity in a minority context in Section 3.4.

3.3.6 The ideology-attitude continuum

In this section, I analyse ideologies and attitudes in relation to Judeo-Spanish in its postvernacular stage. The useful notion of a continuum between overarching ideologies and more specific attitudes as proposed by Sallabank (2013), together with the themes explored in preceding chapters, assist in understanding the significance attributed to Judeo-Spanish in speakers' own perceptions (cf. Bucholtz & Hall 2004: 371). The preceding chapters have examined various dimensions, such as the interplay between language and identity, core values, language cultures, language and religion, and the role of language in shaping social boundaries. These discussions collectively establish structured hierarchies of difference, grounded in power disparities among individuals, groups, and languages. Within these hierarchies, ideological rankings emerge at the group/society level, serving as lodestars that guide individuals as they navigate social spaces. These lodestars are subject to shifts influenced by contextual assessments, attitudes, and individuals' desire to act (*agency*) against social constraints (Ahearn 2001) or in intergroup cooperation or conflict (Bohner 2001).

Ideologies encompass extensive systems of beliefs and values (cf. § 3.3.3–3.3.5) that exert influence over entire groups, societies, and communities of practice. Geertz (1973 [1964]) suggests that ideologies serve as navigational guides for social conduct within specific cultural contexts. Woolard (1998: 3) posits that ideologies represent expansive interconnected frameworks guiding societal understanding and behaviour.

> Ideologies of language are not about language alone. Rather, they envision and enact ties of language to identity, to aesthetics, to morality, and to epistemology. Through such linkages, they underpin not only linguistic form and use but also the very notion of the person and the social group, as well as such fundamental social institutions as religious ritual, child socialization, gender relations, the nation-state, schooling, and law. (Woolard 1998: 3)

Gal & Irvine (2019: 1-2) expand on this concept of interconnection by exploring ideologies through the prism of semiotic signs, aligning with Bucholtz & Hall's (2004) anthropological viewpoint on language and identity (cf. § 3.2.5). The semiotic model extends the discourse on language ideologies more specifically to include speakers' awareness and agency in interpreting ideological signs. In this view, the process of interpretation emerges as crucial in studying ideologies (Gal & Irvine 2019: 12). Following Gal & Irvine's approach, I will depart from viewing *ideology* as a fixed construct and instead embrace terms like *ideologising* and *ideological work*, which empower individuals in the process of actively interpreting their circumstances.

In contrast to ideologies, attitudes reside on the micro level, representing the individual's personal perceptions, emotions, beliefs, and evaluations within the overarching ideological landscape. One of the most frequently cited definitions of attitudes is provided by Allport (1935) who defines attitude as

> "a mental and neural state of readiness, organised through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all objects and situations with which it is related". (Allport 1935: 810)

As Allport proposed at the outset of attitudes research, and as Kircher & Zipp (2022: 2) acknowledged a century later, one of the primary challenges in studying attitudes is "that attitudes are states of readiness, dispositions, or tendencies – and therefore have no overt substance". They can only be interpreted within the larger ideological, historical, socio-economic, political and situational framework.

Examining the past three decades of literature on language attitudes makes it clear that considerable progress has been made in theory-based research since Baker's seminal study *Attitudes and Language* (1992). At the time, Baker identified five key deficiencies in the study of language attitudes: (1) insufficient theory-based research, (2) lack of attention to attitude change, (3) inadequate and one-dimensional study designs, (4) exclusive focus on individual languages, and (4) examination of attitudes solely in connection with language performance (Baker 1992: 1). Upon revisiting the current state of research on language attitudes 30 years later, it becomes evident that the two major concerns highlighted by Baker in points (2) and (3) remain inadequately addressed even today. Studies investigating attitude shifts across diachronic and synchronic dimensions within a comprehensive interdisciplinary framework are rare. Such studies would involve shedding light on attitudes through the lens of specific language cultures and evolving socio-economic and political factors, and ideological discourses.

The distinction between attitudes, perceptions, beliefs, and ideologies about language is often blurred (Baker 1992a: 13; Sallabank 2013: 61). Sallabank (2013: 64) advocates for a broader perspective, suggesting that "attitudes, perceptions, beliefs, and ideologies can be seen as points on a continuum or as manifestations of overall predispositions".

Regarding the components of attitudes, there is a consensus that identifies *affect* (feelings elicited by an object), *cognition* (belief about the object), and *conation* (behavioural intention and actual behaviour directed at an attitude object) (Kircher & Zipp, 2022: 4). In slightly different terms, Bradley's (2019: 515) research distinguishes between "conscious cognition", "unconscious feelings", and "actual language use" across various domains.

One of the key challenges in attitude research is understanding the link between overt/covert ideologies, overt/covert attitudes, and their impact on language behaviour. Studies in language attitudes (Baker 1992: 15-16; Fishman 1999b; Liebkind 1999; Pauwels 2016: 126; Saville-Troike 2003) have shown that positive attitudes towards a language do not always translate into actual language practices or a commitment to language preservation, just as negative attitudes do not necessarily indicate the communicative role of a language within a community. Likewise, language practices and proficiency may not always correspond with individuals' linguistic identity (Liebkind 1999: 144). Fishman (1999b: 157) posits that attitudes act as predispositions to behaviour and are separate from overt language use, which is governed by distinct mechanisms of acquisition and implementation. In the case of the Sephardic community, the language continued to be widely spoken despite facing a period of particularly negative language attitudes between the 1940s and 1980s. However, a significant shift towards more positive attitudes only occurred when the language entered a postvernacular stage, towards the end of the last century.

Bucholtz & Hall's (2004: 381) semiotic approach to language and identity discussed in Section 3.2.5 scrutinises the interaction among four semiotic processes: *practice, performance*, *indexicality*, and *ideology*. Given that attitudes are shaped and evolve through the interplay of individual attributes and social contexts and are subject to variation and determined by a unique set of factors (Ajzen & Fishbein 2005), this semiotic model has proven to be a grounded analytical device that captures the diversity and multidimensionality of attitudes and ideology.

One of the main distinctions in language attitudes is made between *distinctive* and *instrumental* attitudes (Gardner & Lambert 1972). While *distinctive attitudes* are motivated by boundary tracing mechanisms between different groups, *instrumental* attitudes are driven by pragmatic considerations or by the perceived utility of a language (e.g. job opportunities, social mobility). Since the mid-1970s, there has been a shift towards a multidimensional perspective on language attitudes (Baker 1992; Lewis 1975; Sallabank 2013). Six conceptual distinctions are currently recognised.

1. general approval: 'I like speaking'
2. Commitment to practice: 'I want to maintain'
3. Ethnic tradition: 'we owe it to our forefathers to maintain'
4. Economic and social factors: 'offers advantages in seeking good job opportunities'
5. Family and local considerations: 'it is important in family life'
6. Personal ideological considerations: 'provides a range of aesthetic experiences in literature'

In different linguistic contexts, these distinctions might be present to certain degrees, depending on the divergent perspectives of different group members.

Individuals' attitudes can be elicited and assessed using various methods. Kircher & Zipp (2022: 1) classified them into (1) *the analysis of the societal treatment of language,* (2) *direct methods*, and (3) *indirect methods of attitude elicitation* including *Guttman's Scalogram Analysis*, the *Semantic Differential Technique*, the *Repertory Grid Technique*, *Factor Analysis*, *Sociometry*, *Matched Guise Technique*, as well as document analysis, content analysis, autobiographies, and interviews (Baker 1992: 17-18). In this dissertation, I employed predominantly the first and third type (content analysis, autobiographies, and interviews).

Liebkind posits that individuals who perceive their group vitality to be high tend to harbour more positive attitudes towards their group language compared to those who perceive lower levels of vitality (Liebkind 1999: 145). Moreover, Liebkind (1999: 145) found that stronger perceptions of impassable group boundaries enhance identification with one's language group and diminish the likelihood of assimilation.

> And if there are few alternative social categories except the linguistic one with which to identify, then one's identification with one's language group is probably very strong, too. (Liebkind 1999: 145)

While positive language attitudes may not guarantee a language's survival (Saville-Troike 2003: 197), valuing the language within an often hostile minority context is crucial for its maintenance (Brenzinger 2012: 4).

In the investigation of language attitudes, Myhill (2004) highlights the significant influence of attitudes towards the relationship between language and identity, referred to in simpler terms more generally as language culture. He identifies two distinct groups based on their approach to identity: those who associate a common spoken language with shared ancestry (e.g. Arabs, Germans) and those who define identity based on ancestry and religion, irrespective of spoken language. Geographically, this division aligns with a European versus a Middle Eastern understanding of identity (Myhill 2004: 39-43). Myhill (2004: 155) and Şaul (2021) suggest that the choice of spoken vernaculars among Jews often reflects the prestige associated with a language (cf. § 6.2.1).

> In most circumstances, like most other peoples, when a prestigious new language appears on the scene, Jews are likely to embrace it. When the Arabs invaded and conquered the area, Jews switched to Arabic fairly quickly. When the Spanish began to take the Iberian Peninsula back from the Arabs, Jews did not generally show a great desire to hold onto Arabic (particularly not in writing). Jews in modern liberal societies in Western Europe and North America (with the exception of the Ultra-Orthodox) have adopted non-Jewish vernaculars quite enthusiastically. Judeo-Arabic-speaking Jews in North Africa commonly switched to French as their everyday language fairly soon after the French colonized the area. (Myhill 2004: 155-156)

The concept of the ‘likelihood’ of language shift, as described by Myhill, combined with constructivist attitudes towards the relationship between language and identity (including ancestry and religion), is crucial for understanding how the Sephardim, as a minority within the Turkish context, interpret and perpetuate ideologies through discourse and language practices. Additionally, understanding the historical evolution of language culture among Jews in general, as a minority living in diaspora, has been essential for interpreting language ideologies, deconstructing language attitudes, and examining their impact on language practices. These insights set the stage for a deeper exploration of how language and identity interact within minority contexts, particularly in the Sephardic community.

3.4 Language and identity in a minority context

This section foreshadows an examination of the symbolic language use among Turkish Sephardim, acknowledging the complex multi-layered linguistic identity and strategies for coping with acculturation phenomena across generations.

While language is often regarded as a key marker of group identity, as noted by Edwards (1984b: preface), Sallabank (2013: 77) brings attention to the irony inherent in the study of disappearing languages and identity. Indeed, if speakers’ attachment to their ancestral language were the primary motivator of their linguistic behaviour, language shift would not occur. Understanding why some minority groups maintain their language while others experience language shift therefore requires a multifaceted analysis of the intersection between ideologies and other core values of the Sephardim as a minority group.

When exploring the dynamics of social opposition and boundary formation between minority and majority groups, it is crucial to recognise that minority groups often operate within a different, more intricate model of individual identification with the collective compared to members of the majority (Fishman 1999b; Verkuyten 2005; Verkuyten & De Wolf 2002a). Fishman (1999b: 155) defines ethnic identity as a “sociopsychological variable which may not be at all conscious but one of which minorities are more often conscious than are majorities”. Members of minority groups typically occupy lower positions in terms of numerical strength, power, and status compared to majority groups. Minorities often share “common experiences of discrimination and social disadvantage”, factors that bind them together (Hutnik 1991: 21).

The relationship between language and ethnic identity among minorities has been significantly shaped by the rise of nation-states, wherein minority languages often

yielded to the national language of the majority population. This trend traces back to the earliest expressions of Republican egalitarianism during the French Revolution, when language diversity within communities was perceived as a hindrance to revolutionary ideals and modernisation — an ideology that continues to influence contemporary attitudes towards minority languages and language policies worldwide. Verkuyten (2000) attributes these attitudes to a hierarchy in identity formation and status differences, which shape social interactions between majority and minority groups. This ideological ranking allows the identities of the more powerful group to be perceived as the norm, and thus less marked and recognisable as identities (Bucholtz & Hall 2004: 372). Minority group membership, however, is viewed as a threat to one's self-concept, particularly in contexts where positive distinctiveness in ethnic identity is not emphasised (Liebkind, Mähönen et al. 2016: 33). Edwards (2010) cautions against a one-sided perception of majority-minority relations, arguing that larger groups are not always perpetrators and smaller groups not always victims. He underscores the complexity of these dynamics, stating that

> [w]hile it is common to equate what is 'small' with what is good, and to cast the 'large' in the role of villain, it must be remembered that the obvious attractions of the wider world hardly suggest such a black-and-white picture. (Edwards 2010: 67)

This perspective challenges simplistic interpretations of power dynamics between majority and minority groups. The social dynamics of groups and languages are inherently intricate, with each group exhibiting unique boundary delineation, diverse needs, desires for mobilisation, and strategies for managing inter-group tensions. In the context of minority social identity, Tajfel & Turner (1986) elucidated how individuals may either embrace or reject a negative social identity, or adjust their attitude towards their group based on their perception of the broader social system. According to SIT, ethnic consciousness and positive in-group evaluation are responses of minority groups to status disparities and discrimination. Verkuyten & De Wolf (2002b: 781-782) expand upon the principles of SIT, positing that ethnic identity is shaped not only in relation to the majority group but also in relation to the minority group itself. Their study's findings reveal that an ethnic minority's "self-perceptions, acculturation attitudes, and group evaluations were all affected by the comparative group context" (Verkuyten 2002: 787). Attitudes towards acculturation vary thus depending on the context of the comparison and driven by what identity studies refer to as the 'desire for recognition' (Ehala 2018; Fraser 2020; Fukuyama 2018; Honneth 2014), which mobilises both individuals and collectives alike. When faced with denial of recognition by majority groups due to their language practices, individuals from minority groups may collectively adapt their language behaviour to align with the standards required for recognition.

Modification of the behaviour of ethnic minorities is often examined in the psychological literature through the lenses of *assimilation* and *biculturalism* (Verkuyten & De Wolf 2002a: 371). Within this two-dimensional framework, Berry (1997: 9) delineates four acculturation modes, which individuals may choose depending on their circumstances: *integration* (maintaining one's culture while adapting to the majority culture), *assimilation* (adopting the majority culture and abandoning one's own), *separation* (upholding one's minority culture without engaging with the dominant culture), and *marginalisation* (experiencing cultural loss and discrimination, leading to rejection of both cultures). However, Berry (1997: 9-10) notes that individuals may not always have the freedom to choose their acculturation mode, as they may be compelled to conform to models imposed by the dominant society.

> Most clearly, people may sometimes choose the Separation option; but when it is required of them by the dominant society, the situation is one of Segregation. Similarly, when people choose to Assimilate the notion of the Melting Pot may be appropriate; but when forced to do so, it becomes more like a Pressure Cooker. In the case of Marginalisation, people rarely choose such an option; rather they usually become marginalised as a result of attempts at forced assimilation (Pressure Cooker) combined with forced exclusion (Segregation); thus no other term seems to be required beyond the single notion of Marginalisation. (Berry 1997: 10)

Herman (1977) characterises marginalisation as a state of limbo, where individuals find themselves suspended between two groups: unable to fully integrate into the minority yet facing barriers preventing them from joining the majority (Herman 1977: 35). Using the self-perceptions of a Russian Jewish woman as an illustration, Herman (1977) highlights how individuals in this state, often referred to as "marginal men", experience feelings of isolation, insecurity, and an inability to identify with either group. While Berry's model provides valuable insights into the acculturation processes of minorities in general, Haarmann's acculturation model (1986: 45-46) offers a more nuanced perspective which best accommodates the assimilation processes taking place in the Judeo-Spanish community. Haarmann conceptualises ethnicity as a dynamic phenomenon influenced by two possible processes: *ethnic fusion* and *fission. Ethnic fusion* involves *assimilation, incorporation, and conglomeration*, while *fission* encompasses *profilation, separation, and proliferation*. Among these processes, *incorporation*, characterised by linguistic assimilation, is the most common outcome of interethnic contact, leading to the assimilation of smaller ethnic groups.

Particularly relevant to the present investigation is Haarmann's observation regarding Jewish groups, where ethnic identity undergoes *conglomeration*. This implies that only certain features, core values or domains (cf. Liebkind 1999: 142) that define the ethnic group are involved in a *fusion* process. Various Jewish groups have adopted majority languages such as Farsi, Arabic, Tat and Turkish among others while preserving

their family-transmitted cultural traditions and religious practices (Haarmann 1986: 45). These languages have retained and integrated structural features, including morphology, syntax, phonology, and lexicon, from their heritage languages, giving rise to Jewish variants of these languages like Judeo-Shirazi, Judeo-Arabic, Judeo-Tat and Judeo-Spanish.

Conglomeration, as observed by Sussman (2000), is thematised through the perspective of intercultural identity. This concept denotes a form of biculturalism that recognises multiple cultural identities simultaneously, with individuals defining themselves as 'world citizens' capable of adapting to different contexts, countries and regions (Sussman 2000: 368). Although originally applied by Sussman in the context of repatriates, this phenomenon has been observed among the Turkish Sephardim.

The above-mentioned processes of identity formation also imply that multiple simultaneous in-group identities can emerge at the group level. Despite researchers exploring the phenomenon of multiple group membership (Deaux 2013; Lewis 1998; Tajfel 1978), there has been limited investigation into the nature of the relationship between an individual's different in-group identities (Roccas & Brewer 2002), how minority group members combine various ethnic and cultural identities (Sam & Berry 2016), or how they emphasise specific core values of their identity in situations of perceived intergroup conflict or threat (Ricucci 2010). According to Roccas & Brewer (2002), individuals may adopt different modes of identity representation based on individual differences (on a time scale, periods of life) or changing situational factors (cf. § 6.4.2). In the acculturation process, core values of identity may undergo transformation or alteration, with linguistic identities potentially being replaced by ethnic or religious ones. Research suggests (Neufeld & McCarty 1994; Wegner & Wenzlaff 1996) that situational factors such as stress or in-group threats can influence social categorisation, leading to a more homogeneous perception of similarities and differences between in-group and out-group members and clearer in-group boundaries. Under pressure, individuals may focus on the central features and core values of their identity (Hutnik 1991: 166; Roccas & Brewer 2002: 92), with linguistic identity becoming primary for some groups and secondary for others.

As highlighted by Berry (1997) and Herman (1977), to delineate between "free" and "imposed" acculturation strategies, particularly in cross-generational comparative studies within dominant societies, such as in the case of the Turkish Sephardim, is often exceedingly challenging. This challenge is compounded by the longstanding suppression of cultural diversity and recurring episodes of antisemitism spanning centuries (cf. § 6.2.4). Among the Turkish Sephardim, narratives often centre around

traumas stemming from language prohibitions enforced during the 1930s and 1940s, leading to the rapid decline of Judeo-Spanish (cf. § 6.3). The next section will provide an overview of the theoretical evolution concerning the interplay between language and trauma, with a particular focus on how traumatic events can influence attitudes and practices.

3.4.1 Language and trauma

Trauma studies has emerged as a multidisciplinary field, expanding beyond its original confines in medicine and psychotherapy. The term 'trauma' has increasingly permeated everyday language and is sometimes used loosely to describe any painful or frustrating experience. Fischer & Riedesser (2020: 88) define trauma as

> [...] a vital experience of discrepancy between threatening situational factors and individual coping mechanisms, accompanied by feelings of helplessness and vulnerable exposure, resulting in a lasting disruption of self and world understanding. (Fischer & Riedesser 2020: 88) [38]

In the following, drawing on Busch & McNamara (2020: 324-326), I will present an overview of the key developments in the language and trauma discourse that help me contextualise my findings in Chapter 6. Modern trauma research traces its roots to the late 19th and early 20th centuries, particularly the fields of neurology and psychiatry with prominent figures such as Pierre Janet, Sigmund Freud, Josef Breuer, and Sándor Ferenczi making significant contributions. The concept of trauma gained significant attention during and after the Vietnam War, with claims for treatment and compensation by US veterans' associations and anti-war activists. In the 1970s, the discourse expanded to the long-term effects of trauma on Holocaust survivors and victims of sexual violence and domestic abuse, among others. This was the beginning of the gradual public recognition that psychological and somatic suffering can be traced back to traumatising events. In 1992, *Post-traumatic Stress Disorder* (PTSD) was included in the *International Classification of Diseases* published by the *World Health Organization* (WHO, 1992).

The understanding of psychological trauma and PTSD in clinical and public discourse is intertwined with developments in the medical, legal, societal, and historical contexts. Advances in neuroscientific research in recent decades have greatly enhanced

[38] Own translation from German: „[…] als ein vitales Diskrepanzerlebnis zwischen bedrohlichen Situationsfaktoren und den individuellen Bewältigungsmöglichkeiten, das mit Gefühlen von Hilflosigkeit und schutzloser Preisgabe einhergeht und so eine dauerhafte Erschütterung von Selbst- und Weltverständnis bewirkt" (Fischer & Riedesser 2020: 88).

our understanding of the impact of trauma on the human brain, representing significant progress in objectively assessing psychological trauma. Zepf & Zepf (2008: 347) underscore the subjective nature of trauma, emphasising that the crucial aspect lies not in the event itself, but rather in how it is perceived and managed by the individual.

Studies on language and trauma historically focused on the role of language in the discursive construction of trauma as an object of knowledge. Few studies explored the language involved in the actual experience of trauma. Brigitta Busch and colleagues (Busch 2016; Busch & McNamara 2020; Busch & Reddemann 2013) have paid particular attention to this phenomenon.

In her exploration of the intricate relationship between traumatic events and language, Busch (2015; 2016) introduced the concept of *Spracherleben*, or *language experience*. *Spracherleben* encompasses how individuals perceive themselves in relation to others during verbal interactions, unfolding along three key axes: *recognition/ non-recognition*, *belonging/ exclusion*, and *power/ powerlessness*. These axes underscore that our recollection of situations is intertwined with how we perceived ourselves as speakers or recipients within them. Moreover, *Spracherleben* acknowledges the physical and emotional dimensions involved, which can leave imprints in the body's memory, shaping dispositions, behaviours, and attitudes over time. This resonates with Bourdieu's (1977) notion of *habitus*, which encapsulates deeply ingrained habits, preferences, and ways of thinking that influence behaviour subconsciously, as well as *hexis*, the visible manifestation of habitus in bodily comportment and disposition. The dynamic between trauma and language is intricate and reciprocal, involving injuries and disruptions that affect both language and the speaking process. This complex interaction will be explored in depth in Section 6.3.

The definition of trauma, including language trauma, is a subject of controversy due to the need to categorise and describe symptoms in a way that fits existing knowledge. It is important to recognise that psychological trauma is not only a medico-legal construct but also a discursive phenomenon that has evolved over time in response to struggles for recognition and resources. Normative discourse and power dynamics also influence the acceptance of traumatic effects. While advancements in neuroscientific research may lead to a more objective understanding of psychological and language traumas, it is essential to approach the topic with an awareness of its historical and social context and to consider the different profiles of speakers and non-speakers.

3.4.2 Postvernacularism

Jewish languages are often regarded as 'languages without a nation', transcending geographical boundaries and, in many cases, defining the nation itself (Boyarin 1994; Brink-Danan 2011c). Concepts like "Yiddishland" (Shandler 2004; 2005) and "Ladinoland" (Brink-Danan 2011c) emphasise the importance of language over physical landscapes, reflecting the expanded cultural boundaries that facilitate the postvernacular use of Yiddish and Judeo-Spanish. Today, with the exception of Hebrew, most Jewish languages exist in a postvernacular mode in which their symbolic significance surpasses their primary role as a means of communication (Brink-Danan 2011c; Bunin Benor 2011; Shandler 2005). In this context, postvernacular Judeo-Spanish, much like postvernacular Yiddish as defined by Shandler (2000; 2004; 2005), represents a unique semiotic mode of engaging with the language that does not require fluency. This symbolic engagement with the language often emerges as a response to a perceived linguistic and cultural loss, embodying a collective effort to express cultural distinctiveness (cf. Shandler 2004: 25).

Much like Yiddish, Judeo-Spanish has evolved into "a new semiotic mode", in which each utterance carries performative significance beyond its literal meaning (Shandler 2004: 20). The purpose of this type of mode is to create a sense of home in the words (Shandler 2005: 35), a *rhetorical legacy zone* (cf. § 5.4.5). In this dissertation, the term 'rhetorical legacy zone' refers to imagined and virtual rhetorical spaces within which individuals experience a sense of belonging and comfort, regardless of their geographic location or their fluency in the heritage language. Both 'postvernacularism' and 'rhetorical legacy zones' serve as liberating concepts for the endangered Judeo-Spanish community, which has faced strong assimilationist pressures. These concepts empower the Judeo-Spanish community to reclaim symbolic ownership of Judeo-Spanish, beyond fluency in the language. The rise of new online communities creates virtual spaces and opportunities to engage with Judeo-Spanish in its postvernacular form, allowing individuals to navigate these rhetorical legacy zones effectively and fostering a sense of imagined linguistic continuity (Shandler 2004: 30; 37).

Throughout the 20th century, the semiotics of Judeo-Spanish evolved in response to generational shifts and adaptations to external factors such as historical events, socio-economic conditions, and language ideologies, as well as internal linguistic developments including language attitudes and practices, all of which led to its endangerment. A significant turning point in language practices occurred, as discussed in Section 2.3.7, with the creation of the *Autoridad Nasionala del Ladino* (ANL) in 1997 and, a decade later, the emergence of widespread use of social media platforms in the

2000s. This era witnessed a surge in the presence and promotion of Judeo-Spanish in online spaces, transforming the Judeo-Spanish community from a geographically bound entity to a globally accessible digital domain, a "Sephardi courtyard forming on the Internet" (Held 2010: 83-84).

> Having lost its function as a vital a tool of communication, contemporary JS used online may be regarded as a metaphoric place, in which an identity is constructed in the absence of an offline Sephardi community. The new Sephardi courtyard forming on the Internet is based primarily upon the ethnic language: the vehicle for the recreation of a fragmented offline personal and collective Sephardi identity. (Held 2010: 83)

Thus, as Held (2010) implies above, the use of Judeo-Spanish is a performative act of identification (cf. Romero 2017: 279) in the absence of an offline Sephardi community. Globalisation and the widespread use of the internet have significantly reshaped the interconnectedness of Sephardi communities through digital engagement with Judeo-Spanish, influencing identification patterns at both the micro and macro levels (Yebra López 2021). Buchan et al. (2009) suggest that these evolving identification patterns foster cosmopolitan attitudes, expanding group boundaries and reducing the emphasis on locality and ethnicity. As group boundaries broaden and global social networks evolve, postvernacularism comes to accommodate these changes. Today, online social networks grounded in shared beliefs, norms, and ideologies give rise to online *communities of practice* (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet 1992: 464) that conjure up Judeo-Spanish, assign emotive qualities to it, and monitor it "with unprecedented deliberateness" (Shandler 2004: 21). Especially since Covid-19, such communities of practice around postvernacular Judeo-Spanish have experienced a renaissance (Yebra López 2021: 107). This prompts a crucial question: Can such communities of practice foster a sense of linguistic identity? Joseph (2004: 167) argues that while a shared identity is a prerequisite for a community of practice, these communities can display diverse language and identity patterns. According to Joseph, a community of practice is more likely to exhibit a linguistic identity when its members internalise and integrate the group's practices into their own habitus[39].

Like language, ethnicity too can be experienced and manifested on a purely symbolic level (Edwards 2010: 59; Gans 1979), allowing individuals to identify with an ethnic group without significant social or cultural involvement (Gans 2009: 123). This concept of symbolic ethnicity originated from Gans' (1956) observations among American Jews

[39] Joseph uses the term *habitus* (cf. Bourdieu 1977) to refer to those practices that are performed in the process of growing up and which are part of daily routine.

near Chicago and has been explored in subsequent studies of ethnic dynamics among white Americans (Alba 1990; Edwards 2010; Rebhun 2004; Waters 1990). Gans (1956; 1979: 15) noted that individuals expressed their Jewish identity not through specific behaviours or practices, but by utilising "material and non-material symbols" such as ethnic food or a heightened emphasis on previously minor holidays like Hanukkah. He termed this phenomenon "symbolic Judaism", a phenomenon of symbolic ethnicity that was not found among other groups. The following section will explore in more depth the symbolic role of language and its significance in delineating group boundaries and identity.

3.4.3 Symbolic value of language

As discussed in Section 3.4.2, language functions not only as a tool for communication but also as a bearer of social significance. For some groups, it is a crucial factor in ethnic differentiation, while for others, it represents a central symbol of ethnic identity, even when it is not actively used in daily communication. Bourdieu (1984) posits that cultural roles supersede economic roles in shaping and perpetuating power hierarchies within societies, emphasising the role of language as a medium of power. The symbolic power of language, rooted in its ability to shape others' perceptions of reality, plays a crucial role in shaping identity and group boundaries (Bourdieu 1991: 166-167). In the context of minority and postvernacular languages, this symbolic power is particularly important, serving as a crucial tool for fostering a sense of belonging and solidarity.

Edwards (2009) has demonstrated that a communicative language shift towards a dominant language does not necessarily entail an identity shift, since language shift is often accompanied by a retention of the symbolic value of language. Through various studies spanning many years, Edwards (1984a; 1985; 2009; 2010) has illustrated the way in which language retains its symbolic significance even when its communicative function diminishes or disappears entirely. For instance, Edwards (2009: 56) highlights the case of Irish, which, despite its weak language vitality, maintains a symbolic role in shaping Irish identity (cf. Liebkind 1999: 149). As the communicative function of a language wanes, especially when it no longer serves as a prominent marker of ethnicity with a visible public presence that threatens majority group cohesion, it can increasingly become "an emblem of groupness", solidifying the group's boundaries (Edwards 1985: 17; 2010: 6-7). Eastman (1984) introduced the concept of an "associated language" to describe this phenomenon of language operating purely at a symbolic level.

In a comparative analysis of Ladino use in New York and Israel, Harris (1982a) discovered that despite its diminishing transmission to younger generations, the

Sephardic community retained a strong attachment to “Ladino”. This finding was corroborated by Harris in subsequent studies (Harris 1994; Harris 2006). Interestingly, symbolic value can be attributed to languages that lack a historical presence or recent use in certain communities. A notable example is Hebrew, as evidenced by Morahg’s (1993: 207) investigation into Hebrew language instruction at US universities. Morahg observed that students perceived Hebrew as holding enduring value in self-identification, serving as a core value to pass down to future generations, and functioning as a symbolic connection to the state of Israel, even among secular Jews. These findings echo Gans’s (1979: 10) observation that Israel serves as a “a substitute community to satisfy identity needs” for a significant portion of American Jewry and for Jewish populations worldwide.

Based on the examination of various collective symbols that are central to nationalist ideology, Fishman (1989 [1972]: 280) asserts that “language is worthier than territory” or “than the institutions of government”. Furthermore, he suggests that even religion “is often viewed as an embarrassment by modern man” (Fishman 1989 [1972]: 281). With reference to languages, Fishman continues that

> […] one has a secular symbol (if such is desired) that can simultaneously draw upon and lean upon all of the sanctity that religion has given to texts, to writing systems and to word imagery per se […]. Modern societies have an endless need to define themselves as eternally unique and language is one of the few remaining mass symbols that answers this need without automatically implying one or another short-lived and non-distinctive institutional base. (Fishman 1989 [1972]: 281)

Sallabank (2013) contends that the symbolic attachment people form with languages, despite their actual language behaviour, strengthens group boundaries.

> While Guernesiais [is the variety of the Norman language spoken in Guernsey] is valued for symbolic identity and island distinctiveness, it is associated with nostalgia and traditional culture rather than seen as a living form of communication. (Sallabank 2013: 120)

Similar examples can be observed globally. For instance, in the Bulgarian minority of Wallachia, in southern Romania (e.g. the villages of Valea Dragului and Herăști), young girls continue to perform Easter songs in an ‘imaginary’ language with phonological similarities to local Bulgarian. These songs, transmitted orally over generations, now serve as a mere phonological and rhythmic echo of the Bulgarian vernacular once spoken in the area. In the absence of other markers of cultural distinctiveness, these songs aim to reinforce ethnic identity (Kahl 2014).

The symbolic power derived from ethnic language consciousness and its connection to people’s ancestry can signify two phenomena: (1) the emergence of new forms of acculturation (cf. Gans 1979: 12) or as (2) platforms for mobilising ethnic and nationalist movements (Fishman 1985c: 71). This symbolic power of language reinforces and perpetuates what Fishman refers to as “sidestream ethnicity” (Fishman, Gertner et al.

1985). Given these insights, I have closely examined the phenomena stemming from the symbolic use of language among Turkish Sephardim, acknowledging that what may appear to be ethnic revival movements could reflect deeper and more intricate strategies for coping with acculturation phenomena.

3.5 Sephardic ethnic identity and language

This section reviews recent advancements in understanding the complex relationship between Sephardic ethnic identity and language within the broader framework of Eastern Sephardi communities, before shifting focus to the Sephardic community in Turkey. It begins by discussing overarching concepts related to Jewish languages and their intrinsic connection to identity, laying the groundwork for a nuanced exploration of the historical forces that shaped divergent ideologies. I adopt Herman's (1977: 43) perspective, which emphasizes that despite differences among Jewish communities worldwide, they exhibit an interdependence that binds them together. This interconnectedness means that changes affecting one part of the global Jewish community reverberate throughout the entire network. Of particular note is the influence of Zionist ideology, which pressured Jewish immigrants to adopt Hebrew at the expense of their diasporic languages (Perelmutter 2018: 529).

3.5.1 Ethnic identity and language among Jews in general

Inquiry into Jewish ethnic identity occupies a central position in identity research, owing to the intricate nature of Jewish history, diaspora trajectories, and the diverse array of Jewish communities worldwide. Uniquely, Jews are perceived as both a religious group and a nation (Myhill 2004), rendering their identity multifaceted. Myhill (2004: 19) posits that the Jewish conceptualisation of identity, blending ancestry and religious affiliation, has contributed to the preservation of a "relatively stable group identity" over the span of 2,500 years, despite geographical, political, and linguistic divisions. This phenomenon, as noted by Myhill (2004: 33), is not exclusive to Jewish communities; it can also be observed among other groups originating from the Middle East and the eastern Mediterranean, such as Armenians, Assyrians, Copts, or Maronites, where ancestry holds significant value in defining identity. However, Jews worldwide are often perceived by their neighbours as possessing a particularly distinctive identity (Myhill 2003: 89).

The distinctiveness of Jewish identity has often been viewed through the prism of language behaviour among speakers of Jewish languages[40] (Hary & Benor 2018: introduction). This distinctiveness was tragically exploited during the Nazi era, where it served as a foundation for language purism theories, and as propaganda tool against Jews (Myhill, 2004: 178). Jews were portrayed as lacking 'normal' criteria for group identification (Myhill, 2004: 178) and were accused of being disloyal to a mother tongue, and linguistically promiscuous (Hutton 1999). Jewish language behaviour was perceived as threatening to German society particularly because the German language was considered central to Jewish identity formation. As articulated by Hartmann, Plöckinger, et al. (2016: 337) in their critical edition of Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, a central aspect of Hitler's antisemitic ideology was the issue of the German language as spoken by Jews.

> On this first and greatest lie, that Judaism is not a race but a religion, inevitably follow further lies. Among them is the lie regarding the language of the Jew. It is not a means for him to express his thoughts, but a means to conceal them. When he speaks French, he thinks Jewish, and while he crafts German verses, he merely lives out the essence of his ethnicity. As long as the Jew has not become the master of other nations, he must speak their languages, but once they are his servants, they would all have to learn a universal language (e.g., Esperanto!), so that Judaism could more easily dominate them through this means! [my own translation from the German][41] (Hartmann, Plöckinger et al. 2016: 337)

According to this ideology Jewish linguistic adaptability was perceived as morally questionable and as a deceitful act (Myhill 2004: 173-172). Myhill (2004: 179) advances the hypothesis that this divergence in understanding the correlation between language and identity may have been a trigger for the Holocaust. The emphasis on Jewish distinctiveness in antisemitic ideologies likely heightened Jewish groups' awareness of their 'otherness' from other groups. This phenomenon, which Herman (1977) calls 'marking off' suggests a perception that "the boundary line runs between Jews on the one hand and all non-Jews — whatever their specific affiliations — on the other" (Herman 1977: 40).

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[40] The concept of *Jewish Languages*, which was developed by Jewish scholars after World War II, uses, according to Myhill (2004: 53), the ideology of *language-and-identity* as a result of a need among Jews to align themselves with the *language-and-identity* ideologies governing Europe.

[41] „Auf dieser ersten und größten Lüge, das Judentum sei nicht eine Rasse, sondern eine Religion, bauen sich dann in zwangsläufiger Folge immer weitere Lügen auf. Zu ihnen gehört auch die Lüge hinsichtlich der Sprache des Juden. Sie ist ihm nicht das Mittel, seine Gedanken auszudrücken, sondern das Mittel, sie zu verbergen. Indem er französisch redet, denkt er jüdisch, und während er deutsche Verse drechselt, lebt er nur das Wesen seines Volkstums aus. Solange der Jude nicht der Herr der anderen Völker geworden ist, muß er wohl oder übel deren Sprachen sprechen, sobald diese jedoch seine Knechte wären, hätten sie alle eine Universalsprache (z.B. Esperanto!) zu lernen, so daß auch durch dieses Mittel das Judentum sie leichter beherrschen könnte!" (Hartmann, Plöckinger et al. 2016: 337)

The perception of distinct ethnic affiliation and the notion of dual loyalty among Jews significantly influence the establishment of group boundaries within majority populations whose identities are primarily defined by language, such as Germans or Arabs. This highlights the intricate interplay between language, ethnicity, and identity against the backdrop of ideologies that dictate what constitutes a “right” and a “loyal” ethnic profile. Rock (2019) reflects on these aspects in her theoretical chapter concerning the role of language in ethnic identity among the Sarajevo Sephardim, stating that

> [A]longside other minority groups in Europe, the Sephardim have had the ‘wrong religion’ and the ‘wrong language’ in relation to the dominant paradigm of homogenizing ethnic and linguistic nationalism since the nineteen century onward. (Rock 2019: 36)

These ideologies position Jewish diaspora minorities on a spectrum between ‘right’ and ‘wrong’, shedding light on the complexities inherent in defining and negotiating linguistic and ethnic belonging and loyalty within diverse socio-cultural landscapes.

The uniqueness of Jewish identity lies in the intertwining of the Jewish people, the land of Israel, and the Torah, a connection that persists even among non-religious Jews (Herman 1977: 36). Research, including works by David & Bar-Tal (2009: 361) and Herman (1977: 44), widely agrees that the foundation of Jewish collective identity globally lies in shared ancestry and religious tradition. An integral aspect of this identity, as discussed in Section 3.2.4, is a sense of a common destiny, which serves as a unifying force in shaping Jewish collective identity.

Jewish identity is perceived as resilient, even amidst language shifts, emphasising its ability to adapt and reorganise around various core values throughout history (Fishman 1965; 1977; 1978; 1994). In respect to language preservation among Jews, Haarmann (1998: 61) suggests that the presence of a significant Jewish elite has played a role in maintaining languages such as Yiddish, Judeo-Tat, and Judeo-Tajik among Soviet Jewry. He posits that the diversity of languages spoken by Jews, rather than any single language, serves as a marker of Jewishness among Soviet Jews, indicating that multilingualism is characteristic of their linguistic profile. This perspective shows however, that multilingualism is in itself a core value of Jewish identity, contrary to Haarmann’s view that “there is only a partial relationship between language and ethnicity” and that language represented “a minor element of Jewish identity in the Soviet Union” (Haarmann 1998: 66).

Negotiating multiple group affiliations and multilingual competence within a social context often hinges upon prevailing value hierarchies dictated by the contextual demands of the majority population. This phenomenon is exemplified in McNamara’s (1987) study, which delves into social identity theory and multiple group membership

dynamics among Hebrew-speaking Israeli immigrants in Australia. By examining consultant interactions, McNamara elucidates how their diverse group affiliations influence language preferences, with a clear inclination towards English over Hebrew, ultimately contributing to accelerated language shift.

In recent decades, discourse surrounding the significance of language within the diaspora Jewish community has shifted, emphasising its symbolic role in delineating Jewish ethnicity. Balbuena's (2012: 162) study on the role of Judeo-Spanish[42] in Latin America exemplifies this shift, highlighting the symbolic value of Jewish varieties for ethnic identity. Ladino enables individuals to reconnect with their cultural heritage and roots within the Sephardic Diaspora. For Sephardic artists, Ladino serves as a "gateway to their own culture, which is often only vestigial […] or use the language as a vehicle to express their childhood memories and maintain the legacy of their families, thus affirming their identity and links to the great Sephardic 'nation'" (Balbuena 2012: 183).

Balbuena's findings are corroborated by Myhill (2004: 114), who asserts that "Jewish languages such as Yiddish, Judeo-Spanish, and Judeo-Arabic are, to varying extents, coming to be treated as revered cultural objects even as (perhaps because) they are losing native speakers". In the next section, I will turn my attention to this shift in the dynamics between ideologies, practice, and identity among Eastern and Turkish Sephardim.

3.5.2 Ethnic identity and language among Eastern and Turkish Sephardim

Scientific interest in Sephardic history, culture, and language intensified significantly in the wake of their decline. This resurgence in attention emerged after the inaugural *International Congress on Judeo-Spanish* in 1994 (Bossong 2008: 113), described by Hetzer (2004: 238) as "ethnic archaeology", and represented a collective effort to preserve what remains of the Sephardic cultural heritage. Over the past three to four decades, various language-internal and language-external diplomatic events have facilitated the emergence of synergies, paving the way for to the study of Judeo-Spanish. Particularly noteworthy was King Juan Carlos I's visit to the Synagogue of Madrid on 1 April, 1992, during which he publicly acknowledged and apologised for the 1492 expulsion of the Jews (Bossong 2008: 114). In 1998, the *National Authority for Ladino* was founded in Israel with the aim of coordinating endeavours to safeguard and advance the language and culture, alongside Yiddish. Subsequently, in 2002, during the UNESCO

[42] Balbuena (2012: 162) employs the term *Ladino*.

conference on *Judeo-Spanish / Ladino: Intangible Heritage*, further underscored the importance of promoting and preserving Judeo-Spanish by compiling comprehensive list of conservation strategies. Another significant event for the Sephardim worldwide occurred on 24 March 2003, at an event to mark the thirty-third anniversary of the inauguration of the memorial site in Auschwitz-Birkenau. During this event, a stone slab was inscribed in Judeo-Spanish, joining the existing flagstones in 20 other languages.

> Ke este lugar, ande los Nazis eksterminaron un milyon i medyo de ombres, de mujeres i de kriaturas, la mas parte djudyos de varyos payizes de la Evropa, sea para syempre, para la umanidad, un grito de desespero i unas sinyales – Auschwitz-Birkenau 1940-1945. (Rodrigue 2011: 201)

The timing of the event underscored the limited attention given to the Sephardim and their language by the European public. While investigations into Eastern Sephardi communities have flourished over the past three to four decades, their focus has predominantly been on social history, journalistic studies, rabbinical works, and popular prose (Şaul 2013: preface). Judeo-Spanish has been comparatively less explored than Yiddish, with only a few exceptions (Alvarez-Péreyre 2003; Bornes Varol 2013b), primarily in the context of comparing it to Medieval Spanish or contemporary Spanish, rather than as an independent language (Bornes Varol 2013b: 15). It was not until the late 20th century that reference works and dictionaries in Judeo-Spanish were published (Bornes Varol 1998; Hazan & Abensur-Hazan 2013; Koén-Sarano 2000; Nehama & Cantera Ortiz De Urbina 2003 [1977]; Passy 1999; Perahya 1998; Perahya & Gerson Şarhon [1997] 2012), largely due to the lack of language standardisation. Studies examining the role of language in shaping social identity have been limited. In the following, I will review and discuss pioneering sociolinguistic studies, particularly those that address language shift, language maintenance, language ideologies, and language attitudes.

Researchers first encountered the Judeo-Spanish of the Balkans in 1883, a milestone that occurred four centuries after the expulsion from the Iberian Peninsula. During a boat journey on the Danube from Vienna to Budapest, the Spanish doctor Ángel Pulido Fernández happened to meet the Berajano family, Sephardic Jews from Bucharest who spoke Judeo-Spanish (Bossong 2008: 107-108). Among them was Enrique Berajano, then the director of a Sephardic school in Bucharest. This unexpected encounter deeply influenced Pulido Fernández, leading him to dedicate his professional life to investigating the Sephardic community and its language. His subsequent works became the earliest comprehensive portrayals of attitudes towards Judeo-Spanish among both the Sephardic community and external observers. His inventory of writings

included newspaper and scientific articles, letters, and monographs, focusing primarily on Sephardic Jews in Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire.

Pulido's major monographs, *Los israelitas espanyoles y el idioma castellano* (1904) and *Espanyoles sin patria y la raza sefardí* (1905), marked the beginning of a prolonged engagement with the Sephardim, exploring questions of cultural and linguistic affiliation and contemplating the reintegration of the Sephardim into the Spanish Empire. In his 1905 book, Pulido Fernández provided a comprehensive overview of the global distribution and situation of the Sephardim, culminating in a discussion of Spain's potential opportunities to establish contact with them or facilitate a hypothetical return to the Iberian Peninsula, an idea that he ultimately deemed illusory. However, Pulido Fernández's interest in the Sephardim was primarily rooted in their perceived identity as "Spaniards", rather than recognising them as carriers of an independent culture.

> [about Enrique Bejarano] [M]e atrajo la variedad de sus conocimientos gramaticales en distintas lenguas; y más que todo esto me impresionó el estallido de amor a la tierra hispana, que hubo de expresar con emoción lacrimosa y frases de extremada delicadeza y ternura, como atestiguando un culto religioso y secularmente conservado.
>
> ('[I] was drawn to the breadth of his grammatical knowledge in various languages; but more than anything, I was deeply impressed by the outburst of love for the Spanish land, which he expressed with tearful emotion and phrases of extreme delicacy and tenderness, as if bearing witness to a religious devotion that had been preserved through the centuries.') (Pulido 1905: 3)

Pulido's campaign sparked a renewed interest in Sephardic Jews, which came to be known as *philosephardism*. While *philosephardism* appeared to promote cultural ties between the Sephardic and Spanish communities, a closer examination reveals its deeper connection to the *Hispanism movement* (Rohr 2011: 63). This movement emerged following Spain's loss of its last colonies in 1898, aiming to restore Spain's former glory through alternative means and enhance its prestige internationally. Pulido, in particular, lauded the Sephardim for their steadfast loyalty to the Spanish language, viewing them as integral to Spain's spiritual and cultural legacy. Through Pulido's advocacy and the efforts of his disciples, who were adherents of *philosephardism*, initiatives such as Spanish language courses and the establishment of a university chair for Spanish language studies were introduced in Bucharest, Sofia, and Thessaloniki. Describing the linguistic state of the Sephardim he encountered, Pulido wrote in the introduction to his 1904 book.

> […] primero escuchan con interés su expresión espanyola, y luego; con simpática espontaneidad, entablan conversación; y hablando un castellano rarísimo y en grado desigual, pero muy desigualmente inteligible, se le presentan con marcada satisfacción como compatriotas de Oriente […].
>
> ('[…] first they listen with interest to his Spanish expression, and then, with

> sympathetic spontaneity, they start a conversation; and speaking a very peculiar and uneven Spanish, but very unevenly intelligible, they present themselves with marked satisfaction as compatriots from the East […]'). (Pulido 1904: 2)

Pulido repeatedly expresses his astonishment at the adaptability of the "uneven Castilian" spoken by the "Spanish Israelites", which effortlessly incorporates elements from all the languages with which it comes into contact, rendering it "unevenly intelligible". The blend of contact elements in Judeo-Spanish became a central theme in the formation of negative attitudes among the Turkish Sephardim in the subsequent decades, as shown by Altabev (2003) below and in Section 6.4 of the present analysis:

> I do not accept Judeo-Spanish as a language, there is Spanish, our community took it and destroyed it, this is not a language, you know that. English is a language; French is a language… Spanish is a language, but not Judeo-Spanish. (Altabev 2003: 111)

It was precisely these negative attitudes towards code-mixing that provided speakers with a discursive rationale for abandoning Judeo-Spanish in favour of French or Turkish (Farhi: 1937: 151; Gerson 1983: 35-36; Altabev 2003: 111; Gerson Şarhon 2011: 62). In his study, conducted more than two decades after Pulido's publications, Farhi (1937) attributes "language decay" and the loss of its "primitive purity" to the "deformation" of Judeo-Spanish words by incorporating Turkish, French, and Italian loanwords. Between the early 20th century and the 1970s, the attitudes of the Sephardim towards their language and their linguistic behaviour underwent a significant shift towards the negative spectrum.

> Aujourd'hui encore, le bourgeois juif d'Istanbul, parfaitement civilisé, doué de cette facilité pour les langues qui distingue les juifs de partout, s'exprime indistinctement en français ou en judéo-espagnol. […] Mais les jeunes femmes, les jeunes filles, usent du judéo-espagnol ordinairement dans l'intimité, d'abord parce qu'elles sont snobs (le judéo-espagnol n'est pas une langue chic) et puis aussi par gêne de parler en public la vielle langue familiale dénaturée faite de solécismes et de barbarismes. Les hommes et surtout les femmes d'un certain âge, conservateurs, exempts de petitesses, parlent avec simplicité leur langue antique.
>
> ('Even today, the perfectly civilized Jewish bourgeois of Istanbul, endowed with the facility to learn languages that distinguishes Jews everywhere, expresses themselves indistinctly in French or Judeo-Spanish. […] But young women and girls usually use Judeo-Spanish in intimate settings, primarily because they are snobs (Judeo-Spanish is not a chic language) and also due to the embarrassment of speaking the old family language, which has become distorted with solecisms and barbarisms, in public. Men and especially women of a certain age, who are conservative and free from pettiness, speak their ancient language with simplicity.') (Farhi 1937: 151-152)

The era depicted by Farhi was one in which Judeo-Spanish echoed through the streets of Galata and resonated from the balconies in Jewish neighbourhoods like Balat, Kuzguncuk, Ortaköy, or Hasköy, as well as in the 35 synagogues where Rabbis still conducted marriages, delivered sermons, or addressed community matters in Judeo-

Spanish (Farhi: 1937: 153). Farhi observed that Judeo-Spanish as a spoken language was already in a state of decline compared to its written literary form.

> Cette belle langue littéraire est loin d'être celle de la vie quotidienne des séphardites; la jeunesse des écoles, parle ordinairement mal; il m'est arrivé d'entendre une phrase ridicule comme celle-ci: 'habla mas a vagar, ya vas a *ameutar* el *quartier'.*
>
> ('This beautiful literary language is far from being the everyday language of the Sephardim; the youth from the schools usually speak it poorly; I once heard a ridiculous sentence like this: '*habla mas a vagar, ya vas a ameutar el quartier'* [speak more slowly, you're going to wake up the neighborhood.]') (Farhi 1937: 57)

Farhi perceives the multilayered contact elements between Judeo-Spanish and French in the language use of young people as ridicule, reflecting an internalised purist attitude towards language. Farhi attributed this decline to the attitudes of the Sephardim towards Judeo-Spanish, citing an example from a manifesto slogan of the Jewish society *Türk birliği* ('Turkish union').

> Nous abandonnons notre baragouin corrompu (le séphardite) pour la belle langue du gazi.
>
> ('We are abandoning our corrupted gibberish (Sephardic) for the beautiful language of Atatürk.') (Farhi: 1937: 157)

While this shift may have been influenced by the *Citizen speak Turkish!* campaign during the formation of the Turkish Republic (cf. § 2.3.6; 6.2.4), Farhi's article highlights the extent to which the ideology of monolingualism influenced the Sephardim and sheds light on how both scholars and speakers viewed contact elements, code-switching and code-mixing through the prism of language purism.

It would be nearly half a century before subsequent studies delved into the impact of language attitudes on language shift among the Turkish Sephardim. Harris (1979; 1982a; 1982b; 1985; 1994; 2006; 2011) devoted several decades to investigating language shift and its ramifications for social identity in Jewish communities across the United States, Israel, and the Balkans, positioning Judeo-Spanish within broader discussions on language endangerment. As early as the late 1970s and early 1980s (1982a: 71), Harris concluded that Judeo-Spanish was no longer a central marker of Sephardic identity among American and Turkish Sephardim alike. For the majority of her respondents, the preservation of Sephardic culture outweighed language transmission. Harris (1982a: 72-82) stands out as one of the pioneering authors to explore the impact of speakers' attitudes on the decline of Ladino.

Gerson's Master's thesis (1986) found that negative attitudes towards Judeo-Spanish were one of the major factors impacting language maintenance and shift. Gerson argues that language shift has not necessarily weakened the concept of ethnic identity, a conclusion akin to that of Filipović & Simović (2008) in their study on language

and identity among the Sephardim in the Former Yugoslavia, as well as Arnold's (2018) research on the collective identity of Bulgarian Sephardim. However, Gerson's study relies on questionnaires, which, as the author acknowledges, may not fully capture the complex interplay between ideologies, attitudes, language proficiency, and language behaviour due to methodological limitations (Gerson 1986: 74-77).

In her dissertation on language shift, language revival, and language identity among the Turkish Sephardim, Altabev (1996) attributes language shift to two primary discursive directions: the international eurocentric discourse and the national assimilative discourse. This study also presents a shift in attitudes towards the function of Judeo-Spanish, indicating a growing linguistic and socio-political awareness on an international scale. Altabev (1996: 235-236) found that Ladino was still used by a younger middle-aged group for in-group situations.

Christodouleas' study (2008) on linguistic identity amidst language shift among the Sephardic community in Thessaloniki uncovered a significant correlation between fluency level in Judeo-Spanish and positive language attitudes. She revealed that individuals with higher fluency tended to consider Judeo-Spanish a core value of their identity. Among younger generations, knowledge of Judeo-Spanish was observed to serve as a means of delineating boundaries in individuals with multiple identities.

> The use of Judeo-Spanish among this study's participants is employed to establish boundaries with the outgroup and to signal group solidarity with other ingroup members. Participants can soften these boundaries by evading the public use of Judeo-Spanish when the desire is to integrate. Likewise, they can establish and fortify social boundaries by publicly employing or associating themselves with Judeo-Spanish when the desire is to set themselves apart from the Christian majority. (Christodouleas 2008: 202)

Christodouleas highlights the symbolic significance that Judeo-Spanish holds, yet she offers limited insight into the strategies and mechanisms employed for such purposes, as well as how the connection between the signalling and meaning aspects is established and performed. She concludes that the value attributed to Judeo-Spanish by participants in her study lies in its role as an ethnicity marker, particularly by representing a "Thessalonikan-brand" of Sephardic identity (Christodouleas 2008: 204). According to her findings, Judeo-Spanish evokes memories of family members and the tragic losses endured during the Holocaust, serving as a poignant link to the city's Jewish heritage. For younger participants without direct memories of this heritage, the language remains an integral part of their imaginative connection to the past (Christodouleas 2008: 203).

In the context of the Bulgarian and Sarajevo Sephardim, Arnold (2018) and Rock (2019) reached comparable conclusions. Here, too, Judeo-Spanish holds a merely symbolic function as an *associated language* while the observance of Jewish holidays

emerged as a more central value in preserving Sephardic culture than language retention. Similarly, two studies of the Sephardim in Turkey, Seloni and Sarfati (2013) and Erselcan BenTov (2013), highlighted the significance of Jewish rituals as core elements of Sephardic identity. Contrary to Seloni and Sarfati (2013), Erselcan BenTov's (2013: 117) study on the memory of migration among Turkish Jews in Turkey and Israel notes that language continues to serve as a central marker of identity "even when it is no longer spoken frequently or fluently, curiously enough" (Erselcan Bentov 2013:117), a point which this researcher has explored in Section 5.4.5.

> Growing up as a member of a minority religious community in Turkey, shaped all aspects of Turkish-Jewish identity. In that setting Judeo-Spanish became more than just a form of communication. In the Turkish-Jewish community, which is modelled by the Sephardic tradition and culture, Judeo-Spanish is the means to which cultural traditions such as songs for Shabbat or Sephardic recipes are preserved and passed on to the next generation. (Erselcan Bentov 2013: 110-111)

Erselcan Bentov's research indicates that a person's native language and identity are influential factors in shaping the recollection of migration experiences (Erselcan Bentov 2013: 117). Geschwill (2015) reaches comparable conclusions in her examination of language dynamics among Bukovina Jews who immigrated to Israel. Geschwill (2015: 196) illustrates that while Hebrew holds greater significance for the consultants' identity as the language of their new home, German plays a significant role in their intimate memories of family life in Bukovina. Additionally, she notes that the repeated acquisition and use of new languages during their migration to Israel was not perceived as a threat to personal identity by her participants. However, it is important to note that her multilingual participants did not undergo complete language shift, unlike the younger generations in the Judeo-Spanish community in Turkey. Erselcan BenTov's research (2013) unveiled another dimension of the profound impact of Judeo-Spanish on shaping individuals' boundary tracing. For the Turkish Sephardim, Judeo-Spanish serves as a reminder of their roots in Spain and what distinguishes them from the rest of society. In contrast, for Turkish Jews who migrated to Israel, this role was taken on by the Turkish (Erselcan Bentov 2013: 107-108).

Şaul (2013) edited volume stands as the seminal study dedicated to exploring the role of Judeo-Spanish in shaping Turkish Sephardic identity. It explores the intrinsic value of Judeo-Spanish for group identification beyond language shift. Within this volume, Varol Bornes's (2013b) contribution, *Langue et identité judéo-espagnoles, trois scénarios pour une disparition*, attributes changes in the role of Judeo-Spanish to three primary factors:

1. The emergence of new nation-states and the efforts of Sephardic intellectuals to adapt to evolving linguistic realities, placing language at the core of group

identification and thereby reshaping language hierarchies and promoting monolingual language policies;

2. Internal community language policies aimed at strengthening Turkish Jewish identity by emphasising and artificially enhancing the community's Spanish linguistic heritage;
3. Demographic shifts resulting from the Holocaust and emigration to Israel since 1948.

Several language memoirs authored by Sephardim from Turkey who are now living in the European or American diaspora complement the research literature by offering a different perspective on the evolving domains of language use, attitudes, and the perceived effects of language shift on the authors. Cohen's work *In Search of a Lost Ladino* (2006) illuminates various facets of perceived linguistic exile stemming from the loss of homeland (Spain, then Turkey) and language environment. For Cohen, Judeo-Spanish represents a language in a "partially ruined state" (Cohen 2006: 15), deeply impacted by the Holocaust, which claimed the lives of many of his family members. The central theme of his memoir revolves around the looming extinction of Judeo-Spanish and his endeavour to recapture, perhaps for the last time, memories enshrined in a vanishing language. The act of writing in a language never before attempted by the author takes on an experimental dimension. The outcome of this experiment, in which both fiction and reality intertwine, mirrors the experiences recounted by the majority of Sephardim in Istanbul: a journey marked by hazardous irregularities not only in writing but also in the phonological, morphological, and syntactical aspects of language.

Isaac Papo's (2006) memoir illuminates the contradictory prevailing ideologies surrounding Judeo-Spanish, revealing how it was perceived within his family. Judeo-Spanish served as a fundamental aspect of Sephardic identity, yet it was also viewed as an inferior language, frequently mocked and deemed inadequate for modern use.

> En efecto, lo que hablábamos ya se había convertido en úna verdadera ensalada verbal en la que cada cual vertía lo que le daba la gana según lo que se le antojara en aquel moménto. Nadie tomaba demasiado en serio a este idioma, ya desclasado a jerga para uso coloquial, y casi se tomaba gusto introduciendo en él palabras extranjeras, a menudo incluso con un sentido diferente al de su origen, y hasta neologismos extemporáneos o habituales. Se podía tambyén pensar que aquello ya no era cultura, sino úna infracultura de la que hacía falta desprenderse cuanto antes. A pesar de todas estas consideraciones, el vernáculo resultaba muy cómodo y conforme con úna mentalidad oriental y sin pretensiones estéticas. Así, aunque precariamente, el judeoespanyol sobrevivía en el uso corriente.
>
> ('In effect, what we spoke had become a true verbal mishmash where everyone poured in whatever they pleased, depending on their whim at the moment. No one took this language too seriously, already relegated to slang for everyday use, and there was almost a sense of enjoyment in introducing foreign words into it, often even with a different meaning from their origin, and even contemporary or habitual

> neologisms. It could also be thought that this was no longer culture, but a subculture from which one needed to detach as soon as possible. Despite all these considerations, the vernacular was very convenient and suited an unpretentious, Oriental mentality. Thus, albeit precariously, Judeo-Spanish survived in everyday use.) (Papo 2006:87-90, my own translation from the Spanish original') (Papo 2006: 87-90)

Papo highlights here the adaptability of Judeo-Spanish speakers in assimilating new lexical elements from other languages, a characteristic that reflects its "Oriental mentality". The author acknowledges that this linguistic situation may be far from ideal and might even be seen as a subculture some may wish to escape. Yet, despite its precarious state, Judeo-Spanish continues to persist in everyday use.

The studies discussed above on the Eastern Sephardim in various diaspora settings underscore a central theme highlighted by Kirschen[43] (2013: 25-26): the simultaneous evolution of language ideologies linked to Judeo-Spanish across diverse regions. The presence of Judeo-Spanish-speaking communities in diaspora contexts has fostered similar trends in language ideologies. These communities have followed parallel paths, initially within the Ottoman Empire and later within the boundaries of different Balkan countries, as well as Greece and Turkey, demonstrating the authoritative and hegemonic ideologies that shape minority language practices. The formation of negative attitudes towards the language and its endangerment stem from the interplay between societal language ideologies influenced by (trans)national policies and internal family language practices. As these studies highlight, today, while code-switching and code-mixing contribute to pushing Judeo-Spanish to the linguistic periphery, they simultaneously serve as markers of ethnic identity (Seloni & Sarfati 2013: 8), results which have been confirmed in the present study in Chapter 6.

3.6 Summary

This chapter outlined the different levels of interpretative framework of this dissertation (cf. § 4.9.2) used to explore the intricate relationship between Sephardic language and identification processes, with social identity viewed as the key driver behind collective behaviours. It began by exploring fundamental aspects of identity formation in general, guided by the concepts of sameness and difference. The focus then shifted to the linguistic dimension of identity within minority contexts, particularly the Sephardic context.

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[43] Kirschen (2013) takes it a step further by conducting a cross-hemispheric comparison, including the USA and Israel.

Utilising David & Bar-Tal's (2009) sociopsychological framework, the chapter analysed identity at both individual and group levels. Bucholtz & Hall's (2004) and Ehala's (2018) semiotic perspectives further refined this analysis, highlighting the dynamic, context-dependent nature of identity formation. A theoretical framework for the relationship between ethnic identity and language was provided, including a historical overview of language ideologies and their impact on contemporary discourse. Constructivist views on ethnic identity, influenced by Barth's (1998 [1969]) boundary maintenance and Tajfel's (1978) group membership theories, were discussed. The chapter also examined the hierarchy of core values in ethnic identity, focusing on the interplay between language and religion and the question of authenticity, particularly salient in discourse around Jewish identity.

Furthermore, I outlined why the examination of ideologies, attitudes, and practice must be understood within the framework of language and identity. Attitudes, ideologies, and practice arise in the context of identity negotiations within power hierarchies, focusing on sameness and difference and the mechanisms organising group belonging in social interactions. Drawing on four semiotic processes proposed by Bucholtz & Hall (2004) — practice, indexicality, ideology, and performance — the chapter provided a theoretical basis for understanding how identities are created through language. This contextualisation will help in understanding, in chapters 5 and 6, how members of the Sephardic community recognise language and language features (e.g. accent) as markers of sameness and membership, and how this understanding can differ from the criteria imposed by the majority society.

The interaction between language, identity, and acculturation processes within minority groups was then explored, emphasising the influence of power dynamics, ideological hierarchies, and suppression mechanisms on minority identification. I have shown how historical and situational factors, such as the rise of nation-states, have shaped attitudes towards minority languages, often leading to their marginalisation. The chapter also explored how historical traumas affect language maintenance and attitudes towards heritage languages, and delineated the symbolic importance of language in defining group boundaries and identity in a globalised context. The postvernacular state of Jewish languages, including Yiddish and Judeo-Spanish, illustrated how symbolic ethnicity shapes a complex linguistic identity.

The final section reviewed recent research on Jewish ethnic identity and language, focusing on Jewish 'distinctiveness' and 'loyalty'. It examined core values of Jewish identity within the Balkan Sephardim, highlighting the evolution of language ideologies associated with Judeo-Spanish and the interdependence among Jewish

communities. The resurgence of interest in Sephardic culture and language post-1990s was also explored, showing how it can influence attitudes towards Judeo-Spanish. Recent studies how that, despite language shift, Judeo-Spanish remains symbolically significant, serving as an ethnic marker in group boundary tracing. The evolving language ideologies reveal the complex interplay between societal views and family language practices, demonstrating how language acts as both an identity marker and a site of ideological negotiation.

Chapter 4: Methodological design

4.1 Overview

In this dissertation, I employ a qualitative approach to explore how language ideologies, attitudes, and practices interact in shaping identification with a heritage language during its postvernacular stage. This analysis embeds the consultants' subjective interpretations of their experiences within the theoretical framework discussed in this chapter. The consultant's narratives do not reflect facts or objective truth, but represent individual recollections, memories, and interpretations of historical events and ideologies, forming an essential part of the creation of meaning.

In evaluating the results, I seek to capture the most representative core of consultant's experiences through *eidetic reduction*[44] (Drummond 2022; Zahavi 2003). By analysing the interplay between different factors leading to language shift and by interrelating interpretations of different generations concerning these factors, I aim to deconstruct, as close as possible, the mechanisms and processes by which individuals form certain attitudes and adopt specific language practices.

The following research questions, which were drafted prior to my field investigation, were central for developing the research frame and structure:

1. What are the domains, contexts, and dynamics associated with postvernacular language use? What is the communicative and symbolic function of the remaining domains and contexts of language use for the different generations and what types of attitudes motivate what kind of practices in the A-language[45]?
2. What language ideologies emerge in the narratives of different generations, and how do these ideologies intersect with their language attitudes and practices across generations?
3. How do speakers from different generations perceive language shift, and how does language shift influence the interplay between language and core values of Sephardic identity across generations?

In other terms, this study aims to clarify how the interplay of ideologies, attitudes, and practices, along with other factors, contributes to the hierarchy of values that shape

[44] *Eidetic reduction* is a term originating from Edmund Husserl's phenomenology, and refers to a methodological process aimed at identifying the core characteristics of experiences after removing non-essential or subjective aspects. The goal of eidetic reduction is to achieve a clear and precise understanding of the essential features of an experience, independent of individual variations and specific contexts (cf. Drummond 2022; Zahavi 2003).

[45] For a more in-depth discussion of A/B-language, see *Dissertation Roadmap*.

Sephardic ethnic identity. Wurm (2013: 15) states that "one of the most important factors for the maintenance and reinvigoration of a threatened language is the attitude of the speakers towards their own language and the importance which they attach to it as a major symbol of their identity". However, as Romaine (1980: 213) pointed out, the complexity in investigating attitudes lies in the "translation of attitude from the subjective domain into something objectively measurable". Hence, a fundamental challenge in studying attitudes lies in the fact that attitudes are abstract states of readiness, dispositions, or inclinations, lacking overt substance. As such, they can only be understood within the broader context of ideologies, history, socio-economic factors, politics, and specific situations (Kircher & Zipp 2022: 2). To effectively unravel these mechanisms, I have devised a multi-dimensional theoretical framework that synthesises various perspectives and research methodologies. This qualitative-driven approach to methodological integration aligns with Mason's (2006) principles who posits that

> […] a 'qualitative driven' approach for mixing methods offers enormous potential for generating new ways of understanding the complexities and contexts of social experience, and for enhancing our capacities for social explanation and generalisation. Mason's (2006: 10)

The choice for a qualitative approach was motivated by the goal of working closely with empirical reality to understand the phenomenon being studied from the perspective of those who experience it and are directly affected by it (Charmaz & Mcmullen 2011). However, the qualitative approach raises a set of questions about the researcher's position and her relationship in respect to the knowns and unknowns of the topic at hand, or to how this relationship can affect the investigation and the methodology to be implemented.

One of the challenges I faced in conceptualising the research framework was the choice of research strategies and methodology, which span different demarcation areas in linguistics. This was due both to my experience with and competence in one type of methodology, which was predominantly ethnographic, and to the different traditions established at the institutions I have been affiliated with, mostly in German-speaking areas. These premises led to a time-consuming preparatory process in order to determine which framework and data analysis methods would best answer the research questions[46].

[46] I have attempted to overcome these obstacles by attending various international conferences on the issues I faced, and through in-person or written exchanges with established researchers

The multi-dimensional research strategy I chose is organised on two different levels. The description level and the interpretation level.

1. The **Description** level uses the *Grounded Theory Methodology* (GTM) (cf. § 4.9.2) as a work-process-oriented approach to methods and methodology (Strübing 1997). The complexity of the variables in this study required in-depth, systematic, and methodical data collection and analysis. GTM is a dynamic research methodology that allows the researcher to maintain a constant comparative perspective and a systematic interpretation of investigated contents (Charmaz 2006). In contrast to ethnographic research, in which the primary goal is to provide an extensive description of the cultural phenomenon studied, grounded theorists aim to generate substantive theories that allow for an understanding of how humans use social interaction to define their reality (Aldiabat 2011: 3).
2. At the **Interpretation** level, the foundation of inquiry is built upon a multi-layered theoretical framework represented in the Figure 1. Ch. 4 below.

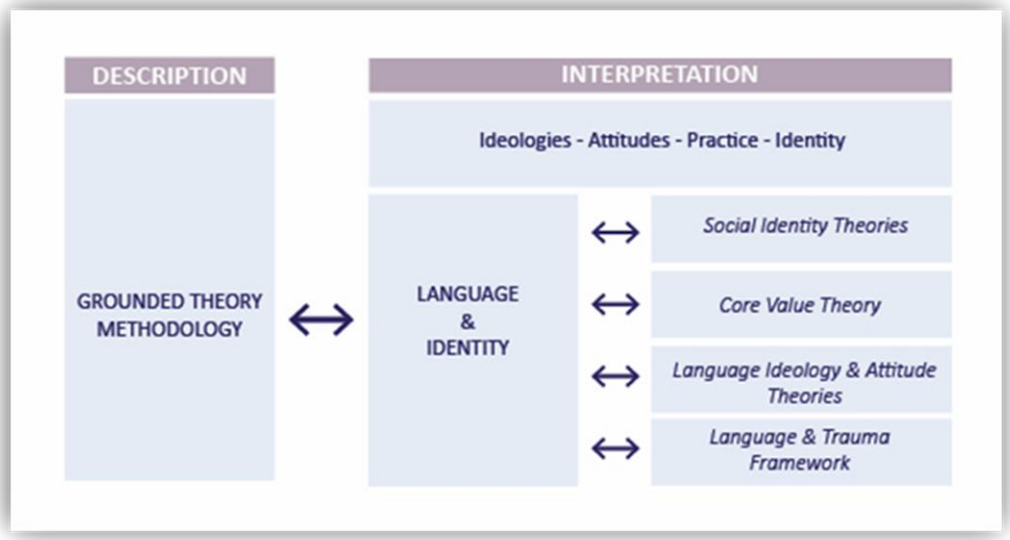

Figure 1. Ch. 4: *multi-dimensional research strategy*

in a multiplicity of areas: with Prof. Itesh Sachdev, Emeritus Professor of Language and Communication at SOAS, London, on matters of social psychology and attitude formation; with Prof. Martin Ehala, Visiting Professor of Estonian, University of Helsinki on matters of identity and belonging; with Prof. Wolfgang U. Dressler, Emeritus Professor at Vienna University on matters of language shift and attrition, with Prof. Mahir Șaul on matters of linguistic anthropology and Judeo-Spanish, with Prof. Brigitta Busch on matters of language and trauma. Their advice contributed to the broadening of my perspective and a better understanding of the whole range of social and linguistic experience and the existing intersections between them.

At the interpretative level, the analysis uses the *Language and Identity framework*. An iterative interpretative method is used, systematically narrowing the scope from general to specific contexts with each phase. The analysis begins with the broader linguistic dimensions of social identity theories (cf. § 3.2; 3.3), then focuses on aspects relevant to minority languages (cf. § 3.4), and finally narrows to specific trends within Jewish communities (cf. § 3.5.1), particularly the Eastern and Turkish Sephardim (cf. § 3.5.2). This approach allows for a nuanced exploration of language and identity, accommodating the complexity and variability inherent in these processes.

In the first iteration phase, I integrate perspectives from social identity theories (Barth 1998 [1969]; 2000; Tajfel 1981), *Communication Accommodation Theory* (Giles & Coupland 1991; Giles & Smith 1979) and socio-psychological understandings of collective identity (David & Bar-Tal 2009). For the second iteration phase, I adopt *Core Value Theory* (Secombe 2016; Smolicz 1980; 1991; 1992; Smolicz & Lean 1979; 2001) to interpret the position of Judeo-Spanish within the Sephardic hierarchy of values. In the third iteration phase, I employ the *Ideology of Language* (Kroskrity 2000; 2004; 2010; 2009; Schieffelin, Woolard & Kroskrity 1998; Woolard 1998) framework and Gal and Irvine's (2019) semiotic perspective to explore language ideologies, focusing on how dominant ideologies imposed by the majority and internalized by the minority shape language representations and attitudes. Additionally, I incorporate insights from research on language attitudes (Baker 1992; Bradley 2013, 2019; Fishman 2002; 1999; 2001, 2007, 2010; 2013: 64; Schiffman 2002 [1996]). To investigate language and trauma in the fourth iteration phase, I use the theoretical framework advanced by Busch (2015; 2016), as well as contributions from Busch and colleagues (Busch & McNamara 2020; Busch & Reddemann 2013) supplemented by insights from psychoanalysis (Frie 2011) and studies on trauma in indigenous societies (Abtahian & Quinn 2017; Mckenzie 2022).

In my investigation, I explore the reflexive process inherent in qualitative research, which can help uncover "what can happen rather than what typically happens" (Coupland 2007: 28) in a socially sensitive approach to language study and in a community context which is unlikely to remain static. At the core of the mixed method and theory approach is a key element of qualitative research logic proposed by Mason (2006). Mason (2006: 16) emphasizes the importance of a qualitative logic of comparison, which involves a holistic approach to understanding and analysing the distinctive socio-cultural dynamics and language practices within the community under study. This approach allows for a more accurate interpretation of social changes, avoiding the limitations of standardized methods and comparators that, as Mason (2006:

16) points out, “can result in a failure to spot changes that fall outside the measurement criteria”.

The analysis of elicited data (cf. Ch. 5; Ch. 6) draws on various types of data and sources, inspired by the framework of Marshall & Rossman (2014) and the requirements of GTM and complemented by the requirements imposed by field research (e.g. community assistants, cf. § 4.6.2). I adopted both *primary* and *supplemental data* techniques of data collection. Combining different approaches of data elicitation allowed me to validate the analysis by a process of triangulation of different data types on language realities (Bryman 1998; Kelle 2005b).

(1) Primary techniques:

a. *Participant observation* (cf. § 4.5.1), which involved actively engaging with the daily lives, activities, and events of community members over a span of two years before the start of this PhD project. Additionally, I have maintained continuous communication with several community members since 2014 through platforms such as Skype, WhatsApp, Facebook, and email, enabling me to receive updates on the evolving role of language in their lives;

b. *Guided in-depth interviews* (cf. § 4.5.2);

c. *Expert interviews* (cf. § 4.5.3).

(2) Supplemental techniques:

a. *life history* (cf. § 4.6.1) about people’s language biographies and their experiences growing up in their cultural milieu;

b. involvement of *community assistants* (henceforth CA, cf. § 4.6.2) who participated in the gathering and annotation of the data and assisted in the analysis process. This is an innovative approach with the purpose of community empowerment;

c. *field notes* (cf. § 4.6.3) prior to and during the research project;

d. *review of documents* (cf. § 4.6.4) including photographs, postcards, images of linguistic landscapes, advertising, objects that community members put at my disposal, written diaries and biographies, etc.

The data analysis is based exclusively on data I collected between 2015 and 2017. This data is currently stored temporarily on the servers of the *Vanishing Languages and Cultural Heritage Commission* at the Austrian Academy of Sciences, in the process of long-term archiving at the *Austrian Phonogrammarchiv* (PhA). This dataset is supplemented by the results of pilot studies conducted between 2012 and 2014, along with observations from remote communication with community members between 2012 and 2024. This comprehensive approach aims to provide new, unique materials as well as greater insight in the analysis and interpretation of language attitudes and behaviour.

Before the primary and supplemental data collection techniques are dealt with more comprehensively later in this chapter, I would like to discuss my own role as a

researcher and my motivation to carry out the present study, followed by a discussion of my sampling mechanisms and the choice of the languages that I used for the interviews.

4.2 Research preparation and embedding

In qualitative research, the researcher has a key role in the research process and should, therefore, go through a process of self-reflection at the beginning of every investigative endeavour (Langman 2013: 256). Before starting to conceptualise the methodological steps of the field research, I went through a period of preparation and accommodation in order to adapt to the contextual requirements of the Sephardic community.

Prior to my PhD research, in 2011 and 2012, I conducted field trips in eastern Turkey among the Kurdish, Arab, and Assyrian minorities, a phase I refer to as the *preliminary period*. This gave me greater insight into the political and cultural position of the majority population in Turkey and enabled me to become sensitive to aspects regarding the different ways of speaking by and about minorities. In addition, I gained a better understanding of the types of competences that I needed in order to grasp the underlying meaning of the practices of the language community under study. The Sephardim in Turkey are fluent in several languages, with different languages attributed to different domains since their arrival in the Ottoman Empire in the 15th century. Younger Sephardim in Turkey, particularly those under 35, are proficient in at least two or three languages. In contrast, the older population, those over 40, typically demonstrate proficiency in more than three languages — most commonly four to five (cf. Figure 8. Ch. 5). I started to establish contacts and friendships in the Jewish community in Istanbul. Since 2012, I have communicated via WhatsApp, Viber, and Facebook in Judeo-Spanish, French and English with several friends from the community. Additionally, I attended an intensive course in Judeo-Spanish taught by Marie-Christine Varol-Bornes and Pandelis Mavrogiannis at the 3rd *Université d'Été Judéo-Espagnole* in Paris in 2015 and took Turkish language classes in Istanbul. These courses and experiences enabled me to achieve a level of proficiency in Judeo-Spanish and Turkish that permitted me to conduct the interviews in the heritage language, when desired, or to use a strategy that combined several languages.

Moreover, my academic grounding in numerous Romance languages (Romanian, French, Spanish, and Portuguese) has enabled me to conduct interviews in Spanish and French and to observe discrepancies in people's reported versus actual language knowledge in the different Romance languages.

The preliminary period allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of the community's language practices and the linguistic and identity-related challenges they

faced. Furthermore, this was an essential period for planning and conceptualising the data collection strategies I would implement, what exactly I was going to collect, and, most importantly, it helped me to reflect on the impact that my role as a researcher would have in the Sephardic community.

Sallabank (2013: 60) begins her chapter on language attitudes and ideologies by noting that "[t]he very fact of studying minority languages raises awareness of that language." Since starting this research, I have participated in one way or another in the language-related activities of the community. For instance, I was invited on multiple occasions to participate in interviews for the weekly newspaper *Şalom*. These interviews focused on my research experience in Istanbul and my perspective on the state of the language. Their objective was to raise awareness about the endangered status of the Judeo-Spanish language. Following these interviews, several young people reached out to me, expressing their interest in participating in the study or contributing to the research project. We organised meetings during which I was sometimes asked to provide guidance on learning Judeo-Spanish. These interactions with community members had a positive effect on the acquisition of further consultants for my study. In contrast to my field research experiences in other locations, I did not encounter any challenges related to prohibition or monitoring by state officials during my research in Turkey.

The Sephardim in Istanbul have been experiencing what might be termed 'special attention' from researchers from different parts of the world for over four decades. Here, consultants would recall the number of times they had been interviewed by researchers; they were able to name a few, and recalled memories of each of the researchers they had encountered. Many of those consultants were already familiar with the interview protocol. On the one hand, this made things easier for me in some ways, particularly when gathering multimedia data (audio, video, photo). On the other hand, I had to consider strategies of eliciting data that would not be influenced by previous interviews or by what the consultants might think was expected of them. I tried to resolve these tensions by arranging, where possible, several meetings with the same people in different locations, building up trusted relationships, which would normalise the interview situation and make consultants feel comfortable sharing their experiences. This procedure opened up new ways of observing people's actual language practices in non-construed contexts like swim clubs among others (cf. § 4.5.1) and enabled an exchange about the research topic beyond the interview situation.

Last but not least, I would like to note that my research in the Turkish Sephardic community was not driven only by academic curiosity and impersonal observation, but with the idea of reciprocity and participatory research in alignment with other studies in

this field (Austin & Sallabank 2011; Cameron, Frazer et al. 1993; Furbee-Losee & Grenoble 2010; Grinevald 2003; 2007; Labov 1982; Sallabank 2013). I assumed from the very beginning the social responsibility based on the "principle of the debt incurred" proposed by Labov (1982: 173), which implies a balance between the needs of the community and those of the researcher. The first step I took was to annotate and publish for open access 50 multimedia documentation units comprising a diverse range of spoken genres, among them narratives about theatre, language attitudes, and biographical materials (cf. § 4.7).

The Sephardic community in Istanbul behaved very differently in terms of the level of commitment expected from me compared to other language communities where I conducted research. In Istanbul, I was required to develop more gradual approach strategies designed to establish a position of trust before I was given access to the community's happenings, which was a rather demanding and lengthy process.

4.3 Choice of languages for the interview

The power relationship in the linguistic field between the investigator and informants is strongly affected by the methods chosen, differences in social status and, most importantly, in the status of the interview language. Whatever the subject of investigation and discipline, information is encrypted and decoded by the means of language. Far from being a neutral medium, language is "partly constitutive of social reality" (Cameron, Frazer et al. 1993: 81). The languages in the investigated community enjoy variable prestige and are distributed in distinct domains. The choice of language(s) for the interview as well as the language in which the questions were formulated were key factors for the investigation of attitudes. Koven (2001; 2004; 1998) has shown that there is a significant difference between stories of the same event told in different languages. Studies of autobiographical memory, interviews, and surveys have demonstrated greater emotional arousal when bilingual respondents speak in their first language as opposed to their second language (Dewaele 2004; Harris, Gleason & Aycicegi 2006; Pavlenko 2007).

> If language acquired and used in emotional contexts comes to be experienced as emotional, then one prediction is that emotion words acquired in early childhood will elicit stronger SCRs [skin conductance response] than emotion words acquired in middle childhood. Our reasoning here is that childhood provides an emotional context of learning because emotional regulation systems are developing. (Harris et al. 2006: 277)

Marian and Neisser (2000) have furthermore demonstrated that the accuracy of recall is enhanced if the language of narrative is the same as the one in which specific life experiences were encoded. I noticed on several occasions during the course of the

interviews that the different languages spoken in the Sephardic community were not merely instruments for describing the facts but powerful tools that could greatly influence the semantics and the effect of telling, and strengthen or weaken the representations of recall and attitudes. The Sephardim often avoided political topics in the majority language, Turkish, or displayed a higher level of emotional arousal or distance depending on whether the events were narrated in the majority or the minority language, respectively.

In an attempt to minimise disenfranchisement of the consultants, to avoid the limitations imposed by a monolingual interview, and to be able to elicit a broader range of related information, I attempted to adjust to the linguistic context required in the Sephardic community and offer the consultants the freedom to respond in the language of their choice. Where they showed a high level of proficiency in more than one language and where a predilection for code-switching was noticeable, I tried to adjust to these contexts by imitating the code-switching behaviour in my responses and interventions as in the example below.

> **4-1. Meri**: Ma lo desh-- loz desháron kuatro ányos en laz, en lo mas négro luγár estávan úna fasón ke eran minoritáres, mozós, avía munchos gréγos i arménes. Ma la mas parte djidío muy léshos, al <doğu nasıl denir, oğlum?> Si, de la Turkía. No stávamos muy buénos. El estáva azyéndo, el govérno un póko dos káras. I riía kon loz Ałmánes i, me sto deteníendo ke kéro topar loz byérvos en Éspany--.
>
> ('And they left him in the most horrible of places for four years, because they were a minority, there were also Greeks and Armenians. And most of the Jews were the farthest, in <how do you say east, son?> Yes, from Turkey. We were not good. It was showing, the government was showing two faces. And they were laughing with the Germans, and, I am controling myself as I want to find the words in Spani--.') [1st-f-88-S-fluent-fam4
>
> **4-2. Author:** Hiç önemli değil. Tu puédes karıshtıreár kon el Túrko, kon el Ebréo, kon lo ke kéres. Lo avoltarémos después.
>
> ('It does not matter, you can mix it with Turkish, with Hebrew, with whatever language you want. We will translate it afterwards.')
>
> **4-3. Meri**: I riyía kon loz almánes, les dáva puedér, kim bilír lo ke azía, i kon loz inglézes ótra fasón. Azía este módo idare. Tamam, bu kadar. [1st-f-88-S-fluent-fam4]
>
> ('And they were laughing with the Germans, they were giving them power, who knows what they were doing, and with the English differently. They were proceeding like this. Alright, that is enough.') [1st-f-88-S-fluent-fam4]

The excerpts provided illustrate how my ability to imitate Meri's code-mixing and code-switching behaviour encouraged her to continue her narrative without the attentional control which would disrupt her narrative. My adaptability regarding the interview language also facilitated a more profound comprehension of code-switching and code-mixing mechanisms in line with Pavlenko's results.

> The insistence on one language only also deprives bi- and multilingual speakers of an important linguistic resource with a range of semantic and affective functions, namely code-switching. (Pavlenko 2007: 172)

Where my knowledge of the required languages was not sufficient (Turkish), I relied on the help of the community assistant (cf. § 4.6.2), who acted as interpreter and met the consultant's language preference. My flexibility in changing the linguistic repertoire during the interview strongly influenced my in-group or out-group membership perception by the community members and on several occasions minimised the longer reaction times caused by diminished language competence in a given language.

4.4 Research sites, sampling, setting

As discussed in Section 4.2, my pilot experiences with Turkey's language minorities prompted me to carefully consider the complexities of data sampling and to make advance decisions and detailed plans for my research. This proactive approach ensured greater informational adequacy and the effectiveness of the methods I was going to implement (cf. Marshall & Rossman 2014: 59). By combining data sampling techniques, events and actors, I aimed at observing a wide range of language practices and attitudes. At the same time, I tried to reduce as much as possible the methodological gap between reported narratives on language and actual language practices.

The analysis in this dissertation is grounded in 60 interviews, which were selected from a total of 86 interviews conducted within the Sephardic community of Istanbul. Some interviews were only partially completed and, as a result, did not provide a solid foundation for meaningful comparisons. However, the insights obtained during these interviews are integrated into the participant observation. The table below provides an overview of the chosen interview locations and interaction types.

Setting	Interaction (community internal)	Interaction (community external)	Formal	Informal
synagogues	X		X	X
public spaces: (cafés, restaurants, parks)	X	X	X	X
event location (weddings, funerals, swim clubs)	X	X	X	X
schools / universities	X	X	X	
consultants' homes	X			X
author's rented apartments at the research site				X
group trips	X	X	X	X

Figure 2. Ch. 4: *Data collection – sampling – setting*

The consultants were chosen according to the following criteria: generation (1st, 2nd, 3rd), gender (29 male, 31 female respondents)[47] and level of education (elementary, secondary, higher education). It is important to highlight that the Turkish Sephardic community, across all generations, including the first generation, has predominantly completed higher education (34 consultants), as indicated in Figure 3. Ch. 4.

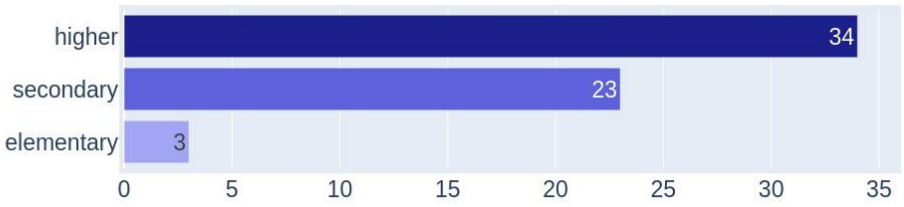

Figure 3. Ch. 4: *Analysis criteria – education*

Finding consultants with intermediate education levels (23 consultants) was challenging due to the overall high level of education among the Sephardim. Only three consultants had an elementary education level. Additionally, gender-based differences in levels of education were insignificant, as indicated in Figure 4. Ch. 4.

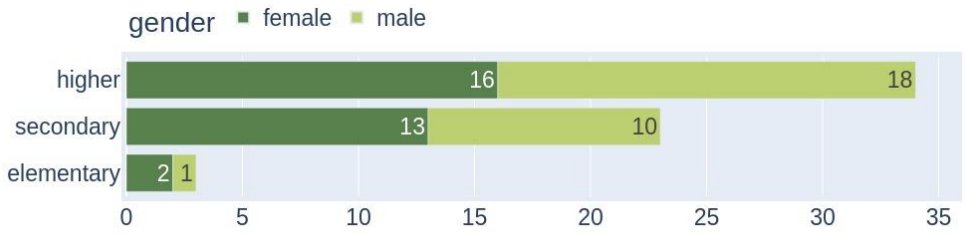

Figure 4. Ch. 4: *Analysis criteria – education – by gender*

Significant differences in education were identified, as expected, based on the generation status (cf. Figure 5. Ch. 4). Among the first generation, five individuals had a higher education, 15 had a secondary education, and three had elementary education. The great majority of the first and second generations had a higher education, while only one individual from the third generation had a secondary education.

[47] In the ethnographic questionnaire, the gender category was open to non-binary gender affiliations, with options including male, female, and other.

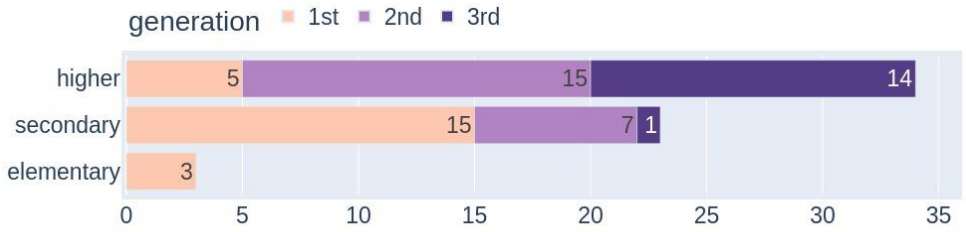

Figure 5. Ch. 4: *analysis criteria – education – by generation*

At the outset, it is important to note that *educational attainment* did not prove to be a significant factor in the individuals' attitudes and language practices. Instead, the consultants' social backgrounds, as observed during the pilot studies and confirmed throughout the project, proved to be more significant. One of the key variables under examination is generational status. The following figure represents the age range of study consultants.

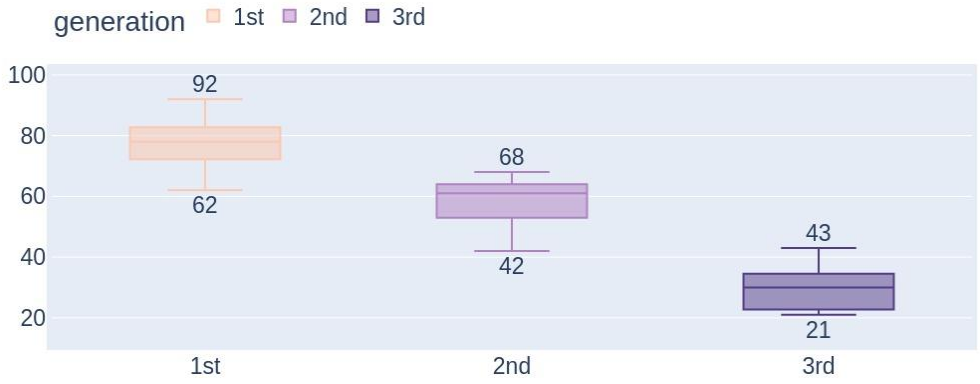

Figure 6. Ch. 4: *Analysis criteria – generation – age range*

The age range of consultants in the study varies across the three generations: the first generation ranges from 62 to 92 years old, the second generation from 42 to 68 years old, and the third generation from 21 to 43 years old. Among all consultants, the age range extends from the youngest at 21 to the oldest at 92. It is important to note that classification into these generational groups was not primarily based on age alone. There are overlaps in age between the generations because generational status is not determined by a specific and clearly delimited age range. Instead, it is defined by the presence of different generational cohorts within the same family, as individuals who share common social experiences (cf. Rock 2019).

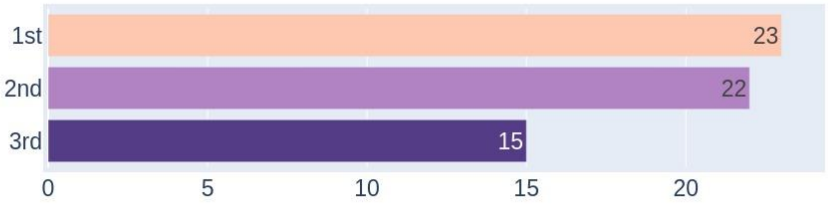

Figure 7. Ch. 4: *Analysis criteria – generation – distribution*

Out of the 60 consultants with whom I conducted all steps of data elicitation (cf. § Figure 1. Dissertation Roadmap; Figure 7. Ch. 4), 23 individuals belong to the first generation, 22 to the second, and 15 to the third. My objective was to challenge the notion that ideology represents a static and uniform culture. Therefore, I aimed to conduct interviews with different generations within the same family to create an analytical framework that could reflect the dynamic forces influencing change over time, even among individuals exposed to the same family language practices and same set of shared attitudes (cf. Kroskrity 2004: 496).

Thus, in addition to the generational diversity among the consultants, the study involved a range of family structures. Specifically, there were 6 families with consultants spanning three generations and 7 families with consultants covering two generations. Furthermore, in several instances, the consultants' spouses also participated in the study. These interviews with spouses were conducted in an unstructured manner, with minimal intervention, primarily focusing on their language biographies and their attitudes towards the A[48]/B[49]-language. Interestingly, the spouses often provided valuable insights into contradictions within their partner's narratives, contributing to the validation of the collected data. In total, among my study consultants, there were 26 individuals who were not part of a family structure, while 34 consultants belonged to either two-generation or three-generation family structures (cf. Appendix 1.1; 1.2).

Within the Sephardic community, the typical pattern of intergenerational mother tongue transmission within the family, as described by Fishman (1991: 57), has been interrupted. As detailed in Chapter 5, the study findings reveal a notable disparity in language skills distribution across generations. Specifically, the first generation speaks

[48] The term *A-language* refers to Judeo-Spanish as the heritage language of the Turkish Sephardic community (cf. Dissertation Roadmap).
[49] *B-language* refers to Turkish, which is both the majority language and the mother tongue of many consultants in the study (cf. Dissertation Roadmap).

Judeo-Spanish but has intentionally chosen not to pass the language on to the next generation. The second generation exhibits a reduced level of active/passive proficiency in Judeo-Spanish. The third generation possesses minimal passive knowledge or no language skills in Judeo-Spanish. This disruption in the intergenerational transmission of language has resulted in intricate processes of social identification for this cohort. While the second generation faced the necessity of transitioning from the A-language to learning the B-language, few individuals in the third generation experience an emancipation in the reverse direction, referred to by Dorian as the "third generation pursuit" (Dorian 1993: 576). In this pursuit, the third generation strives to re-establish access to the A-language in its postvernacular stage but does so through novel means, such as music, theatre performances, cultural events, and more. However, in the Sephardic community, this linguistic shift appears largely irreversible, with only a few individual exceptions.

Research on attitudes spanning various generations of Sephardim with different levels of language competence is relatively limited (cf. Kirschen 2020; Rock 2019). Consequently, it was of the utmost importance to include individuals from different generations in this study, ideally within the same family. However, a significant challenge in implementing this methodological approach was finding families in which all three generations were willing to participate. This challenge was particularly pronounced among the third generation, largely due to logistical issues. Young people often have long daily commutes, which made it difficult to schedule appointments that did not interfere with their work hours and personal lives.[50]

One of the most prevalent reasons for non-participation was due to a palpable reluctance to participate in interviews about the A-language that people did not speak or considered doomed. My strategy for dealing with such challenges was to make repeated inquiries and organise my field research during different times of the year (early spring, summer), with varying mobility patterns or to show a high degree of flexibility in choosing the locations where the interviews took place.

Consultants are categorised into the following groups based on their A-language knowledge: (1) *fluent speakers*, (2) *semi-speakers*, (3) *passive speakers*, (4) *neo-speakers*, (5) *heritage speakers* (6) and *Spanish speakers* (Dorian 1981; Garrett 2004; Grinevald & Bert 2011). For a more detailed distribution of consultants' language profiles base on gender, generation status and education see Section 5.2.

[50] Many young people had a workplace far from their homes and they would say that it was difficult for them to organise an additional appointment for an interview.

During the consultant recruitment process, I incorporated additional consultant profiles to enhance the likelihood of obtaining valuable results and to optimise data triangulation. In total, I conducted 6 expert interviews to explore the language attitudes of individuals involved in official language-related matters. I also participated in various community activities and gatherings (10 instances) where I conducted group interviews. These group interviews typically included 5 to 6 open-ended questions aimed at capturing people's attitudes, practices, and perspectives when engaged in a group setting. The diverse reactions to comments and viewpoints shared by other consultants in these group interviews allowed me to identify both commonalities and differences in perspectives.

The majority of interviews were recorded in various media formats, including audio, video, and photography. The use of recording devices did not significantly impact the nature of the speakers' interactions since these technologies were widespread among the Sephardim, including older speakers. My prior experience in multimedia language documentation and extensive training in field research equipped me with effective strategies to ensure the comfort of consultants in the presence of cameras and to detect instances when consultants may have been self-censoring due to recording devices. In cases where consultants were uncomfortable with video recordings, only audio interviews were conducted, and in situations where digital recordings were not preferred, I relied on field notes. It is worth noting that only two consultants belonging to the first generation declined to be recorded in either video or audio formats.

4.5 Primary data collection techniques and procedures

Different approaches can be employed to observe attitudes, depending on how they are defined. In market research, attitudes are often deduced through direct questions in the form of standardised questionnaires (Payne & Payne 2004). This approach offers the advantage of easy categorisation, comparison, and statistical analysis (Baker 1992). However, it also carries a high risk of yielding unreliable results because when asked a question directly, consultants tend to provide responses that are socially acceptable or more agreeable to the researcher or society in general (Sallabank 2013: 69). Recognising the advantages and disadvantages of various research designs, I employed a range of *primary* and *supplemental* techniques to elicit people's attitudes towards their heritage language, Judeo-Spanish. These techniques will be discussed in the following two subchapters.

Following the insights of Foddy (1993: 71), I began by ensuring that the consultants were consistently well-informed about the general aim of the study. Following

the insights of Foddy (1993: 71), I made it a priority to ensure that the consultants were consistently well-informed about the general aim of the study. Foddy argues that if respondents are left to formulate their own assumptions about the researcher's objectives due to a lack of explicit information, these assumptions can influence their responses, leading them to either assist or obstruct the research. Therefore, it is more effective to inform respondents about both the overall purpose of the study and the specific intent of each question. This approach ensures that all respondents consider the same contextual information when providing their answers. Additionally, I maintained a rigorous and consistent approach, avoiding any negative or positive statements regarding the status of Judeo-Spanish or the consultants' language practices.

Moreover, I tried to carefully examine and adjust the context in which the interview took place and avoid any normative pressure on the consultants. For instance, I noticed that in some cases, consultants seemed more at ease when they were in a private setting, away from the possibility of being overheard by others nearby. This behaviour was a clear indication of the caution exercised in a society where language ideologies still discriminate against Judeo-Spanish. Several consultants were initially reluctant to express their thoughts on language in front of the researcher. The presence of the CA or other Sephardic individuals assisting me seemed to put consultants at ease during their interviews. As I got to know more community members, new interview consultants tended to trust me more.

Regarding the interview procedure, I tried to maintain the same structure. I would first introduce myself and provide my affiliation before asking the consultants about their origins and other questions related to their background or occupation. This in turn would help establish a relationship of trust and make the consultants feel more comfortable with the interview. The interview consultants received an *information sheet* in Turkish about the project, which they could keep, together with a *consent form* (cf. Appendix 2) that they needed to sign before recording could start. In the meantime, the recording devices — a camera and audio recorder — had been set up in a corner. When the consultant was ready, I would proceed with the recording. The camera was usually running from a corner, which made the consultants more comfortable.

At the outset of each in-depth interview, I completed a *profile outline* (cf. Appendix 3) for the purpose of long-term archiving[51]. Additionally, I asked several structured questions about the number of languages the consultants knew and their self-assessed

[51] The procedures for long-term archiving with the *Austrian Phonogrammarchiv* (PhA) are currently in progress.

proficiency levels in those languages. Following this, I conducted the in-depth interview, which lasted around 90 minutes (cf. § 4.5.2; Appendix 3). The interview was divided into different sections with short breaks between sections. These breaks allowed both the researcher and the consultant to engage in more private discussions about culture, experiences, the community's way of life, and any other topics that had arisen during the interview and piqued my interest. This informal exchange was valuable in assessing the extent to which my consultants felt inhibited by the interview process and how much they may have withheld relevant and interesting information when they were aware of being recorded. Any insights shared during these more informal, personal conversations were written down as field notes at the end of each interview. Upon request, every consultant received a copy of the interview recordings

By the end of the project, the number of interviews had exceeded the recommended amount advised by methodological frame of *Grounded Theory* (cf. § 4.9.2). The need for this many interviews imposed itself in view of the cross-generational approach, which required a larger range of data to draw on in the process of categorising and coding (Charmaz & Keller 2016: § 26).

The initial interviews were conducted with community experts and consultants with whom I had established connections during the pilot study. They directed me to existing language clubs, NGOs, and potential informants, initiating a snowball process. The CA also played a significant role in guiding me towards suitable consultants. Additionally, I incorporated random sampling techniques to minimise biases and ensure the representation of various perspectives (Honigmann 2003 [1982]). Sampling occurred in diverse locations, including swim clubs, synagogues, coach buses, gatherings on various topics, and boat trips. Achieving random sampling was challenging due to the community's dispersion throughout Istanbul. One strategy to address these challenges was approaching potential consultants during boat trips between mainland Istanbul and the Prince Islands (Tk. *Prens Adaları*), which include Büyükada, Burgazada, Heybeliada, and Kınalıada.

The majority of Sephardim would spend their summers on these islands (cf. § 2.2, 5.4.2). Many working individuals commuted between the mainland and the islands almost daily. I adopted a specific strategy to identify and approach potential consultants during these trips. I would call my Jewish friends and converse with them in Judeo-Spanish, occasionally switching between Judeo-Spanish and French. By observing the reactions of people around me, I could quickly identify those who understood these languages and with whom I could start a conversation. Often, people would approach me and inquire about my background or why I was able to speak *Ladino*. In other

instances, I would initiate conversations by asking for directions or engaging in small talk. I conducted a total of 8 interviews with consultants acquired through this method.

4.5.1 Participant observation

In addition to the other methods described in more detail below, participant observation served as the foundation of this research. This approach involves systematic note-taking and recording of events within the social setting under examination (cf. Marshall & Rossman 2014: 79). Initially, participant observation allowed me to define the research aim and determine the necessary methods for its execution. Additionally, it complemented other elicitation tools in investigating language choices, practices, and the significance of language to speakers in natural, uncontrived settings. As I spent more time within the community, my observation notes became increasingly detailed, structured, and contextually sensitive.

I conducted participant observations by participating in various community activities and events. These activities included excursions organised by the *Chief Rabbinate*[52] (e.g. the inauguration of the Edirne Synagogue, 2015), attending synagogue prayers and post-prayer gatherings, joining Shabbat dinners, taking part in Jewish summer recreation clubs, and engaging with senior citizens' clubs. This moderate level of participation allowed me to establish close and ongoing connections with the community over an extended period. It is important to note that my consultants were not pressured to exhibit specific linguistic practices to meet my expectations. As a result, I was able to make observations and take notes on code-switching, code-mixing, and linguistic attitudes without imposing any particular linguistic norms. These notes also play a crucial role in the final analysis (cf. Ch. 5; 6), where I used them to cross-reference and validate the data. They helped ensure that the identified themes and the relationships between them accurately explained or confirmed the actual language practices in various settings. Participant observation revealed a significant discrepancy between individuals' reported practices and their actual practices. The observed use of the heritage language was notably higher than what had been previously documented in the literature (Altabev 2003; Romero 2012; Şaul 2013) or indicated by self-reports.

Regarding the issue of objectivity in my qualitative research, I prefer to frame the discussion in terms of neutrality versus bias, which I believe are more appropriate concepts in this context. As Luker (2008) aptly notes,

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[52] The office of the *Chief Rabbinate of Turkey* is organised under the umbrella of *The Jewish Community of Turkey,* https://www.turkyahudileri.com/, accessed on May 3rd, 2024.

> [t]he study of the social order is itself a social process, so how could the process of doing it not be surrounded by assumptions, fetishes, beliefs, and values that are not simply reflections of objective reality, if there is such a thing? [...] – we are fish studying water, and our very fishiness shapes how we think about it. (Luker 2008: 31)

In alignment with Luker (2008), I acknowledge that my personal and academic background has inevitably influenced my observations. To maintain neutrality, I adhered to a rigorous process of observation and employed constant comparison among various data types. Additionally, I appointed a community assistant (cf. § 4.6.2) to help balance the emic and etic perspectives, thereby striving to minimize bias in my research.

4.5.2 Guided in-depth interview

The in-depth interview, often referred to as "a conversation with a purpose" by Kahn & Cannell (1957: 149), is an ideal data collection method for exploring individual perceptions and attitudes related to language practices, heritage language loss, and their impacts on different categories of speakers. Patton (1990: 280-290) identifies three types of in-depth interviews: (1) *the informal conversational interview*, (2) *the general interview guide approach* and (3) the *standardised open-ended interview*. In this study, I primarily employed the first and third types. The structure of the open-ended interview is embedded in the two sections illustrated in Figure 8. Ch. 4. and Appendix 3.

Theme	Units	Description/Purpose
1. Profile outline	24	▪ socio-demographic variables and language knowledge ▪ close-ended questions for standardised archiving, ▪ consultants would indulge in longer narratives
2. Language biography & transmission 3. Language knowledge & practices 4. Attitudes surrounding JS 5. JS in a value system 6. Social identity	88	▪ structure adapted to the interview situation ▪ interview continued until all themes were exhausted ▪ not always possible to get all responses

Figure 8. Ch. 4: *Data collection – in-depth interviews*

The open-ended interviews consisted of six sections, each exploring different research topics through various approaches. The first section, which aimed to gather the consultants' language profiles, had a predominantly close-ended format. However, the consultants would often indulge in longer narratives in this section. In order to aid comparisons between different individuals, I tried to implement the same interview

structure presented in Figure 8. Ch.4 as well the same preformulated questions (cf. Appendix 3). However, deviations were inevitable. Deviations included the order of the questions and necessary follow-up questions that involved new aspects that appeared relevant for the analysis and had to be explored in more depth. Despite these deviations, the interview structure was designed in such a way that all themes under investigation could be fully addressed.

When formulating questions (cf. Appendix 3), I considered their order, cultural sensitivities, and the interview context. The CA reviewed the questions for bias and clarity. Prior to conducting interviews, I tested the questions with several consultants and collected feedback at the end of each interview. Subsequently, I adjusted the structure and content of the questions based on the comments received. In the questionnaire, I use the term *Ladino* to refer to Judeo-Spanish, as this terminology caused the least confusion among the consultants.

Given the relatively larger number of study consultants in this project, some level of systematisation and ordering in questioning was essential. From a synchronic perspective, I focused on the consultants' narratives of experiences and events influencing language practices, their interpretations of these events, cross-generational negotiations with evolving changes, and the impacts of these changes on their lives (cf. Marshall & Rossman 2014: 46).

On a diachronic level, although the questions were not targeted at specific ideological trends or events, the consultant's narratives about their past language practices provided insights into the ideological mechanisms that shape language attitudes and their interplay with external (historical and social) and internal factors. The open-ended in-depth interviews also facilitated a rich exploration of the cultural perspective, social system, and community life in the past and present, which was essential for understanding the role of language within the social structures of the Turkish Sephardic community and a proper contextualisation of evaluations. Special attention was given to discussing the current status of Judeo-Spanish as a postvernacular language and its role in the community.

4.5.3 Expert interviews

Six expert interviews were conducted with individuals possessing specialised knowledge in language matters, often occupying positions of authority or responsibility in language centres, educational institutions, publishing houses, and other relevant organisations. These experts, hailing from within the community, offered valuable insights into the intricate dynamics of language ideologies, attitudes, and practices. Their diverse

backgrounds in fields such as linguistics, history, and sociology provided a multifaceted perspective on language development over time. Additionally, expert interviews played a crucial role in identifying areas that warrant further investigation, complementing the extensive literature and documents available to support data analysis.

One notable interview conducted in Istanbul was with Karen Gerson Şarhon, a prominent scholar in the Sephardic community. She is the founder and coordinator of the Sephardic Center in Istanbul, where she specialises in Judeo-Spanish Linguistics and Social Psychology. Additionally, Gerson Şarhon is the editor of *El Amaneser*, the Judeo-Spanish monthly supplement of *Şalom* newspaper. Her dedication to promoting Judeo-Spanish extends to various digital communication platforms, including WhatsApp, Facebook, YouTube, and more. My initial contact with Gerson Şarhon was instrumental in gaining an insightful overview of the state of Judeo-Spanish in Istanbul and the activities associated with it. She kindly facilitated connections with potential study consultants within the community. Having a community expert of her stature vouch for my research significantly facilitated my access to the community and its resources.

The goal of the expert interviews was to benefit from the emic view of individuals with specialised knowledge and experiences that have resulted from their activities in and for the community. In this section, the focus of inquiry switched from the subjective individual interpretation of events to the more objective expert views of individuals who are representatives of an institution or organisation insofar as they represent its decision-making structures. Most of these expert interviews continued periodically with these experts, who were consulted on the interim results and with whom I was able to discuss parts of the analysis and share perspectives.

4.6 Supplemental data collection techniques

In addition to the primary techniques mentioned in Section 4.5, I also drew on supplemental methods. These techniques were instrumental in gaining insights into the actual use of Judeo-Spanish and its associated social significance. In this section, I will provide an overview of these techniques.

4.6.1 Life histories and language biographies

Narratives, whether oral or written, are a “means by which people give their lives meaning across time” (Pavlenko 2007: 164). Through the lens of narration, one can access people’s most intimate thoughts and experiences. One of the main supplemental techniques used in this project is life histories and language biographies, which offer useful insight into people’s cultural milieu, language practices, and motivations for

language maintenance and shift (cf. Hinton 2001; Tse 2000). Life histories unravel the trajectory of a person's life and their growth in a particular cultural context that is inaccessible by other methods of inquiry. (cf. Marshall & Rossman 2014: 88). These personal histories are embedded within broader discourse frameworks and are capable of unveiling extensive networks of language practices within families, both within the group and in interactions with outsiders. They offer insights into the cultural, historical, and social influences that extend beyond individual life stories (Fontana & Frey 2000: 459).

The narratives gathered around language biographies were central in establishing the level of internalisation of the meaning of language as a core value to the Sephardic identity. This type of content can only rarely be reliably deduced by direct questions in an interview situation. As noted by Ehala (2019: 134), these aspects are more effectively revealed through personal stories, creative performances like theatre productions, or observations of everyday behaviour. Autobiographical narrations can be transformational, highly interactional having the ability to shape the self while describing past events (Wortham 2001: introduction xi; 157).

Autobiographical narratives also helped me reconstruct the language trajectories of the consultants' families and forebearers, as well as those of the community (Deprez 1996). The life histories are to be regarded as a separate section from the in-depth interview due to their different structure, which are unimpeded by the researcher's interventions. Before proceeding with the in-depth interview, the consultants were asked to recall their language learning settings and development from their early childhood to the present. Crites (1986: 168) warns us against "the illusion of causality" that accompanies the consultants' recall of past events, as these are subjected to selective memory and reinterpretation of the past (Marshall & Rossman 2014). In response to these concerns, Pavlenko (2007: 168) moves away from seeing narratives as distortions or exaggerations of past events. Pavlenko (2007) argues that narratives should be viewed as performative acts rather than simply as discursive constructions, exaggerations, or distortions. This perspective emphasises the interpretative nature of storytelling, highlighting how narratives are crafted and understood as part of broader performative contexts.

> [...] narrators do not necessarily consciously 'distort the truth', rather they use the act of narration to impose meaning on experience. (Pavlenko 2007: 168)

Narrations are, by their nature, constructed realities and people's narrated language competence and behaviour do not always reflect reality. The researcher's role is to observe and validate the ways in which the narrator constructs meaning and how

individuals express feelings by means of symbols in a particular language of their choice. Especially in the study of attitudes, these expressive means are of paramount importance, as they are framed by a process of reinterpretation of the past through the filter of present perspectivisations.

Narrations of life histories are perhaps the domain where attitudes and ideologies are at best staged in an unconscious process of bringing forward one's inner thoughts, desires, and emotions. The instances in which the consultants would admit to remembering, reflecting and expressing previously unspoken language traumas, inhibitions, or affections towards a given vernacular for the first time were not unique. Life histories are thus an important piece in the mosaic of eliciting qualitative data. However, their value for analysis is revealed only when triangulated with the other data inquiry techniques. One of these techniques was to compare the narrations of different generations of speakers in the same family, identify contradictions in narrations, and recognise recurrent stances, ideologies and attitudes (cf. § 6.4). The differences between the narrated reality and the actual one, as far as this could be elicited by observation and context, exposes other phenomena like language anxiety and motivation for language choice or desire to maintain the heritage language. This is also true of the instances where narration is interrupted or censured.

Based on Mandelbaum's (1973) proposed chronology of narrations, I organised the life histories in the following order:

(1) The dimensions of a person's life
(2) The principal life changing events and the life conditions between such events
(3) The person's characteristic means of adaptation

On the basis of this clustering, in the analysis stage, the narrative is coded according to the requirements of the GTM approach (Charmaz 2006; Corbin & Strauss 2008) in a hierarchical structure containing themes, patterns and categories.

4.6.2 Community assistant

In order to satisfy the requirements of "multiple interpretative perspectives" (Langman 2013: 257), I draw on the help of a community assistant (CA). The CA was involved in the entire research process, from data collection and transcription to the final phases of analysis, thus enriching the possible interpretations minimising idiosyncrasies and mediating between the emic and etic approach.

During the preliminary preparation period from 2012 to 2014, I aimed to select a CA to accompany me throughout all phases of my research. While the designation of a CA has been a common practice in linguistic field research and language documentation,

their involvement in all stages of research represents a novelty. For the Judeo-Spanish community, I had the privilege of meeting and collaborating with Deyvi Papo, who became my CA. Papo assisted me in preparing the questionnaire and conducting 24 out of the 60 interviews. His assistance was particularly crucial since my proficiency in Turkish was limited at the outset of the research. Consequently, his contributions ensured that all languages spoken in the practice community were appropriately represented throughout the research period, in line with Langman's (2013) recommendations.

> The researcher's stance emerges from, among other things, her familiarity with and competence in the varieties of language used in the context of study and that will develop over time. (Langman 2013: 257)

Before each collaboration with Papo, we conducted detailed briefings about the intended research methods, research phases, and strategies for eliciting valuable information. Understanding the CA's profile was essential for comprehending potential perspectives. The selection criteria for the CA included:

(1) his/her degree of interconnectedness/activity in the community
(2) his/her involvement for the whole period of the research project
(3) his/her degree of relation to the topic under scrutiny

In the following paragraphs, I will provide a brief description of the CA's profile with his explicit agreement.

Deyvi Papo, originally from the Sephardic community in Istanbul, Turkey, is considered a neo-speaker of Judeo-Spanish. While he was exposed to the language during his childhood, his active learning of the language began through our collaboration. I first met Papo in 2014 at the Department of Romance Languages in Vienna, where he was studying Italian. At the time, he was pursuing a degree in Architecture at the TU Vienna and had a keen interest in Romance languages. Papo's dedication and enthusiasm were invaluable throughout the entire research process. He accompanied me on two research trips to Istanbul in 2015 and 2016. Furthermore, he was employed as student assistant in the *Vanishing Languages and Cultural Heritage Commission* (VLACH) of the Austrian Academy of Sciences (ÖAW) in Vienna and the *Department for Romance Studies* at the University of Vienna. His primary role was to assist in transcribing the Judeo-Spanish data, which proved to be a complex task due to the extensive code-mixing of Judeo-Spanish, French, Italian, and Turkish, as well as the advanced language shift into Turkish. As a native Turkish speaker, he played a critical role in all phases of the research. Papo's interest in Judeo-Spanish developed gradually, starting in his childhood and intensifying through our collaboration.

> It [Judeo-Spanish] was a language that I heard frequently at home, whether through some expressions in specific occasions or in long conversations, which were kept as a secret. This unique usage of the language intrigued my interest in Spanish when I was 13 years old. As the differences between Ladino and Castilian were vague to me, I developed a general interest in modern Spanish, but also an interest in Romance languages since my friends and relatives were somehow related to these languages. (visiting French/Italian schools, or making Judeo-Spanish music, etc.) After I came to Vienna, I simply chose to learn Italian because there were no places left in the Spanish class. Afterwards, when I met you [the author], I also developed a deeper interest in my own culture, which allowed me to learn it and embrace it on a whole different level, scientifically and objectively but at the same time I developed a very subjective perception of self. And as I was engaged more and started sharing it with my family, they have also started developing a consciousness of the language. Nowadays I feel that my parents and grandparents appreciate that I learned this language and that's why they have started using it more often in family occasions. (Deyvi Papo, 2018, conversations)

The specific contributions of the main CA will be highlighted throughout this chapter. During the field research period, I also received invaluable assistance from additional community members who generously dedicated their time and effort to the project's success. The particular mention of the main CA is due to his comprehensive involvement in the entire methodological process, including data collection, transcription, and analysis.

4.6.3 Field notes

Previous studies (Maegaard 2005) have indicated that direct questions about language practices can potentially influence speakers' attitudes. There is a risk that a direct approach may lead consultants to reproduce prevailing local ideologies found in the media, influential cultural and social institutions, or politics. To mitigate this risk, I incorporated the participant observations and field notes from the pilot study period (cf. § 4.5.1). These pre-study notes were digitally organised for each consultant profile. They proved invaluable in establishing the research framework, formulating the questionnaire, devising data collection methods, and creating the initial hierarchies in the data coding (cf. § 4.9.2ß3).

While reviewing these notes at the end of the study, I came to realise that language attitudes show more variety when the purpose of the investigation remains unclear to the consultants, compared to situations where consultants are directly questioned about their language attitudes. This made me acutely aware of the importance of considering the evolving nature of attitudes and identity constructions (Bendle 2002), a phenomenon referred to as "fluidity of attitudes" by Sallabank (2013: 71). This fluidity could lead researchers to different interpretations of people's narratives. As a result, it became essential for me to conduct multiple interview sessions in a week,

or in most cases a year, had passed between sessions, in order to assess whether the expressed attitudes remained consistent over a specific time frame. These field notes were subsequently triangulated with other data types in the analysis.

4.6.4 Review of documents

During the data preparation, collection, and analysis phases, I encountered a diverse range of documents that were either directly or indirectly connected to the subject of my research. These documents included photographs, letters, wedding invitations, postcards, and other artifacts held by the families. These items served as valuable supporting material for constructing life histories and language biographies. The examination of these memory boxes allowed me to uncover the multilingual practices of the Sephardim and their language preferences for various domains across different generations.

In contrast, Judeo-Spanish was more commonly used for private written exchanges, including postcards (cf. Figure 9. Ch. 4 below) and letters to family members and relatives. It should be noted that the choice between Judeo-Spanish and French for this correspondence depended on the writer's social background.

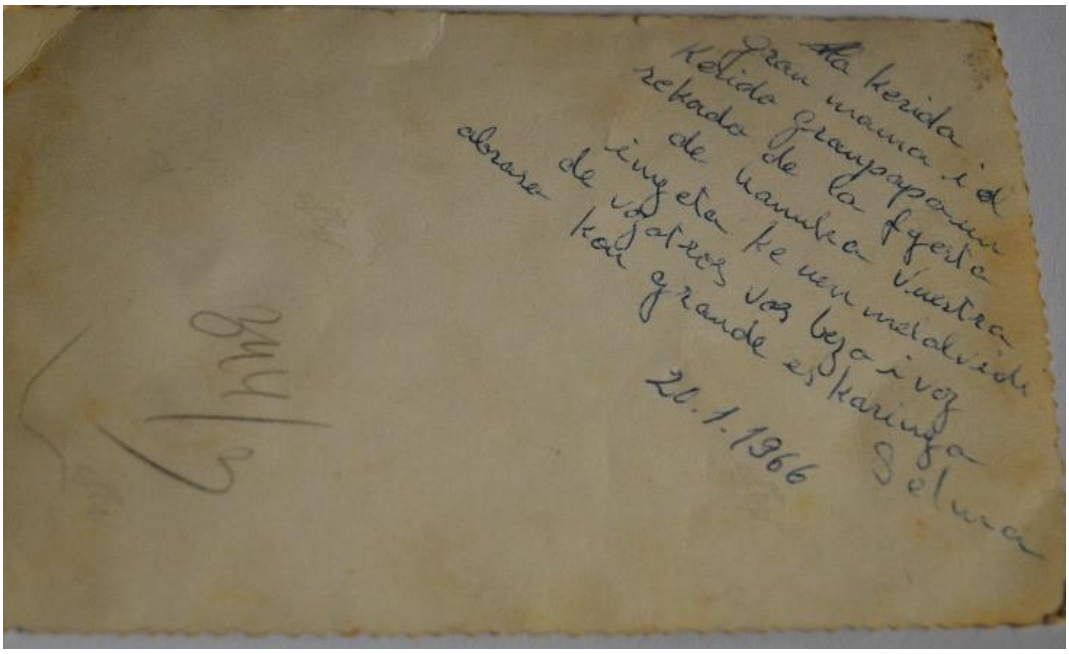

Figure 9. Ch. 4: *Postcard in Judeo-Spanish*

Following the establishment of French schools in Turkey under the auspices of the *Alliance Israélite Universelle* in 1860, French became the preferred language for official

written communications within the community, such as wedding invitations (cf. Figure 10. Ch. 4 below).

Figure 10. Ch. 4: *Wedding invitation in French*

Further documents include my WhatsApp conversations with community members, as well as textbooks, newspapers, and novels. For example, Bension Varon's memoir, *Gifts of Language: Multilingualism and Turkish-Sephardic Culture* (2016), provides valuable insights into language choices and practices among Turkish Sephardim during a pivotal moment in Turkish history—the founding of the Republic by Kemal Atatürk and the implementation of top-down language policies that created a culture of fear among multilingual communities in Istanbul. This autobiographical novel traces the evolution of language attitudes over time, blending fiction and reality to reveal both imagined and actual experiences. Throughout the project, all documents were systematically annotated, interpreted, and coded, with the results integrated into the overall analysis.

4.7 Ethics

4.7.1 Ethical frameworks in linguistic research

Reflecting on the nature of the relationships established with individuals within the studied community has long been a standard practice among fieldworkers. This

reflection, extending beyond the academic necessity for maintaining good and ethical scientific conduct, is paramount as it can profoundly impact the entire research process and its outcomes. Over the past three decades, there has been a significant evolution in the ethical frameworks guiding linguistic fieldwork. Cameron et al. (1993) identified three distinct frameworks in their work aimed at conducting ethical linguistics research.

(1) *Ethical research* in this context pertains to research *on* social subjects, where, as the authors state, "human subjects no more set the social researcher's agenda than a bottle of sulphuric acid sets the chemist's agenda" (Cameron, Frazer et al. 1993: 83). Under this framework, research is considered ethical as long as it does not harm the subjects being investigated. An example of this approach can be found in Samarin's (1967) book *Field Linguistics* where he emphasizes that the primary goal of field linguistics is to obtain linguistic data and study linguistic phenomena (Samarin 1967: 1). Samarin's ethical concern revolves around the process of selecting suitable informants and establishing a fair remuneration system that adequately compensates them for their efforts.

(2) *Advocacy research* involves conducting research both *on* and *for* the community. In this approach, the researcher actively participates in community affairs, leveraging their expertise in areas such as education and culture to benefit the community (Labov 1982; Sutton & Walsh 1979; Wolfram, Reaser & Vaughn 2008).

(3) *The empowering approach.* The framework that guided me throughout the research project is the empowering approach (Cameron, Frazer et al. 1993; Grinevald 1998; Hinton & Hale 2001) which involves research *on, for*, and *with* social subjects. In this approach, the community members, referred to as *consultants* in this study (cf. Dissertation Roadmap) provided me with valuable information, and in return, I aimed to empower, support, and facilitate individual consultants in their efforts to independently pursue activities related to language documentation and preservation. This approach initially focused on the CA, enabling interactive, collaborative, dialogic, and bidirectional research strategies.

As a researcher, one of my top priorities was the proper handling of recorded data. I was determined to avoid a situation where the research data would simply gather dust on shelves after completing my PhD thesis. To achieve this, I took several proactive steps.

First and foremost, I ensured that the multimedia materials collected during interviews were made available to the consultants if they wished to access them. I provided each consultant with strategies for storing and disseminating the data. This

information was shared with them at the beginning of every interview and was documented in an *information sheet* and *consent form* (cf. Appendix 2).

Secondly, I envisioned providing a representative selection of these data in a user-friendly, open-access format to enable the dissemination of the data beyond the scope of my PhD project and to allow access for the Judeo-Spanish community. To bring this vision to life, I collaborated with the *Vanishing Languages and Cultural Heritage Commission* (VLACH) of the Austrian Academy of Sciences (ÖAW). The documentation of Judeo-Spanish in Istanbul[53] was carried out as part of the IRDICH project at the *Vanishing Languages and Cultural Heritage Commission* (VLACH) at the *Austrian Academy of Sciences* (ÖAW). The total volume of raw multimedia data (audio/video) comprises more than 45 hours and was collected between 2014 and 2017 in Istanbul. A total of 50 fully annotated videoclips (transcription, translation, content description, metadata) ranging in length from 7 to 20 minutes on a wide variety of topics and genres have been published in collaboration with the CA, Deyvi Papo and Imane Sghiouar.

Thirdly, I facilitated collaborations between the University of Vienna and language activists, theatre performers, and other members of the Turkish Sephardic community who are dedicated to preserving Judeo-Spanish. This initiative aimed to raise awareness of the Judeo-Spanish language and create opportunities for collaboration between academic institutions and endangered language communities. To this end, I organized a series of events, including Judeo-Spanish courses, concerts, theatre productions, and readings held within both academic and non-academic contexts at the *Institute for Romance Studies* of the University of Vienna.

I am well aware of the ongoing debate regarding the role of scientific objectivity when a researcher becomes socially involved in community practices beyond linguistic inquiry. Throughout my work and to the best of my ability I tried to maintain a balance between what Labov (1982: 166) terms the “scientific conscience” with the “social conscience”, carefully navigating my position as both an insider and outsider within the Judeo-Spanish language community. I strived to maintain and respect an auxiliary, non-intrusive role, aligning with Labov’s (1982: 195) view that “the only permanent advance in the condition of life occurs when people take their own affairs into their own hands”.

[53] https://www.oeaw.ac.at/vlach/collections/judeo-spanish/judeo-spanish-in-istanbul, accessed on July 15th, 2024.

4.7.2 Anonymisation procedure

As I conducted the research presented in this dissertation, I constantly strove to maintain a balance between researcher and researched, while at the same time observing the fairness principles and ethical standards in linguistic fieldwork: respecting the consultants' *voluntary participation*, ensuring their safety, dignity, and privacy and adhering to data confidentiality or disclosure policies according to their expressed wishes. To ensure the complete anonymity of the consultants in this PhD dissertation, a dual anonymisation process was employed, involving pseudonyms and specific anonymised codes, explained in greater detail in the Dissertation Roadmap. The choice of using pseudonyms, rather than mere codes, aligns with the ethical principles guiding this research. It is an effort to present the consultants as real individuals, fostering a sense of relatability and human connection.

4.7.3 Informed consent

Prior to every interview, the consultants were informed verbally and in writing about the broad aim of the research and about the methods used in eliciting, annotating, and archiving the data. Every informant received: (1) an *information sheet* (cf. Appendix 2) containing my (a) *academic affiliation*, *position and contact data*, (b) *a broad description of the research title* and (c) *the purpose of the research*; (2) a consent form (cf. Appendix 2) mentioning the different ways in which the data would be made public or published, drawing on conclusions reached by Watkins & Schulman (2008).

> For some [...] the offer of anonymity re-inscribes the asymmetry of power in the research relationship, where authorship goes to the researcher and anonymity goes to the consultants. Let your consultant know they have a choice in this matter, thinking through with them any potential down-sides. [...] [They] may wish to claim their own words and perspective as their own. (Watkins & Schulman 2008 306).

I would like to note that no individual expressed a desire to be identified by their real names for the purpose of the PhD. A table made explicit the different types of publication with the specific access profile, formulated in English and Turkish. The consultants could choose among a series of possibilities for handling the data, as shows the extract below.

Data type	PhD dissertation	Scientific journals	Marketed books (manuals)	Archives and documentation platforms without open access	Archives and documentation platforms with open access
Photo	anonymous	anonymous	anonymous	open	open
Audio	anonymous	anonymous	anonymous	open	open
Video	anonymous	anonymous	anonymous	open	open
Sign					

Figure 11. Ch. 4: *Extract from the consent form in English*

Furthermore, the consultants were informed of their right to decline participation in the research at any stage. They were also made aware that they could revoke their agreement regarding the use of their data by submitting an informal withdrawal notice, including the date and their signature, via postal mail or email. In Istanbul, I received 21 requests for full anonymity, but no withdrawal notices have been submitted to date.

Those who agreed to the open access policy were asked why they did so. Most of the elder consultants were reassured when they found out that the materials would be archived and subsequently made available to them. One of the most common reasons expressed was related to the state of endangerment of the minority language and the desire to preserve what could still be saved. The prospect of making the material available under an open access policy within the activities of the VLACH Commission was welcomed and encouraged by the majority of the consultants. However, interviews with consultants who wished to maintain their anonymity will be stored in the archive with restricted access, meaning the communities will not benefit from them as much.

4.8 Reliability of results

It is essential to give careful thought to the extent to which a researcher can be influenced by experts and assistants in the field, as they have the power to steer the data interpretation in a completely different direction. I experienced a challenging and complex process of negotiation between the great support and new perspectives I was given access to by community experts and CA and the need to take a step back and remain faithful to the interpretations imposed by the data and the research subject's perspective.

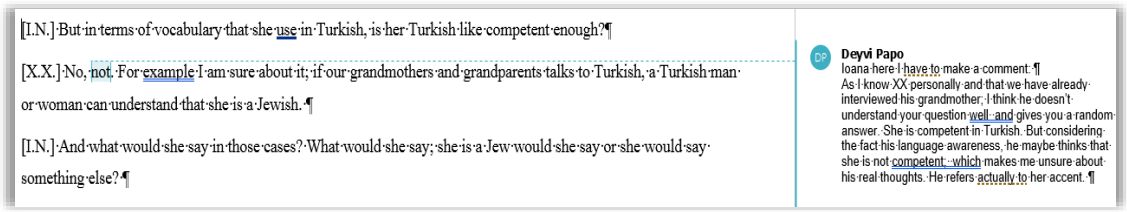

Figure 12. Ch. 4: *Screenshot comment of CA – transcription process*

In Figure 12. Ch.4 above[54], I provide an example of feedback that I received from the CA. The CA had a personal connection with the consultant and their family, and he noticed a significant detail. The consultant was referring to his grandmother's accent in Turkish rather than to her knowledge of Turkish as I initially understood. Thanks to the CA's input, I was able to achieve a more accurate analysis.

This feedback mechanism helped me to obtain more informed consent (cf. Cameron, Frazer et al. 1993: 90) and to avoid drawing inaccurate conclusions. In addition, it established a dialogue between myself as a researcher and my consultants who are the object of study, and it encouraged the empowerment of community members in the investigation process and beyond. The different perspectives were thus negotiated in a quest for reliable and representative results.

4.9 Data analysis flow

The analysis was carried out after reviewing and cross-verifying the consistency of the interpretation across all data sets. As was often the case, the data collected at a later point in time provided me with new insights into the interpretation and categorisation of the materials gathered previously. The figure below presents information regarding the total size and duration of the audio/video data sets.

Recording type	Sephardim
Audio length	65:27:32
Video length	45:13:40
Total size	759 GB

Figure 13. Ch. 4: *Data sets – duration and size*

[54] *"Ioana, here I have to make a comment: As I know XX personally and that we have already interviewed his grandmother; I think he doesn't understand your question well and gives you a random answer. She [grandmother] is competent in Turkish. But considering his language awareness, he maybe thinks that she is not competent; which makes me unsure about his real thoughts. He refers to her accent."* (Deyvi Papo, December 2, 2017)

4.9.1 Transcription

With the exception of personal conversations unrelated to the subjects under investigation, the majority of the data was transcribed to ensure that the analysis offers a comprehensive and accurate depiction of the various factors influencing the speakers' accounts. Interestingly, portions of the interviews that I initially considered irrelevant proved to be valuable during the later stages of coding. Converging with Friese's approach (2019: 120), I found that interruptions and pauses in the conversations held significant interpretative value. These interruptions and pauses often indicated what the speaker was attempting to avoid in their response or served as a means to gain time to formulate an answer. I captured such instances in the transcription through comments, and later, these observations were transformed into memos in ATLAS.ti, allowing me to correlate them with other parts of the data.

Transcriptions of each data set were conducted after each field trip to Istanbul, allowing for a critical review and improvement of the interview process for subsequent investigations. These transcriptions were a collaborative effort involving the CA Deyvi Papo and two Romance language students[55] at the University of Vienna. All assistants were officially appointed and received financial compensation through contracts from the *Department for Romance Studies* of the University of Vienna and the Commission for *Vanishing Languages and Cultural Heritage* (VLACH) within the Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna, where the materials are securely stored.

Every transcription underwent a thorough review process involving a minimum of two individuals. In the majority of cases (approximately 70 %), three individuals were involved in the review process, including the community assistant, contracted students, and myself.

One of the greatest challenges in transcribing the data was handling the different languages used in the interviews, which I will list here in order of their predominance in the interviews: Judeo-Spanish, Spanish, English, French, and Turkish. Whenever these languages had a standard pronunciation, they were written in the original orthography.

[55] My gratitude for the great help in transcribing the material goes to Deyvi Papo (Istanbul, Vienna), Izabela Apostol (Vienna, Department of Romance Study) and Imane Sghiouar (Vienna, Department of Romance Studies) for the transcription and review of the Judeo-Spanish materials.

Data was transcribed using an enhanced version of the *Aki Yerushalayim*[56] script presented in Figure 2. Dissertation Roadmap. This script was supplemented with additional signs, alternative symbols, and the marking of both regular and non-regular accents to improve transcription accuracy (cf. Figure 3. Dissertation Roadmap). The choice to adapt the *Aki Yerushalayim* system in this dissertation was driven by the need for precision in recording narratives of Judeo-Spanish as an endangered language that exhibits significant pronunciation variation, even within individual speakers' discourse. Furthermore, legibility was crucial to cater to both scientific and non-scientific audiences in local and international contexts while aligning with the chosen theoretical framework. All consultant narratives are accompanied by English translations in order to enable easier access to Judeo-Spanish by non-speakers. The interviews with the third generation were predominantly conducted in English. Original quotations in all languages have not been altered, nor have I used [sic.] to indicate deviations from standard spelling and wording.

In the transcription process, it was important to faithfully render the spoken discourse. Code-switching, repetitions, incomplete starts or endings, restarts, slips of the tongue, breaks, etc. were rendered exactly. Paralinguistic features such as hesitation, differences in tonality, and markers of emotionality were introduced in square brackets.

4.9.2 Grounded Theory Methodology (GTM)

After conducting the initial pilot studies in Turkey (2013, 2014), I realised that a hypothetic-deductive approach would not be suitable for the research design I had in mind. The primary reason for this was the need for a multilevel approach to study cross-generational perspectives (cf. Kroskrity 2004: 501). Essentially, I needed to find an approach that would encourage me to think "outside of the box" (Mason 2006: 13), employ a theory rooted in data, and provide insights into both processes and outcomes in response to my research questions:

> Our ways of seeing, and of framing questions, are strongly influenced by the methods we have at our disposal, because the way we see shapes what we can see, and what we think we can ask. In that sense, researchers can fail to appreciate how methods-driven are their questions. (Mason 2006: 13)

[56] *Aki Yerushalayim*, "Grafia del Djudeo-Espanyol", https://yerushalayimaki.wixsite.com/ladino/grafia-del-djudeo-espanyol, accessed on June 22, 2024.

I therefore chose *Grounded Theory Methodology* (GTM) as the data collection and analysis methodology for my research. GTM is a methodology that originated in the social sciences and provides an experience-proven framework for organising and conducting research to develop relevant theories (Strübing 1997: 400). It was developed in the 1960s by sociologists Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss during their research on dying hospital patients. This collaboration resulted in two seminal monographs: *Awareness of Dying* (Glaser & Strauss 1965) and *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* (Glaser & Strauss 1967). GTM emerged in response to the dominance of quantitative research methods and the need to establish the legitimacy of rigorous qualitative research. It challenges the traditional hypothetic-deductive approach focused on testing pre-existing hypotheses. In recent years, GTM has evolved into a hybrid method that combines both inductive and deductive elements in the theory-building process (Bryant & Charmaz 2007; Kelle 2005a).

According to Glaser and Strauss (1967: 2-3), GTM seeks to minimise the emphasis on the "prior step of discovering what concepts and hypotheses are relevant for the area that one wishes to research". GTM's goal is to reduce the tension between experienced researchers who possess a broad understanding of existing methods (referred to as "theoretical capitalists") and scientists who are at the early stages of their research careers (referred to as "proletariat testers").

When Glaser and Strauss first introduced GTM in 1967, they did not explicitly outline the philosophical foundations of their theory. Instead, they provided a minimalist definition, describing GTM as "simply a set of integrated conceptual hypotheses systematically generated to produce an inductive theory about a substantive area" (Glaser 2004: introduction). This definition suggests the process of inferring theoretical concepts from empirical data. Corbin and Strauss later expanded on this by explicitly acknowledging the influence of pragmatic philosophy and sociological symbolic interactionist theories in their book *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory* (Corbin & Strauss 2008), which is considered an evolved GTM methodology.

The primary assumption of GTM, as described by Glaser (1992), is that *symbolic interactionism* provides insights into the relationship between individuals and their society. To comprehend the actions of the individuals under investigation, it is essential to gather data about their actions and interactions within a specific context. This approach recognises that individuals create meaning and structure their social world based on their contextual awareness (Ralph, Birks & Chapman 2014: 3) and guides the researcher in collecting data on these actions and interactions (Aldiabat 2011: 9).

In the context of the present study, developing a substantive theory of the interaction between ideology, language attitudes, and language practices among the Sephardim from a cross-generational perspective, involves understanding the various perspectives and interpretations of contexts held by different types and profiles of speakers across a fluency continuum. It also entails examining how these individuals interact with and interpret their language environment, and how these interpretations influence their linguistic practices.

Today, GTM has become one of the most widely used methodologies in qualitative research. Its enduring relevance is attributed to its dynamic nature, enabling researchers from different generations to adapt it to the needs of contemporary sociological interpretation across various domains. This flexibility allows researchers to translate the principles of GTM to their specific contexts and develop new interpretative models in response to societal changes. As a result, grounded theorists (Ralph, Birks & Chapman 2014: 2-5) are encouraged to be self-aware of their ontological and epistemological stances, prompting them to critically examine how GTM methods are applied and adapted to their research.

GT has its philosophical roots in the Chicago school of symbolic interactionism and pragmatism. Over time, the conceptualisation of GTM methodology has evolved into three distinct philosophical branches:

a. Classic Grounded Theory, associated with Glaser & Strauss (1967), adopts a postpositive perspective.
b. Evolved Grounded Theory, represented by Strauss, Corbin, & Clarke (1990), draws on symbolic interactionism and pragmatism.
c. Constructivist Grounded Theory, correlated with the work of Charmaz (2000), aligns with a constructivist perspective (cf. § 3.2.2).

In the present dissertation, I adopt the constructivist perspective of Charmaz (2000). One of the significant methodological differences between classic GTM as proposed by Glaser and Strauss (1965) and constructivist GTM pertains to the role and involvement of consultants in data construction, the level of researcher's distance from the data and the relativism of multiple social realities (Charmaz 2000: 510). GTM allowed me to engage in an analytical iteration process, facilitating the development of core categories and central concepts that form the foundation of my analysis. Each research step is well-defined, and various data collection methods are systematically integrated throughout the entire analytical process. The model presented in the figure below was applied to all sets of field data. In GTM, systematic analysis practices are conceptualised as a thorough examination of the data line by line, starting with a systematic reading of data

transcripts and followed by the generation of codes, categories, and properties as pictured in Figure 14. Chapter 4[57].

Year	Step in analytic cycle	Scope
2015	▪ empirical research	▪ data elicitation in Istanbul
2015-2016	▪ initial contact with the material ▪ first transcriptions	▪ first stage of data coding process[58] ▪ integration of personal accounts prior to, during and after interviews ▪ clustering of themes and patterns
2015-2016	▪ interim inductive analysis	▪ emergence of themes and patterns ▪ generation of codes and coding families ▪ opportunity to improve on the interview
2016-2017	▪ empirical research ▪ transcriptions were carried out	▪ data elicitation in Istanbul ▪ integration of personal accounts prior to, during and after interviews ▪ clustering of themes and patterns ▪ generation of codes in Atlas.ti
2016-2017	▪ deductive procedure	▪ comparison with analytical categories from previous field trips and references ▪ establishment of a first code hierarchy
2017	▪ empirical research	▪ completion of consultant profiles among the Sephardic community (especially the third generation)
2017-2018	▪ transcriptions and coding carried out	▪ data transcription ▪ integration of personal accounts prior, during and after the interview ▪ clustering of themes and coding patterns comparison with analytical categories from previous field trips and references
2017-2021	▪ data reduction	▪ raising the level of abstraction ▪ comparing groups and subgroups categorisation and conceptualisation
2021-2023	▪ data triangulation and axial coding	▪ achievement of a better understanding of the same phenomena from different perspectives and fulfilment of the methodological rigor that leads to a more theoretical abstraction ▪ creation of typologies, conceptual models ▪ triangulation of in-depth interviews with participant observations and field notes
2021-2024	▪ contextualisation of the findings	▪ finalising analysis and writing process[59]

Figure 14. Ch. 4: *Analytic steps based on GTM*

As shown in Figure 14. Ch. 4, GTM focuses on processes within a core category that interconnect the various stages of theory development (Glaser & Strauss 1967; Glaser

[57] Figure 14, Chapter does not include the preliminary period of pilot study (2012-2014).
[58] The transcription process was a crucial step in developing sensitivity to thematic clusters, while also providing an opportunity to reflect on and refine the interview methodology.
[59] The writing process has been ongoing and has accompanied all of these stages.

1978; Strauss & Corbin 1990; Charmaz 2000). To illustrate the axial coding process applied to the phenomenon of *language trauma*[60] observed among Sephardim, consider the following example: Initially, I identified the specific conditions and contexts in which consultants experienced the emotion of fear. Subsequently, I searched for fear-coping strategies and examined them within the context in which they appeared.

The reason I adopted this methodology lies in its flexibility, especially regarding data collection and immediate analysis, followed by iterative data collection that takes into account insights from previous experiences and results. This approach provided the freedom to continuously enhance data collection methods and content for subsequent phases.

4.9.3 Coding Process in ATLAS.ti

The GTM methodology employed in this project is based on a systematic approach that facilitates the development of a paradigmatic model for organising and interpreting the data. To achieve this, I chose ATLAS.ti[61], a data processing tool that aligns well with the existing workflow, providing openness, flexibility, and adaptability in a theory building process. In analysing the data, I adopted a content-analytic approach in coding the data, I followed the coding logic paradigm proposed by Strauss (1987: 27f), which considers (1) conditions, (2) interaction among actors, (3) strategies and tactics, and (4) consequences related to the phenomena under investigation. Subsequently, I focused on comparing indicators with each other to generate conceptual codes and then compared these indicators with emerging concepts (Glaser 1978: 62; Strübing 1997: 401). The point of theoretical saturation was determined when the findings for providing theoretical explanations for certain causes, occurrences, or observations from the data started to repeat those that already existed. Throughout the coding process, I employed a dynamic approach, shifting between:

1. **Open coding**: the first step in breaking up the textual data based on the transcribed interviews by labelling them with data-driven codes. The open coding process allows a flexible and open perception of the data that can lead to new theoretical interpretations.
2. **Axial coding:** during this process, I grouped my codes into code categories (Atlas.ti = code groups)

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[60] Expressed generally as fear of speaking the heritage language in public because of the repercussions they could experience in the majority context (Busch & McNamara 2020).
[61] https://atlasti.com/, accessed on April 3, 2024.

3. **Selective coding**: the theory-driven process by which I connected all the categories from axial coding together around one core category (Atlas.ti = smart groups).

These three categories can be summarised as follows: Initially, in my analytical process, I began creating lower-level explanatory concepts or codes. These were later merged into higher-level concepts or codes with mutually exclusive subcategories. This hierarchical structure allowed me to compare and contrast these categories, recognising connections between them. All these features and processes make ATLAS.ti one of the few qualitative data analysis programs that enhance the theory-building process required by the GTM approach employed in this dissertation.

4.10 Summary

In this chapter, I outlined the methodological framework employed to explore the relationship between language ideologies, attitudes, linguistic practices, and identification with Judeo-Spanish in its postvernacular stage. The chapter begins by detailing the research preparation and embedding process necessary for studying the Sephardic community in Istanbul. This involved a preliminary fieldwork period in eastern Turkey, which offered crucial insights into the complexities of minority language practices and the challenges faced by these communities. The steps taken to build trust within the community, including active participation in community activities and the strategic planning of data collection methods, are thoroughly described. I emphasised the balance between academic research and social responsibility, highlighting the principle of reciprocity and the importance of participatory research. Moreover, I discussed the time consuming preparation period for gaining access to the Sephardic community, which required a gradual and trust-building approach.

Attention was given to the methods used to minimise power dynamics between the researcher and informants, particularly through the choice of interview language. Linguistic flexibility not only facilitated deeper insights into the community's language practices but also fostered trust, reducing linguistic barriers during interviews. The chapter also underscores the importance of careful planning in data collection, informed by earlier pilot experiences. The sampling criteria, meticulously crafted for 60 interviews within Istanbul's Sephardic community, ensured representation across generations, gender balance, and educational background, capturing nuanced language ideologies, attitudes, and practices shaped by diverse contexts.

Employing a range of primary and supplemental data collection techniques, my immersion in community activities provided valuable insights into actual language

practices. Challenges in recruitment, particularly among the younger third generation, were addressed through flexible scheduling and persistent engagement. The use of various media formats for recording interviews was tailored to meet consultants' preferences, ensuring comfort and authenticity during the data collection process.

Participant observation played a foundational role, enabling the observation of language practices in natural settings and revealing discrepancies between reported and actual practices. The open-ended interview methods were carefully adapted to the cultural context and specific needs of the study. Additionally, expert interviews offered valuable insights into the community's language ideologies and practices, complementing the broader data collection efforts.

Supplemental data collection techniques further broadened the scope of my research, particularly in exploring language ideologies and attitudes across different generations of Sephardim. By gathering life histories and language biographies, I accessed valuable personal narratives that illuminated the cultural, historical, and social contexts in which language operates. The involvement of a community assistant (CA) was pivotal in ensuring the research remained balanced and reflective of both insider and outsider perspectives. This collaboration enriched the data collection process and mitigated potential biases, enhancing the reliability of the findings.

Ethical considerations were paramount throughout the research process, with a detailed anonymisation procedure implemented to protect consultants' identities while providing necessary contextual information for readers. In addressing the reliability of the research findings, I acknowledged the potential influence of experts and community assistants on data interpretation. To mitigate biases and ensure accuracy, a continuous feedback mechanism was established to facilitate informed consent and maintain data integrity.

Finally, the chapter discussed the data analysis process, which followed a systematic and iterative approach. After verifying the consistency of interpretations across all data sets, I conducted a thorough analysis that was continuously refined as new insights emerged. The transcription process played a crucial role, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the various factors influencing the speakers' accounts. The analysis involved a dynamic coding process using ATLAS.ti, where data were categorised and ultimately connected around a core category. This iterative process, combined with the adaptability of GTM, allowed the study to achieve a nuanced understanding of the intricated interaction between language ideologies, attitudes, and practices within the Sephardic community.

Chapter 5: The dynamics of postvernacular language use

5.1 Overview

Today, Judeo-Spanish finds limited use in the life and expression of the community. It primarily manifests itself in fragmented instances of situational code-mixing and inter-sentential and intra-sentential code-switches within the speech of a community that has fully shifted to Turkish. Habib expresses this situation as follows:

> **5-1. Habib**: Si en avlándo túrko podémos enkashár byérvos en espanyól, amá no avlámos en espanyól.
>
> ('While speaking Turkish we can sprinkle in a few words in JS, but we don't converse in Spanish[62].') [1st-m-73-fluent-ind]

Its most evocative use is as a code language, whether within the intimate confines of the home or in public settings, where it has profound implications for delineating group boundaries (cf. § 5.4.3). As Morvan (2011: 11) points out, its limited integration into daily life reflects the community's dispersion across Istanbul, characterised by fragmented intergenerational language transmission and a shrinking population due to ongoing territorial shifts within Turkey in the past century and increased emigration to Israel and elsewhere.

> Réduite à sa portion congrue dans le pratiques quotidiennes, cette langue fait surtout aujourd'hui l'objet d'un usage fragmentaire mais o combien révélateur, en particulier le terme 'vedre', 'vert', pour désigner les musulmans sans que ces derniers ne soient capables de le comprendre. (Morvan 2011: 11)

Nearly a century after its forecast demise (Cantera 1964; Nathan 1964; Renard 1966; Şaul 1983), Judeo-Spanish continues to resonate within the linguistic repertoire of the Sephardic community of Turkey as "post-vernacular language" (Brink-Danan 2011c; Bunin Benor 2011; Shandler 2005) (cf. § 3.3.2). At this stage, Judeo-Spanish has transitioned from an instrumental role in everyday communication to symbolic roles that involve performing in the language, discussing it, translating texts, attempting to learn it, or incorporating its words and phrases into the dominant vernacular. As Shandler (2004: 20) notes, in this capacity, every spoken word is imbued with a performative quality as a speech act.

Considerable scholarly attention has been devoted to examining the diminishing functional domains of Judeo-Spanish, as evidenced by numerous studies (Altabev 2003; Benbassa & Rodrigue 2000; Harris 1979; Harris 1982a; Harris 1982b; Harris 1994; Harris

[62] The majority of participants refer to Judeo-Spanish as "espanyól" ('Spanish'), a term that is retained in the English translation without alteration.

2006; Malinowski 1982; Romero 2012; Sala 1970; Sephiha 1991). In the late 1970s, Harris (1979: 13) identified six domains in which Judeo-Spanish persisted: 1) the language of the home, 2) the language of the older generation, 3) a secret language, 4) the language of entertainment, 5) a lingua franca with relatives, 6) in professional settings, with a high level of contact with Spanish. Jumping ahead to the 21st century, Harris (2006: 120) and Romero (2012: 93-102) noted five remaining domains of Judeo-Spanish use among Sephardi communities: (1) the language of some elders who can still speak the language, (2) the language of humour, (3) the language of music (romanzas, ballads) (cf. Nechiti 2015), (4) a secret or code language, (5) the language of the workplace, when used to communicate with non-Sephardic Spanish speakers (cf. Kirschen 2021).

The present study's examination of the current dynamics of language use mirrors the findings of Harris (2006) and Romero (2012). However, both the instrumental and symbolic values of these domains require a more nuanced understanding, differentiation, categorisation, interpretation, and contextualisation within the broader socio-cultural landscape and the relationship between ideology and attitudes, especially in view of recent digital developments which have introduced additional domains of language use. I therefore propose the following categorisation:

(1) Domains of family and intra-group communication:

- (a) Language spoken by some elders who are proficient in Judeo-Spanish
- (b) Language use among peers
- (c) Use as a code language
- (d) Onomastic practices

Furthermore, Judeo-Spanish continues to be employed to varying degrees in:

(2) Religious worship

(3) Theatrical, musical, and humorous performances, where language serves as a performative act

(4) International communication with non-Sephardic Spanish speakers

(5) Online communication platforms

(6) Community hubs dedicated to language learning and maintenance.

Particular attention will be paid to the emergence of new digital groups and communities of practice dedicated to Judeo-Spanish over the past two decades, which have led to a significant shift in our understanding of language domains. Romero (2017: 276) explored online spaces within this framework, prompting a re-evaluation of the position of Judeo-Spanish on the *Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale* (GIDS) proposed by Fishman (Fishman 1991). While the offline community scores between

levels 7 and 8 on the GIDS, among online communities, Judeo-Spanish occupies a position closer to levels 1 and 2, facilitating discussions across a diverse range of domains and encouraging the participation of younger generations (Romero: 276; 279). Moreover, when discussing language domains, it is important to recognise the significant role of Judeo-Spanish as a code language in delineating group boundaries. Its use will therefore be contextualised within the domain of family and intra-group communication (5.3.3), rather than being treated as an isolated aspect of postvernacular language use.

Finally, as discussed in Section 4.1, establishing a comprehensive distribution of language domains and language profiles for the study consultants proved to be quite challenging. However, I found that delving into individuals' life histories, exploring their language biographies, and examining their experiences growing up within their cultural milieu provided the most valuable insights into their language habitus and socialisation. These narratives, combined with other factors such as gender, generation, and education, have played a significant role in shaping the consultants' linguistic capital, as defined by Bourdieu (1991). By coming to grasp these dynamics, I have gained a deeper understanding of how language profiles are distributed among the consultants.

In the following sections (5.2 to 5.8), I will explore the contemporary language profiles and domains of language use among the study consultants. Section 5.2 tackles the scarcity of data on Judeo-Spanish speakers in Turkey, drawing on a sample of 60 consultants. I discuss the methodological challenges of delineating consultants' language profiles in Judeo-Spanish and propose five distinct categories for analysis. Furthermore, I examine the distribution of these profiles across socio-demographic variables such as generation, gender, and education, revealing significant disparities in language distribution across generations that are indicative of an interruption in intergenerational language transmission. Moreover, I analyse the shifting multilingual practices and the distribution of different languages in the evolving multilingual dynamic through the perspectives of ideological pressure and socio-demographic changes. The focus here is the question of the extent to which multilingualism is perceived a core value among the study consultants.

In Section 5.3, I explore the intergenerational language transmission dynamics within the Sephardic community, tracing historical shifts in language prevalence based on ideological pressure. Moreover, I address the implications of non-transmission across different generations and examine attitudes towards language transmission and its effects. These discussions offer insights into the reproduction of ideologies and the mechanisms of language attitude formation. They also reflect how macro-level ideologies serve as a navigational guide for micro-level language behaviour.

In Section 5.4 I examine the current domains of Judeo-Spanish language use and discuss the significance of Judeo-Spanish, both in its role as a spoken vernacular and in its postvernacular symbolic implications as a language used among elders, among peers, as a code-language, and in onomastic practices, as well as the implications of the last words employed by the third generation of heritage speakers. I interpret the intersection of consultants' narratives about linguistic prevalence within Jewish enclaves in the past and present and the transformation in Judeo-Spanish use under the influence of broader demographic and societal changes. Moreover, I discuss the strategies that Sephardic individuals belonging to different generations use to navigate interactions and mark their distinctiveness by using Judeo-Spanish.

Section 5.5 explores the evolving linguistic choices in religious rituals, tracing the shift of languages and different scripts in the context of religious rituals. Personal narratives highlight a temporal dimension, marked by a swift transition over a few decades driven by internal community dynamics, shifts in multilingual practices, and attitudes towards language. I show how language use within worship is aligned with broader societal changes and a secularising trend within Istanbul's Jewish community.

Section 5.6 discusses the domains of music, theatre, and humour performances, in which postvernacular Judeo-Spanish is most prevalent today. I explore how these performances counteract ideology and shape Sephardic identity, drawing from Bucholtz & Hall's framework of practice, performance, indexicality, and ideology. Through the analysis of narratives spanning the three generations, I discuss the role of the deliberate use of Judeo-Spanish both as a language of performance but also as a performance act, shedding light on its role in preserving cultural heritage and fostering intergenerational connections.

Section 5.7 examines the increased presence of Judeo-Spanish in online platforms and digital resources in recent decades and their impact within the Turkish Sephardic community. I further discuss the role played by these platforms as well as the documentary *Las ultimas palavras* and the series *The Club* (Tk. *Kulüp***)** in raising awareness of the Judeo-Spanish language and fostering a sense of Sephardic community. Moreover, I discuss how these avenues not only function as spaces for language preservation and transmission but also reflect offline language ideologies.

In section 5.8 I explore the language maintenance efforts carried out at the *Sephardic Center of Istanbul* (SKAD) and the challenges that are faced by both contributors at this centre as well as those consuming their various dissemination results. I discuss the challenges stemming from language variation and limited literacy, as well

as the echoes of evolving language ideologies that influence participation in and reception of language maintenance practices.

5.2 Language profiles of the study consultants

5.2.1 Profiles in Judeo-Spanish

Precise data regarding the total percentage of Judeo-Spanish speakers in Turkey and their language profiles currently remains unavailable. Existing studies have provided only selective insights based on small sample sizes identified for various research purposes (Altabev 1996; Bornes Varol 2006; Brink-Danan 2011b; Gerson 1983; 1986; Gerson Şarhon 2011; 2019; Harris 1979; 1982a; 1994; Hualde & Şaul 2011; Malinowski 1982; Romero 2012; Şaul 2013; 2021; Seni 2015). This study therefore relies on data collected from a sample of 60 consultants. Based on the use of a combination of random sampling techniques (cf. § 4.4.) and a snowball approach, I consider this sample to be representative of the Judeo-Spanish community in Turkey. As outlined in section 4.4, the proficiency profile, referred to throughout this dissertation as the *language profile*, comprises six categories (cf. Dorian 1977; Grinevald & Bert 2011; Van Deusen-Scholl 2003): (1) *fluent speakers*, (2) *semi-speakers*, (3) *passive speakers*, (4) *neo-speakers*, (5) *heritage speakers,* and (6) *Spanish speakers*.

(1) *Fluent speakers* are defined in this dissertation as those positioned at the highest proficiency end of a continuum. They exhibit the greatest proficiency and least insecurity in Judeo-Spanish, in contrast with lower-proficiency speakers (Grinevald & Bert 2011: 49-50). The key characteristic of fluent speakers is their ongoing engagement with conversational partners. Fluency is not solely associated with the older generation; the categories “old fluent speakers” and “new fluent speakers” are thus applicable within the Sephardic context (Grinevald 2007: 51). The distinction between these two types lies in language variation: old speakers typically use a more traditional form of the language, whereas new speakers have introduced changes in Judeo-Spanish influenced by Spanish. Within the Judeo-Spanish community, “new fluent speakers” are often key activists in language revitalisation efforts.

(2) *Semi-speakers* are most emblematic of Judeo-Spanish as an endangered language (cf. Dorian 1977). This group includes individuals with predominantly receptive skills in Judeo-Spanish and varying productive abilities, as well as the highest insecurity about speaking Judeo-Spanish. They may exhibit varying levels of proficiency, ranging from nearly fluent to weak in casual conversations, but generally lack regular conversation partners and operate mainly in the dominant language. Their speech often

contains more modified forms, viewed as mistakes by fluent speakers, yet they are often key activists in language revitalisation efforts (Grinevald & Bert 2011: 50). Establishing the profiles of semi-speakers posed a significant challenge, primarily due to the uncertainties and insecurities expressed by the speakers regarding their language proficiency. Their hesitancy to respond in Judeo-Spanish further complicated the process. To address this challenge, repeated visits at different time intervals were necessary to gather more comprehensive data and insights.

(3) In this dissertation, *passive speakers* are defined as individuals who primarily possess receptive knowledge of Judeo-Spanish, with limited productive skills. Grinevald and Bert (2011: 50) refer to such individuals as *rememberers*. Some passive speakers have denied any active language skills and passive understanding due to traumatic language experiences that inhibit active use (Busch & McNamara 2020; Grinevald & Bert 2011b). Within the passive speaker category, two participants correspond to what Grinevald & Bert (2011: 51) describe as “ghost speakers” — individuals who deny any passive knowledge of the endangered language despite evidence of some competence. While this term provides a nuanced understanding of a specific type of non-speaker, I have refrained from employing it based on the recognised challenges of accurately assessing hidden knowledge and the ethical considerations of attributing a label to speakers that contradicts their own claims.

(4) *Neo-speakers* are defined as individuals who have had minimal exposure to Judeo-Spanish within their family and community during childhood but acquire the language later in life as adults (O'rourke, Pujolar & Ramallo 2015: 1). This learning process predominantly occurs through Spanish and subsequent immersion in community activities. Neo-speakers typically exhibit positive attitudes towards Judeo-Spanish and make conscious efforts to learn it as a second language during adolescence or adulthood (Grinevald & Bert 2011: 52). One neo-speaker in this study acquired Judeo-Spanish through her involvement in Sephardic amateur theatre, highlighting the role of cultural activities in language acquisition**.**

(5) The label *heritage speakers* encompasses individuals who have been exposed to Judeo-Spanish to differing extents during childhood or adulthood. Their defining trait is their cultural affinity with Judeo-Spanish, fostered primarily through familial and/or community interactions (Benmamoun, Montrul & Polinsky 2013; Fishman 2006; Van Deusen-Scholl 2003)

(6) In this dissertation, *Spanish speakers* are identified as individuals who have acquired knowledge of Spanish in adulthood through immersion during Erasmus programs, or university courses and Cervantes language courses. This category of

speakers' objectives include accessing Judeo-Spanish and their heritage culture through their knowledge of Spanish. These individuals demonstrate a keen awareness of the differences between Spanish and Judeo-Spanish, often mixing the two languages in their speech. Figure 1. Ch.5 below applies this typology to the consultants who participated in the study.

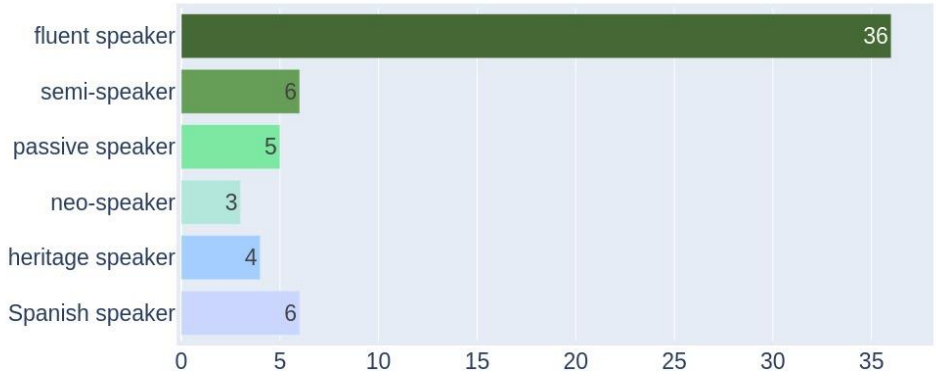

Figure 1. Ch. 5: *Sampling – consultants' language profiles*

The categorisation of fluency levels was established through a combination of self-reported proficiency and the researcher's observations during interviews, which were the prevailing factor. However, delineating these profiles presented challenges, particularly in the case of *heritage speakers* (cf. Benmamoun, Montrul & Polinsky 2013). Polinsky & Kagan (2007: 371) describe the proficiency of *heritage speakers* as spanning "a continuum, from rather fluent speakers, who can sound almost like competent native speakers, to those who can barely speak the home language". The extensive range of proficiency levels within these categories leads to significant overlap among them. When the features describing the five remaining categories are subtracted, what remains are the core characteristics that apply to *heritage speakers*. Given the complexity of this category, it necessitates further discussion and clarification to adequately address the nuances involved.

To address these nuances, I propose an understanding of *heritage speakers* in the context of endangered and postvernacular languages, aligning with Fishman's (2006) and Van Deusen-Scholl's (2003: 218) emphasis on the interplay between cultural and linguistic heritage. Under this broader definition, *heritage speakers* encompass individuals who use Judeo-Spanish symbolically to express their Sephardic ethnicity and engage in postvernacular language use. All Sephardic individuals are initially classified as heritage speakers. Subsequent categorisations should be viewed as additional

distinctions within this identification. Based on these criteria, I suggest refining the definition of heritage speakers to apply to individuals who have been exposed to Judeo-Spanish to differing extents during childhood or adulthood. Their defining trait lies in their deep cultural affinity with Judeo-Spanish, fostered primarily through familial and/or community interactions[63].

Contrary to initial expectations based on the literature review, the number of fluent speakers was greater than anticipated. After comparing individuals' self-assessed fluency and language use with their observed proficiency in Judeo-Spanish, a significant disparity emerged (cf. Studemund-Halévy 2013: 138). Out of the 60 consultants, 36 demonstrated fluency in Judeo-Spanish, as was evident in their ability to effortlessly narrate childhood experiences in the language. Moreover, this ability was confirmed by observations gathered in repeated meetings with these speakers over the years. Three consultants were classified as neo-speakers, having learned Judeo-Spanish in adulthood, while five consultants, who were proficient in Spanish, were endeavouring to learn Judeo-Spanish based on their proficiency in Spanish. One of the three neo-speakers of Judeo-Spanish is Deyvi Papo, who has been my main community assistant and collaborator over the years, as indicated in Section 4. While our collaboration has deepened his interest and offered him ample opportunities for language learning and practice, it is crucial to recognise that his journey from being a heritage speaker to attaining fluency as a neo-speaker started roughly three years prior to our collaboration, when he entered university. As revealed in this study, this transitional phase triggered intense contemplation regarding his personal identity and the preservation of one's heritage language.

When examining fluency levels by gender, I identified a balance between male and female consultants, with equal numbers of fluent speakers (18:18) and semi-speakers (3:3). This balance is particularly noteworthy in light of the historical trends in language distribution and transmission roles among the Sephardim up to the early 20th century. As Harris (1994: 136) highlights, in the Ottoman Empire, men generally occupied public roles and spoke Turkish, while women, who led more secluded lives, played a crucial role in preserving Judeo-Spanish. Initially, women had limited if any knowledge of Turkish, but this began to change at the turn of the 20th century, leading to a shift in language distribution between the genders. With this shift, women increasingly learned and used Turkish, ultimately resulting in a more balanced distribution of

[63] For a deeper exploration of the term *heritage speaker*, see Van Deusen-Scholl (2003) and Polinsky & Kagan (2007).

languages between male and female consultants. Gerson (1986) and Harris (1985: 202) found that women exhibited a greater awareness of the prestige of languages like French and Turkish and a stronger tendency to negative attitudes towards Judeo-Spanish (cf. Labov 1966). This phenomenon has also been observed in other communities with vanishing languages, such as Breton (Dressler & Wodak-Leodolter 1977) and Provençal (Schlieben-Lange 1977). The present study confirms this trend, with women outnumbering men 5 to 1 among Spanish speakers. Harris's study (1985: 202-203) on Judeo-Spanish in the United States and Israel found that women's competence in Judeo-Spanish was generally lower than men's, influenced significantly by negative attitudes. The present study highlights only minor disparities between male and female consultants in the categories of passive speakers, neo-speakers, and heritage speakers, with women slightly outperforming men. This balancing process in language competence may be a result of the attitude shift among women towards the positive end of the spectrum (cf. § 6.4.2).

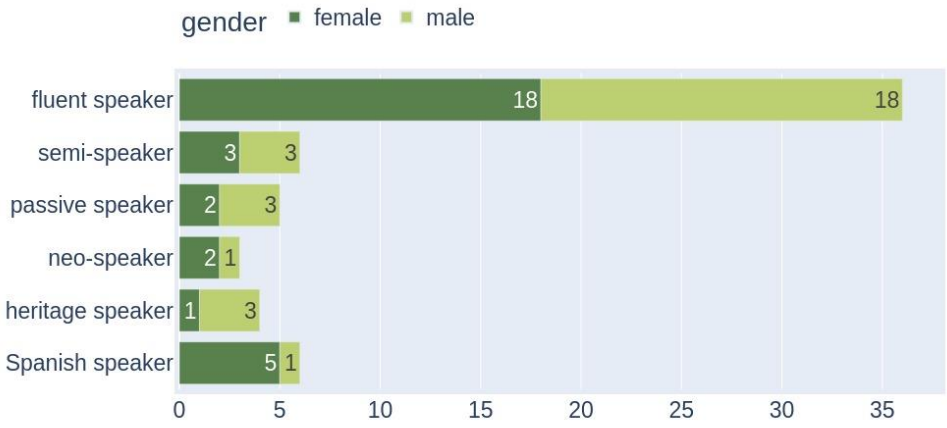

Figure 2. Ch. 5: *Sampling – speakers' language profiles – by gender*

When examining fluency levels across generations[64], significant disparities emerge that underscore the interruption in intergenerational language transmission during the latter half of the 20th century. Specifically, we observe 22 fluent speakers from the first generation, 13 from the second generation, and only one from the third generation. As anticipated, all semi-speakers belong to the second generation, while heritage speakers and Spanish speakers are predominantly from the third generation. These findings align

[64] The age ranges for the different generations are: 62–92 for the first generation, 42–68 for the second generation, and 21–43 for the third generation (cf. Figure 6, Ch. 4; § 4.4).

with expectations based on historical trends in language transmission and reflect the impact of sociocultural shifts on language proficiency across generations. Since the second half of the 20th century, Sephardic parents have decided to disrupt the process of language transmission within their households. This decision has progressively contributed to language attrition and age-related disparities in language proficiency within the community.

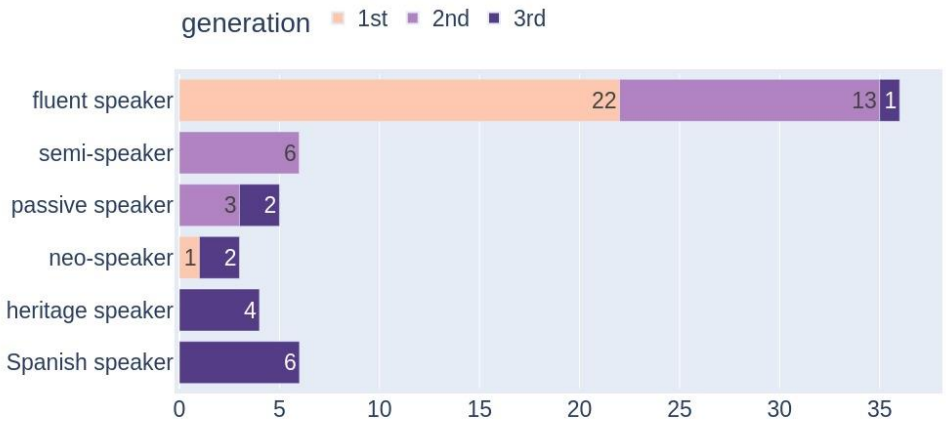

Figure 3. Ch. 5: *Sampling – speakers' language profiles – by generation*

As discussed in Section 4.4, while education does not appear to significantly influence fluency levels beyond shaping generational patterns. More reliable results would require testing this variable independently. Given the historical context of education in Turkey, first-generation consultants typically attained elementary and secondary levels of education.

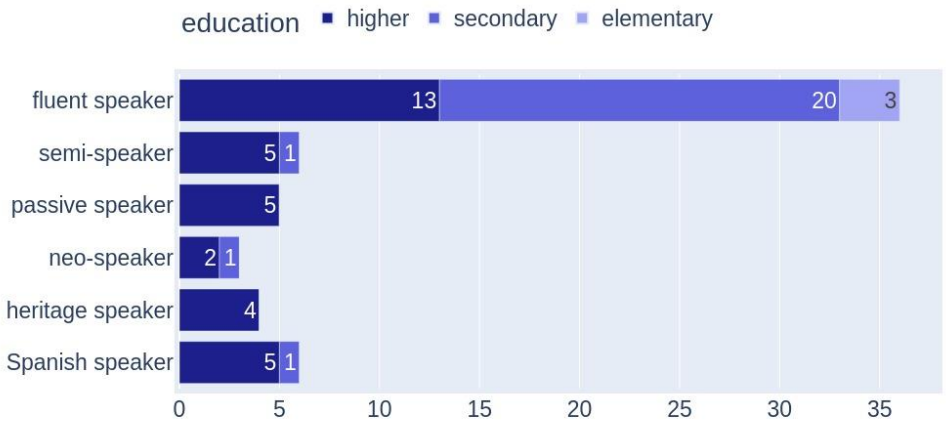

Figure 4. Ch. 5: *Sampling – speakers' language profiles – by education*

Notably, education level directly influences the profile of Spanish speakers as proficiency tends to be acquired during the university years, particularly among the third generation. With regard to **education** as a variable in this study, it is important to note that Judeo-Spanish is no longer viewed as the language of the uneducated or as a jargon, as was the case throughout the second half of the 20th century (cf. § 6.2). Language status has drastically changed in the past decade due to the increased attention that has been given to the language both among the community in Turkey and internationally by scholars studying Judeo-Spanish language and culture and community-led projects like *Dia Internasional del Ladino* (cf. § 5.8).

Despite the national and international attention now focused on Judeo-Spanish in its postvernacular stage, language transmission within the protected domain of the home during childhood, which is paramount for mother-tongue acquisition, has been disrupted in the Sephardic community since roughly the 1940s. Both internal and external factors (cf. § 6.2; 6.3) have influenced speakers' attitudes towards the language. These attitudes have in turn significantly shaped parents' decisions regarding which languages to prioritise for transmission to their children (cf. Kircher 2022).

5.2.2 Multilingualism – a Sephardic core value?

Multilingualism has been a longstanding characteristic of Jewish communities for nearly three millennia, across various domains of language use (Spolsky 2010: 16; Haarmann 1998: 61). Harshav (2008: 101) defines multilingualism as "the knowledge of more than one language by a person or a social group and the ability to switch from one language to another in speech, in writing, or in reading". According to Harshav (2008: 99), the Ashkenazim were "by definition multilingual or at least aware of different language systems". Haarmann (1998: 61) illustrates how the diversity of Jewish languages, rather than any single language, serves as a marker of Jewishness among Soviet Jews, underscoring the significance of multilingualism in defining their linguistic profile. Wexler (1981) posits that Jewish history, which is marked by repeated episodes of persecution, expulsion, migration, led to greater exposure to different varieties and languages than among other sedentary groups (Wexler 1981: 103).

Multilingual profiles are particularly evident in the numerous narratives of Jewish migrants to Israel in the 20th century. Sacrificing multilingualism was seen as necessary for the revival of Hebrew. While these accounts predominantly feature speakers of Yiddish, who constituted a larger demographic than the Sephardim, they shed light on the multilingualism of the first generation of immigrants to Israel. Influenced by the prevailing language ideologies of their new homeland, which emphasised Hebrew as

language of unity, many of these migrants raised their children exclusively in Hebrew, even though they themselves were predominantly multilingual.

> My father could read sixteen or seventeen languages and speak eleven (all of them with a Russian accent). My mother spoke four or five languages and read seven or eight. They would talk in Russian and Polish when they did not want me to understand. (Which was most of the time. When my mother referred to a stallion in Hebrew in my hearing my father rebuked her furiously in Russian: *Stho s taboj?! Vidish malchik ryadom s name!* – What's the matter with you, you can see the boy's just there!). Out of cultural considerations they mostly read books in German or English, and they presumably dreamed in Yiddish. But the only language they taught me was Hebrew. Maybe they feared that a knowledge of languages would expose me too to the blandishments of Europe, that wonderful murderous continent. (Oz 2005: 2)

The Turkish Sephardic community serves as a further compelling example of this enduring multilingual tradition among Jewish groups, which began to change under the influence of ideological pressure in the wake of the foundation of the Turkish Republic. Following their expulsion from the Iberian Peninsula in 1492-1497, the expellees embraced new multilingual patterns within the Ottoman Empire (Quintana 2002). Throughout the 16th century, they spoke different Ibero-Romance varieties that they had brought with them from their places of origin in Spain (cf. § 2.3.2; 2.3.3). The outcome of the process of Sephardisation in the Ottoman Empire was "the disappearance of Romance multilingualism and the triumph of one language for the Jews of Iberian heritage in the Mediterranean" (Şaul & Hualde 2016: 10). In the Ottoman Empire, Judeo-Spanish acquired the status of *la'az* or *lo'ez*, the profane language, in contrast to Hebrew, the *lashon ha-kodesh*, or sacred language, both being written languages (Bornes Varol 2013b: 16). Moreover, given the relative freedom that the Sephardim enjoyed to travel throughout the different regions of the Ottoman Empire and their international family networks (Altabev 2003), contact with the local majority population as well as the different minorities around them led to the acquisition of further languages. In Turkey, for instance, Greek facilitated interactions with service providers and neighbours[65], as Naftali points out.

> **5-2. Naftali**: Sáves, a mi, a mi granmamá, sus amígas djudías la yamávan 'Süzǻn la gréga'. De ke? Porké éya, éya puedía avlár äl grégo muy, muy, muy byän. De ánde? Porké teníyan teníyan vizínos, de los vizínos a, en morávan en Ba--, en Khásköy. I en Khasköy teníyan muy, muy múnchos vizínos grégos. I estávan bivyǻndo, sáves, úno al ládo del ótro, éra el úzo. Éra el úzo de puedér avlár la língua de su vizíno. Akäl tyǻmpo. […] No däl túrko. Porké el túrko porké el túrko es, éra sóla--, solaménte los ómbres ke'stávan yíndo a lavorárse en, en la sivdád. E las mujéres kómo no

[65] The Sephardim living in districts such as Balat, Taksim, Tarlabaşı, and Hasköy, which neighbor Greek districts, or who have houses on the islands, have acquired knowledge of Greek.

> lavovárovan, kómo estávan en la káza tóda äl día, estávan avlándo éntre éyos. I kómo kon los vizínos puédes avlár, es, éra muy, muy normál de, de puedér avlár múnchas línguas.
>
> ('You know, my grandmother, her Jewish friends called her 'Suzan the Greek'? Why? Because she could speak Greek very, very well. Why? Because they had neighbors, they lived in Ba[lat], in Khasköy. And in Khasköy, they had many, many Greek neighbors. And they were living, you know, one next to the other, it was the custom. It was the custom to be able to speak the language of your neighbor at that time. Not Turkish. Because Turkish, Turkish was only for the men who were going to work in the city. And the women, as they were not working, as they were at home all day, they were talking among themselves. And, as you could speak with the neighbors, it was very, very normal to be able to speak many languages.') [2nd-m-45-fluent-fam12]

Naftali emphasises here the almost "cultural norm" of speaking the language of one's neighbour, Greek, in this case, shedding light on the social dynamics of contact between different ethnic groups, the Sephardic attitudes towards other languages that shaped language use among its members, and the distribution of Turkish knowledge among men and women (Harris 1994: 136). As discussed in Section 5.2.1, men typically used Turkish for work in the city, while women primarily conversed in their native languages at home.

With the establishment of *Alliance Israélite Universelle* schools in 1860s (cf. § 2.3.6), French assumed a prominent role as the language of instruction and written communication within the community (e.g. wedding invitations), but also in many cases the language of inter-ethnic contact, as Nina points out in her narrative about her mother's multilingualism.

> **5-3. Nina:** En káda día la mádre la desháva, pasáva enfrénte i djuɣáva kon laz amíɣas en Gülhané Parkí. Ayá teníya amíɣas katolík armenyə. I avlávan en frãnsé. Mi mádre ampesó a avlár ayá en frãnsé. Loz djúɣos en frãnsé, se peleó en frãnsé, yoró en frãnsé, rió en frãnsé i en grégo. Kuantas línguas s'ízo aɣóra? Mira, buɫgár, túrko, ladíno, grégo, frãnsé. Mi mádre, ya s'ízo sínko --- sínko línguas ke sta avlándo. No, no eskrivír i meldár en ésas línguas. Pratík. Sólo ávlar.
>
> ('Every day, her mother would leave, and she would cross the street and played with her friends in the Gülhane Park. She had Catholic Armenian friends. They spoke in French. My mother started speaking French there. They played in French, fought in French, cried in French, laughed in French, and Greek. How many languages did she speak now? Look, Bulgarian, Turkish, Ladino, Greek, French. My mother already speaks five, five languages she speaks. Not write and read in those languages. Practice. Just speaking.') [2nd-f-62-fluent-ind]

Over time, French began to rival Judeo-Spanish as the preferred language for transmission to future generations (cf. § 5.3). Cohen (2006: 73), for instance, vividly portrays in his autobiographical novel how his parents seamlessly adapted to a new life in France in their thirties thanks to their excellent command of the French language.

As discussed in Section 5.4.3, maintenance of multilingualism was often enhanced by the use of code language(s) in the family domain. This practice would expose children to various languages in which they later became proficient. In order to understand this trend, in the following I will discuss the multilingual language profiles of

the study consultants and the evolving dynamics across different generations, taking into account the variables of generation, gender, and education.

Study consultants reported proficiency in a total of 13 languages. However, five of these languages — Romanian, Portuguese, German, Aramaic, and Arabic — are spoken by only one or two individuals, and are therefore not represented in the subsequent plots. Additionally, since the level of fluency in languages other than Judeo-Spanish, French, and Spanish is not the primary focus of analysis, I have relied on reported accounts without triangulating these results with my own observations or other elicitation methods.

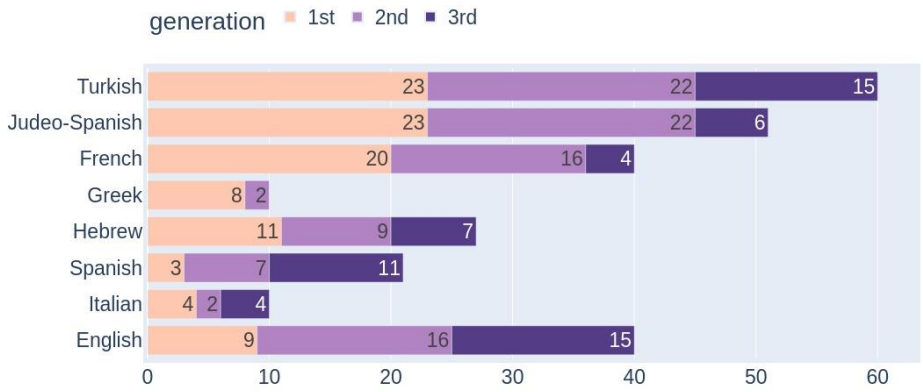

Figure 5. Ch. 5: *Sampling – number of languages spoken – by generation*

The language distribution across generations highlights Turkish as the shared language among all study consultants. However, there is a noticeable decline in Judeo-Spanish proficiency across generations. While all consultants from the first and second generations report proficiency, only 33 percent (5 out of 15) in the third generation do so. A clear intergenerational gap emerges in French proficiency, with 20 consultants from the first generation, 16 from the second, and only 4 from the third generation reporting knowledge. The parallel decline in reported knowledge of French and Judeo-Spanish underscores the historical significance of French, as previously mentioned.

Moreover, there is a shift towards increasing English proficiency in the third generation, mirroring the decline in French proficiency. This reversal, with 9 consultants from the first generation, 16 from the second, and 15 from the third generation reporting proficiency in English, reflects evolving global linguistic trends. All these findings align with those of Altabev (2003: 154). However, in contrast to Altabev's findings, which observed an increasing knowledge of Hebrew by age group (37.5 percent for 17-25 and 66.6 percent for 60+), this study's accounts reveal relatively stable reported knowledge of Hebrew across generations. Approximately 46 percent of the first generation, 40

percent of the second generation, and 47 percent of the third generation report proficiency in Hebrew. This discrepancy in findings may stem from my observed differences regarding Hebrew knowledge in the different elicitation techniques. In open-ended interviews, consultants often downplayed their proficiency in Hebrew. These narratives typically intertwined with criticisms of the inadequate language learning methods employed in the Jewish high school. Interestingly, when consultants were asked about the number of languages they speak, Hebrew knowledge was included in their list alongside other languages.

Another noteworthy observation is related to proficiency in a variety of Romance languages (Italian: 4; Portuguese: 2[66], Spanish: 11) observed among the third generation. This suggests a general interest in acquiring other Romance languages through formal education, potentially serving as a bridge to accessing Judeo-Spanish or as a coping mechanism in response to the lack of knowledge and learning platforms for Judeo-Spanish (cf. § 6.4.3).

Based on the findings depicted in the figure below, gender does not seem to exert a significant influence on language proficiency distribution among the consultants. The only relatively significant differences emerge in the domain of French proficiency, with women outnumbering men by a margin of four, whereas in Hebrew proficiency, men outnumber women by three.

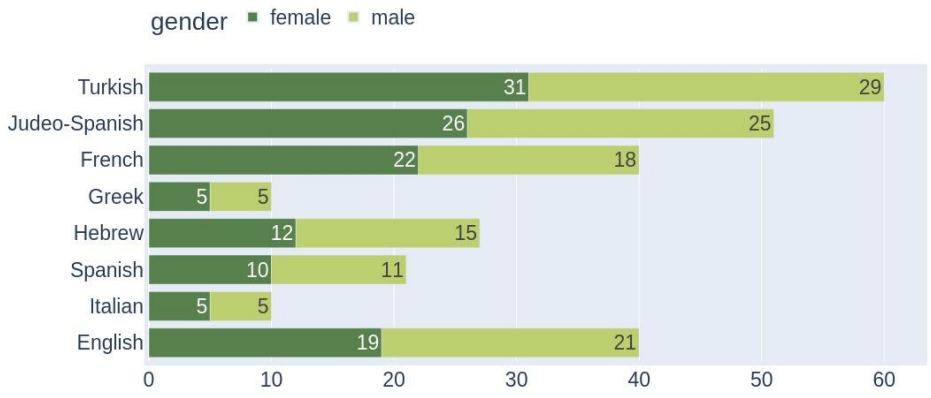

Figure 6. Ch. 5: *Sampling – number of languages spoken – by gender*

When considered alongside the broader educational dynamics (cf. § 5.2.1), it appears that the education variable does not play a significant role in shaping multilingual

[66] As these languages were spoken by only two speakers, they have not been included in the diagrams.

practices among consultants. English and Spanish proficiency are most prevalent among the third generation, who typically have higher levels of education.

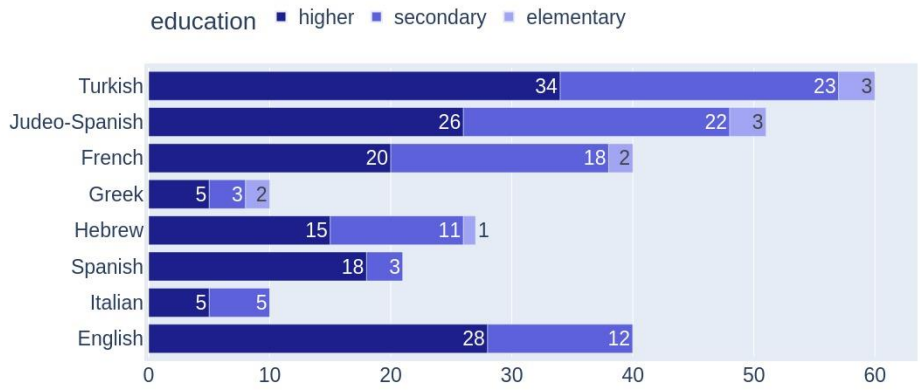

Figure 7. Ch. 5: *Sampling – number of languages spoken – by education*

Following the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923, the promotion of Turkish as the national language aimed to neutralise differences among ethnic and religious minorities (Giesel 2014). State-sponsored campaigns like *Citizen speak Turkish!* facilitated Turkification and linguistic homogenisation, heightening tensions among linguistic minorities (cf. § 6.2). This process transformed the multicultural and multilinguistic atmosphere of Galata[67], with Jewish and Greek businesses replaced by Turkish-owned establishments. This linguistic shift reflects a process of linguicism, defined as "the domination of one language at the expense of others" (Skutnabb-Kangas 1989: 37), perpetuating an anti-minority ideology in the Turkish context. Consequently, the use of Judeo-Spanish decreased, impacting not only the Sephardim's strategies in negotiating identities in conversation and social identification (cf. § 6.3) but also their attitudes towards multilingualism (cf. § 6.4). The accounts in the study reveal a keen awareness of multilingualism among the Sephardim in the past, contrasted with a recognition of diminishing multilingual practices since the mid-20th century, as pointed out by Moshe.

> **5-4. Moshe:** The Jewish were more multilingual in the past, or more people who were speaking five or six languages before, now, in my generation I see people who are speaking one or two languages. Istanbul was more cosmopolitan, or like they did not have to go to school to learn languages, which they also did, but they could learn from their neighbours Italian, Greek, Armenian and [Judeo-]Spanish from their families. Now there are not so many ethnicities you can see in Istanbul very easily. Basically English, some of them German, French and a very few Spanish, but in total, like most

[67] Galata-Beyoğlu, Balat, Hasköy, and the Princes' Islands were districts in Istanbul known for their high minority populations.

> of all they would speak three languages generally. And I think the Jews also lost the comparative advantage of multilingualism and better education according to the general public in my generation. We are more equal now. And my parents did not want to teach me Ladino in the beginning. When I started to speak, because they did not want that I have an accent in Turkish, but then it was very important for me that I understand Ladino and I talked insistently in Ladino. [2nd-m-42-semi-fam7]

Moshe's statement mirrors a common perspective in the community, highlighting multilingualism as a core value of Turkish Sephardic identity. Habib[68] implies an almost genetic predisposition to multilingualism: *"Mi famíya tenía genetík a las línguas, avlávan múchas línguas"* ('My family was genetically predisposed to languages; they spoke many languages'). When asked to name his most favourite language, Salamon[69] finds it hard to choose one from his repertoire of languages: "*Ningúna de éyas, pórke a mi me plázen múchaz línguaz. No me pláze úna sóla língua"* ('None of them, because I like many languages, I don't like only one particular language'). Salamon's account points to what Bornes-Varol (2013: 5) called a specificity of Judeo-Spanish identity drawing on an inherent multilingualism, multiculturalism and multi-layered identities. David likens himself to a chameleon, adeptly shifting his language to suit the context in which he finds himself. This ability to adapt mirrors the processes of multilingual practice as expressions of multiple identities (cf. Langman 2013: 253).

> **5-5. David**: Yo so bukalemún. Ke se tróka las kolóres. Si sto akí, me kéren konosér kómo túrko. Si sto en la Espánya, me klorofíko. Si sto en Itálya, me pláze i el italyáno.
>
> ('I am a chameleon. I change colours. If I am here, they want to know me as Turkish. If I am in Spain, I change colour. If I am in Italy, I also like Italian.') [1st-m-72-fluent-ind]

The Sephardim's awareness of their multilingual practices aligns with the prevailing official discourse, which often portrays Jews as exemplars of ethnic diversity, multiculturalism, and multilingualism, showcasing Turkey's Ottoman heritage of tolerance (Seni 2015: 87) (cf. § 2.2.2). While the majority of consultants in the second and third generations exhibit proficiency in more than four languages, contrary to Moshe's observations, only a few third-generation consultants displayed proficiency in fewer than three languages, indicating a trend towards less visible multilingual practices among the third generation as illustrated in Figure 8. Ch.

[68] [1st-m-73-fluent-ind]
[69] [3rd-m-43-fluent-ind]

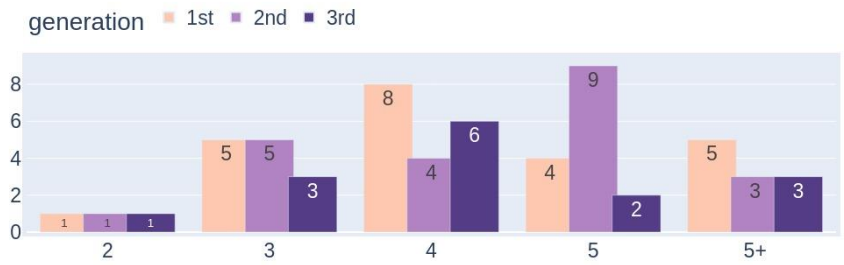

Figure 8. Ch. 5: *Sampling – distribution of multilingualism – by generation*

Moshe attributes this decrease in multilingualism to demographic changes and ideological pressure to avoid having an accent in Turkish. These factors have led to increased linguistic and educational uniformity, diminishing the distinctiveness of Sephardic identity, as Moshe aptly observes, *"We are more equal now".*

Finally, when examining multilingualism within the Sephardic community, the Judeo-Spanish language emerges as a quintessential example. Judeo-Spanish, shaped by various layers of linguistic contact (Altabev 2003; Bornes Varol 2006; 2008), inherently embodies multilingualism, as noted by Bornes Varol (1991: 513). This unique blend of languages is not only a defining feature of Judeo-Spanish as an autonomous language but also dictates a practice of code-mixing and code switching between languages (Bornes Varol 2006), as exemplified by Meri's case.

> **5-6. Meri**: Yo konósko el túrko, ke me tresálgo, lo konózko **o fɔ** [> Fr. *au fond* 'fully, in depth'], eskrívo ermózo, no so ekrivấn [> Fr. *écrivain* 'writer'], ma te azíamos las kompozisyónes en la skóla, te kéro dizír, konósko buéno el frãnsé**, o fɔ**, **bre** (> Tk. *bre* 'hey'), **mais** (> Fr. *mais* 'but') la ke me pláze muy múncho es frãnsé. A little English, and Hấbru.
>
> ('I know Turkish, very well, I know it fully, I write beautifully, I am not a writer, but as we did compositions in school, I want to say, I know French quite well, in depth, but the one I really like is French. A little English, and Hebrew.') [1st-f-88-fluent-fam4]

The various borrowings from French, Turkish, and English evident in Meri's account reflect the intricate and multiple layers of linguistic contact experienced by multilingual Sephardic individuals. These code-mixing practices have contributed to a high degree of linguistic variation which, in the context of purist ideologies has resulted in a considerable loss of prestige among speakers. Loss of prestige, coupled with Kemalist ideological pressure, has contributed to interruptions in intergenerational transmission. The next section explores past and contemporary practices of intergenerational language transmission, analysing consultants' attitudes towards both the transmission and non-transmission of Judeo-Spanish.

5.3 Intergenerational language transmission

To grasp present-day language transmission practices, I will first outline a few key pieces of historical data on the primary language among the Sephardim. According to the official Turkish census of 1927, 84 percent of the 81,872 registered Jews listed their mother tongue as Judeo-Spanish[70] (Hirschberg & Cohen 1971: 1462). By the 1935 census, that figure had already declined drastically to 54 percent. As Şaul (1983: 345) noted, this decline must be interpreted within the context of official ideological pressures, suggesting that the census figures may not have accurately reflected the actual linguistic reality. An increase in the percentage of Judeo-Spanish speakers in the subsequent decades — 63.3 percent in 1945 and 71.7 percent in 1955 — confirms Şaul's interpretation. Although census data from the 1930s to the 1950s may not accurately capture the realities of language transmission during this period, ideological pressures began to significantly influence consultant's decisions about passing on their language.

A survey conducted in 1991 revealed that the generation born between 1940 and 1960 ceased passing on Judeo-Spanish to their children (Besalel 1999: 213). Şaul (1983: 348) observed in the 1970s that it was rare to find teenagers who were proficient in Judeo-Spanish. A decade later, Altabev (2003: 89; 127) observed that no Judeo-Spanish speakers under 30 could be found, and those with some knowledge of the language were often unaware of it, lacked the appropriate context for communication, or felt ashamed to speak it.

The results of this study show that, despite this dire outlook, it was not a difficult task to find Judeo-Spanish speakers in Istanbul today (cf. Malinowski 1982: 9): three of them were new speakers in their 40s and even 20s (cf. Appendix 1). One of the reasons why certain consultant's language profiles, which are now found among the second-generation group, had been invisible to previous researchers has to do with the design of earlier research studies. These studies relied on older fluent speakers' reports about younger speakers, or on self-reports that underestimated actual language competence, which can only be observed in different contexts and through a variety of elicitation techniques.

Repeated trips to Istanbul between 2012-2017 have provided me with the opportunity to conduct more extensive observations of these concealed consultants' language profiles, competencies, and primary languages, referred to here as *mother*

[70] The Turkish term used for Judeo-Spanish in the census was *Yahudice.*

tongues, a term favoured by the majority of consultants when referring to their A-language.

Several studies have addressed the issue of intergenerational transmission within the Turkish-Jewish community to various degrees (Altabev 2003; Bali & Mallet 2015; Bornes Varol 2005; 2008; 2013b; Bornes Varol & Mavrogiannis; Brink-Danan 2011b; Gerson Şarhon 2011; Harris 1979; 1982a; 1982b; 1994; 2006; 2011; Romero 2012). However, to the best of my knowledge, the implications of non-transmission for the three different generations, and particularly for individuals' perceptions of the importance of both transmitting and not transmitting Judeo-Spanish, have not been a central focus of research to date (cf. § 3.5.2).

As discussed in Section 3.2.6, attitudes do not have an overt substance (Kircher & Zipp 2022: 2). They can be tapped into only indirectly, by interpreting states of readiness, dispositions, or tendencies. By investigating the attitudes towards and effects of both transmission and non-transmission, indirect insights into the reproduction of ideologies and mechanisms of language attitude formation can be gained, along with a clear perspective on the place that language holds in the hierarchy of core values for every individual. I have found that, when individuals were asked about the ramifications of language shift, they discussed its broader impact on the Sephardic community as a whole. Conversely, discussions about transmission centred on individual practices and the accompanying emotions elicited by these practices.

5.3.1 "Mother tongues" and "background" languages

The mother tongues[71] of the Turkish Sephardim who participated in this study are currently distributed between Turkish, Judeo-Spanish, French, and various combinations thereof. In total, 28 individuals reported Judeo-Spanish as their mother tongue, while seven individuals reported French, and the majority, 43 individuals, reported Turkish.

[71] As highlighted in Section 4.1, I use the term 'mother tongue' to describe the language embedded in cultural contexts, transmitted intergenerationally, and predominantly experienced during early developmental years. This terminology aligns with how the study's consultants refer to their A-language.

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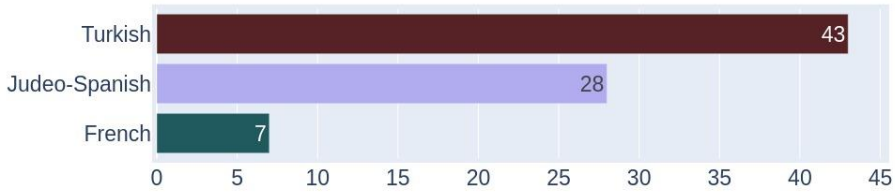

Figure 9. Ch. 5: *Mother tongue distribution – total*

Judeo-Spanish was reported as the exclusive mother tongue by 14 consultants. An additional 11 consultants stated that Judeo-Spanish was their mother tongue alongside Turkish and three consultants that it was their mother tongue alongside French. Furthermore, 28 consultants identified Turkish as their sole mother tongue, while four consultants reported Turkish and French as their mother tongues.

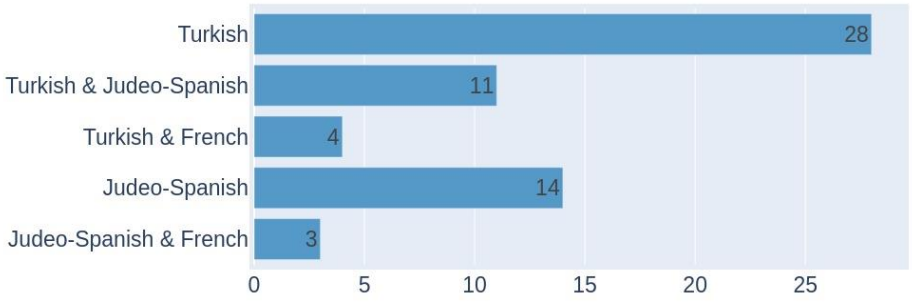

Figure 10. Ch. 5: *Mother tongue distribution – language combinations*

When analysing the distribution of mother tongues by gender, there is an equal representation of Judeo-Spanish (14:14) and a nearly equal representation of Turkish among women and men (21:22). In contrast, French shows a more noticeable gender difference, with five women and two men reporting it as their mother tongue.

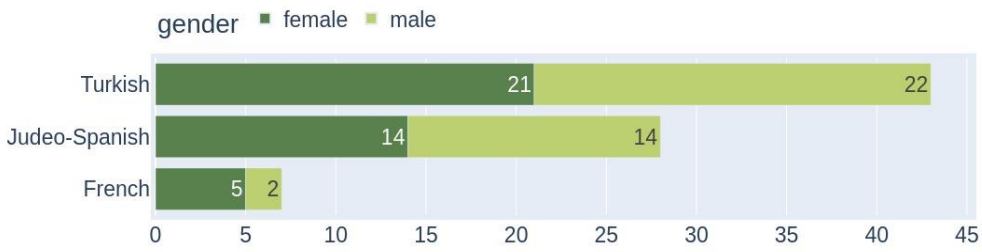

Figure 11. Ch. 5: *Mother tongue distribution – by gender*

The disparities in mother tongue distribution become evident when it is examined across different generations. Among the first generation, born between 1923 and 1954, 19 out of 23 consultants reported Judeo-Spanish as their mother tongue, three also reported French, and eight reported Turkish in combination with Judeo-Spanish. In the second generation, born between 1949 and 1974, 20 out of 22 consultants had Turkish as their mother tongue (cf. Besalel 1999: 213), while eight reported Judeo-Spanish in combination with Turkish or French. For the third generation, born between 1973 and 1995, all consultants reported Turkish as their mother tongue, with only one person also reporting Judeo-Spanish in combination with Turkish. Additionally, three individuals in the first generation and four in the second generation reported French as their mother tongue.

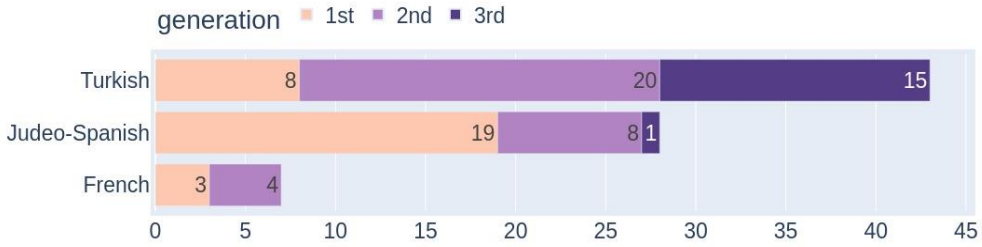

Figure 12. Ch. 5: *Mother tongue distribution – by generation*

In the reminder of this section, I will contextualise these findings within the historical development of language education and the pressure of dominant ideologies, which have been internalised and perpetuated in the attitudes and discourses of the three generations.

The lack of institutional support for minority language education not only speeds up language shift by depriving speakers of an educational framework in the heritage language but also, as studies have shown (Gerson 1980 45-48; Altabev 2003: 96), contributes to a gradual suppression of language use within the family domain.

> [...] that's what we are afraid of, that they won't be competent enough in Turkish and that they will fare badly in Turkish exams. This is the apprehension that we have. We want them to be good students, and do not want to take the risk of being impaired by speaking. (Altabev 2003: 96)

The language of education has significantly influenced the language choices of Sephardim, as noted by Gerson (1983). Among the Sephardim, the educational system established by the *Alliance Israélite Universelle* has left a lasting impact on individuals' French language proficiency, either through formal education in French schools or through intergenerational transmission of French as the primary language. As depicted in Figure 9. Ch. 5, 11.6 percent of the study consultants identified French as their mother

tongue. This echoes the observation made by Farhi (1937) in the 1930s, that Judeo-Spanish was not directly competing with Turkish, but rather with French. Moreover, the popularity and accessibility of French literature, coupled with a decline in interest in and the availability of Ladino literature in the latter half of the 20th century (Harris 1994: 215), played a pivotal role in shaping language preferences (Gerson 1983: 48). Interestingly, my research indicates that many of those whose educational medium was Turkish demonstrated strong proficiency in French, often cultivated through family contacts and magazine or novel reading practices among the first generation.

Beki's linguistic journey echoed the linguistic preferences and changing patterns in language transmission discussed above. Beki is one of the six individuals in the second generation who acquired the language in adulthood. Beki grew up with French as her mother tongues, and after the age of five, she also learned Turkish. However, she recalls that Judeo-Spanish was always spoken in the "background", a language to which she did not pay much attention until around the age of 18.

> **5-7. Beki:** [...] Mi priméra língua ez el fransés [...] Despuéz yo aprendí el, el túrko. Kuándo fui a la skóla sínko ányos [laughing] ke no estáva entendyéndo náda de lo ke se estávan avlándo, i después el djudéo-espanyól estáva syémpre ayí, porké la famíya, los, los amígos de mis pádres, syémpre avlávan, stáva syémpre ayí. Péro yo tenía lo, las, laz oréjas yénas de la língua. Péro no tenía múcha okazyón de avlárla, sólo a los, kuándo tenía dyesyéte, dyesisyéte, dyesiócho ányos ke fwi mi myémbra de un klöb, de mansévos djudíos. Ayí izímos un teátro musikál i tenía un kon--, ko--, devía de djúgar kon úno [laughing] ke no podía núnka memorizár lo ke devía de dezír i syémpre desía lo ke le venía al tíno. Alóra ka-- kalía de, kalía respondérle i pára podér asér éste djúgo de teátro yo aƀrí las oréjas I, es, es kon el, a chákes de el ke emp-- ke empesí a aprendér el espanyól bastánte byen i después fui a kúrsos de espanyól modérno, aprendí el espanyól modérno i después empesí a leér. I después, kuándo avrímos, kuándo fundímos éste séntro en dos mil tres — Alóra el día antéro estúvo kon ésto imahí-- imajínate ke éste 'Amanesér' empesímos ántes dyéz ányos. La priméra eskríta ke eskriví, uuu [exclamation], me tomó kómo doz días. Aóra en, le de-- le demándo: <Kuantas palávras kále?>. Me díze: <Ochosyéntas.>. Dyéz minútos [she mimics the sound of the keyboard] ochosyéntas palávras i yásta. Si, si, si te interésas se áze mas mijór.
>
> ('[...] My first language is French. Then I learned Turkish. When I went to school at five years old [laughing], I didn't understand anything they were talking about, and then Judeo-Spanish was always there because family, friends of my parents, always spoke it, it was always there. But I had my ears filled with the language. But I didn't have many opportunities to speak it, only when I was seventeen, eighteen, eighteen years old when I was a member of a club of young Jewish people. There we did a musical and I had a --, I had to play with someone [laughing] who could never memorise what he had to say and always said whatever came to his mind. Then, when it was my turn to respond to him and to be able play, I opened my ears and it's with him that I started to learn [Judeo-]Spanish quite well and then I went to modern Spanish courses, I learned modern Spanish and then I started reading. And then when we opened, when we founded this centre in two thousand three. Then, the whole day, imagine that we started this 'Amaneser' ten years before. The first thing I wrote, whoa [exclamation], it took me like two days. Now, I ask her/him, <How many words are needed?> She/he tells me: <eight hundred>. Ten minutes [she mimics the

sound of the keyboard] eight hundred words and done. Yes, if you're interested, it gets better.') [2nd-f-57-fluent-ind]

Beki's linguistic journey mirrors that of her generation, marked by an interrupted direct transmission of Judeo-Spanish, which, as Beki notes, was spoken 'in the background'. Despite French being her first language, which is indicative of its high status in the hierarchy of language attitudes, Beki's constant exposure to Judeo-Spanish communication within her family laid a solid foundation for her language learning journey as a young adult. This familiarity with Judeo-Spanish provided her with a strong basis upon which to build, particularly within Jewish youth clubs and theatres. Beki's participation in a musical theatre production was instrumental in her language acquisition, offering her a practical context for learning the language while using it. This underscores the importance of immersive experiences and the role of theatre and youth clubs in facilitating language transmission through performance in a postvernacular stage (cf. § 5.6).

Beki's introduction to "modern[72]" Spanish as a written medium marks a significant milestone in her linguistic journey. Her mastery of both language systems — Spanish and Judeo-Spanish — and her acute awareness of phonological and lexical differences and their constant interplay are evident in her meticulous attentional control to pronunciation (cf. Romero 2013; 2017), repetitions and rephrasing. This is particularly notable in her handling of the replacement of the Spanish voiceless velar fricative /x/ as in *ima**h**í* with the voiced postalveolar fricative /ʒ/ in *ima**j**ínate*. Much like other consultants in her generation, Beki's lack of exposure to Judeo-Spanish in its written form fostered feelings of insecurity (cf. § 6.4.1). This further reinforced the prevailing perception that Judeo-Spanish was not a fully-fledged language, nor one that could be acquired. As written communication in an ethnic language is symbolically and directly connected to ethnic identity (Durgunoglu & Verhoeven 2013: xi), the lack of a written standard in Judeo-Spanish weakened group identification (cf. Altabev 2003: 130).

The transition from an exclusively oral tradition to literacy, even if it is in Spanish, marks a significant shift in the perception of Judeo-Spanish, fostering confidence not only in written expression but also in spoken communication. The establishment of the Cervantes Institute in Istanbul in 1991 has sparked a growing interest among Sephardic individuals in improving their confidence in speaking and writing Judeo-Spanish through

[72] Most consultants refer to Peninsular and other contemporary Spanish varieties as "modern Spanish".

Spanish courses or by learning Spanish directly as a 'substitute' for Judeo-Spanish, particularly since the enactment of the *Law of Return* in 2015.

For the second generation, acquiring Judeo-Spanish later in life coincides most often with reaching maturity and recognising the significance of being part of a community, as disclosed by Beki (cf. 5-7) and Meri.

> **5-8. Meri**: Solo dospués ke me engrandesí me víno el meóyo.
>
> ('Only after I grew up did I came to my senses [in appreciating Judeo-Spanish].') [1st-f-88-S-fluent-fam4]

Only two of the first-generation individuals learned Judeo-Spanish at a later age: Mendi[73] acquired Judeo-Spanish after the age of 11, and Sandy[74] learned the language from her mother-in-law after getting married. In the second generation, out of 22 individuals, six consultants began learning Judeo-Spanish at a later age. Three consultants acquired it passively or as a code language in their homes, while the other three learned it in music or theatre clubs, through interactions with the elderly, or in publications related to Judeo-Spanish. In accordance with Romero's findings (2012: 94-95), the six consultants who were exposed to Judeo-Spanish later in life explained the delayed exposure in the context of theories suggesting that learning Judeo-Spanish could affect their Turkish accent, as Moshe reveals.

> **5-9. Moshe**: Because my parent's mother tongue was Ladino, they had an accent and because of that accent, also like a kind of nationalistic antisemitism, they don't want me to speak with a ladino accent. So first I learned Turkish, but, unlike other people of my age, which their parents never spoke to them Ladino or little, they wanted to teach me the language. So, like, after I was able to speak Turkish, they started to speak in Ladino and my ladino level was not so good. [2nd-m-42-H-semi-fam7]

Moshe clearly refers here to the intersections between linguistic features and broader societal attitudes and biases, the link between unrecognisable language proficiency, that is, without a Jewish accent, in Turkish and mechanisms of discrimination and prejudice. Furthermore, Moshe's statement points to the effect of delayed introduction to Judeo-Spanish in the language acquisition journey *"so, like"* and *"my Ladino level was not so good"* express a sense of inadequacy and disappointment regarding his perceived low level of proficiency in Judeo-Spanish. That introduces us to the next main perceived effect and further cause of the intergenerational interruption of language transmission: the insecurity complex of semi-speakers that is prevalent among the second generation.

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[73] [1st-m-70-H-fluent-ind]
[74] [1st-f-78-S-fluent-fam3]

It is illustrated below by Rafi and Beti but is encountered, without exception and in different degrees, among all second-generation consultants.

> **5-10. Rafi**: It's, with my mother for example I know it's the case, that my grandparents didn't speak to her that much. So, she was not really competent. So how was she going to teach me? But in my father's case, it's really interesting as we did interview with my grandma, that she was speaking to him the whole time. And he was replying it in Turkish. So I don't know how he didn't accept it as his mother tongue. And now he's really not speaking it. […] I think teaching Ladino would be very good but the problem is who will teach Ladino to the children in the school, since nobody is that competent enough. Maybe teaching [Peninsular] Spanish, but with [Peninsular] Spanish exposing them to Ladino, so they can develop an interest? [3rd-m-22-neo-fam3]
>
> **5-11. Beti**: "Because the generations didn't learn it. If my mother --- learns properly and speaks to me properly I will learn it, but she didn't want to do it and it stopped." [3rd-f-21-H-Spanish-ind]
>
> **5-12. Berk**: Of course I would understand [Judeo-Spanish]. I also have a interest about speaking [Peninsular] Spanish. I also you know, I like it how it sounds. But, I thought already that, [pointing towards his mother] let's spend the time and you try to teach me. But I don't think that she's good with the grammar again. Because I would try to, you know, learn from the books. She also, doesn't you know, she's not so well about the grammars. [3rd-m-30-H-heritage-ind]

In all three statements *"not competent", "speaks properly", "not so well about the grammar"*, the consultants reflect on their parents' incomplete language acquisition: According to them, this parental lack of proficiency and language insecurity impacted their ability to pass on the language. Rafi reveals another significant aspect related to his mother's evolving attitudes toward Judeo-Spanish over the past decade, coinciding with Rafi's own language learning journey. As Rafi made efforts to learn the language, his mother became increasingly willing to use Judeo-Spanish within the family. In contrast, Rafi's father, despite more exposure to Judeo-Spanish from his grandmother, did not share the same attitudes or interest in speaking it. Ironically, Rafi's mother experienced an improvement in her Judeo-Spanish acquisition after marrying his father, which facilitated communication with her mother-in-law.

Rafi embarked on his journey of language acquisition in adulthood, recognising the challenge of the perceived competence of his parents and grandparents as a primary inhibitor. When discussing the possibility of introducing Judeo-Spanish at the Jewish high school, Rafi poses a rhetorical question: *"but who will teach Ladino to the children in the school, since nobody is that competent enough?"* As evidentiated by his continued narrative, Rafi does not truly imply that teachers could not be found, nor does he refer to a lack of appropriate materials to teach the language. Instead, he alludes to the entrenched function and perception of Judeo-Spanish as an exclusively spoken language, which, for him, seems impossible to teach in a formal context. This view is widespread among all generational cohorts.

Despite being exposed to Judeo-Spanish throughout his life, he found it necessary to resort to modern Romance languages to be able to build his confidence before actively engaging with the community in Judeo-Spanish. Drawing on his experience, Rafi proposes an alternative approach to language learning: integrating Judeo-Spanish into Spanish language instruction in the Jewish high school, exposing students to it within the context of Spanish language learning. This approach may foster an interest in Judeo-Spanish and its cultural heritage among students before community emmersion.

Rafi further reveals that there is a general lack of knowledge among community members regarding language learning resources, highlighting a barrier to independent language learning. As the accounts of Rafi, Beti, and Berk above show, this generation's perception of their parents' incomplete and *"improper"* (Beti) language acquisition, hinders them in their quest to try to learn it from them, even if they show an increased interest in the language once they reach adulthood. These insights into both covert and overt attitudes towards transmission and non-transmission are crucial for identifying potential avenues for language revitalisation efforts. In the next section, I will explore the perceived effects of non-transmission, focusing more closely on understanding the felt impact of interruptions across different generations.

5.3.2 Effects of non-transmission

As shown in the previous section, a significant pattern emerges in the intergenerational transmission of language from grandparents to grandchildren: the primary means of communication for grandparents was Judeo-Spanish or French, particularly among those who acquired Turkish later in life and spoke it with a distinct accent (cf. § 6.3.2). In families where the grandparents had attended the *Alliance Israélite Universelle* schools, French often became the language they transmitted to their children and grandchildren. Communication between the first and second generations typically occurred in French and Turkish. A qualitative analysis of the data reveals a clear discrepancy between attitudes towards transmission and the actual transmission practices. Surprisingly, 70 percent of the consultants (42 out of 60) in the study conveyed negative attitudes regarding the non-transmission of Judeo-Spanish, with a higher rate of 80 percent among the third generation.

generation	female	male
1st	9	5
2nd	9	7
3rd	7	5
total		**42**

Figure 13. Ch. 5: *Attitudes to non-transmission – negative*

Following the framework outlined by Bucholtz & Hall (2004: 371) and Gal & Irvine (2019: 12) I attempt to identify the reasons for this discrepancy. To do so, I examine the speaker's own perceptions and interpretations of the circumstances of language transmission and the perceived impacts stemming from non-transmission across each generational cohort. I analyse how narratives from different generations intersect, providing insights into the complex and multifaceted dynamics of language transmission within the same families. Additionally, I seek to unravel the underlying significance behind individuals' apparent positive or negative attitudes, the disparities in roles among individuals, and the discrepancies between the *desire* to take action against social constraints (Ahearn 2001), juxtaposed with actual *agency* in non-transmission.

As outlined in Section 3.3.6, attitudes are composed of *affect* (feelings elicited by an object), *cognition* (belief about the object), and *conation* (behavioural intention and actual behaviour directed at an attitude object) (Kircher & Zipp 2022: 4). By understanding people's thoughts on transmission processes (*cognition*) and the perceived *affect* (feelings) and effects on the different generations, one does not only gain insight into language behaviour (*conation*) in its most essential domain: intergenerational transmission, but also into the significance that different generations attribute to Judeo-Spanish.

First generation and transgenerational perspectives

Among the first generation, 65.2 percent expressed negative attitudes towards non-transmission. In this cohort, two main groups can be distinguished: (1) those who express feelings of regret and guilt, and (2) those who feel a sense of alienation and isolation stemming from an interruption in linguistic and cultural practices. These sentiments are also associated with a perceived decline in multilingualism among this generation, which previously used various languages in different domains.

> **5-13. Jüdit**: Puéde ser ke éra en el tiyémpo de --- de Edirné ke avía múcha --- akél [implying multilingualism] pudo ser ayá. Ma dospués, víne a Estanból, *Vatandásh Türkche Konúsh*. I avlímos en túrko. I por ésto no se puéde --- Yo yené ambezí a los íjos. Ya sáven avlár en ladíno. I la íja i el íjo. I éya i el íjo.

> ('It could be that it was during the time of --- in Edirne that there was a lot of --- [implying multilingualism] could be there. But then, I came to Istanbul and *Citizen speak Turkish!* happened. And we spoke in Turkish. And because of this, we could not [continue JS transmission] --- And I still taught my children. They already know how to speak Ladino. Both the daughter and the son. Both she [pointing to her daughter] and my son.') [1st-f-83-fluent-fam6]

Here, Jüdit expresses regret about the shrinking of her family's multilingual practices once they moved to Istanbul. As she recounts, despite the *Citizen Speak Turkish!* campaign (cf. § 2.3.6), she tried *yene* 'still' to speak Judeo-Spanish to her children and even to her grandchildren, an account confirmed by her grand-daughter, Kaden.

> **5-.14 Kaden**: But my grandmother was --- even if she was trying to speak in Turkish, after some time she was just switching to Ladino automatically, yes. So --- she was already speaking to us. Of course after learning some [Peninsular] Spanish, I've started to understand whatever she is telling to me. For some time I tried to reply her in [Judeo-]Spanish as well. I mean, I know that --- she was saying me íja, but which is 'íkha' in [Peninsular] Spanish; so I was trying to adjust it to Ladino. [3rd-f-33-Spanish-fam6]

Kaden's grandmother's default code-switching to Judeo-Spanish reflects the routine use of Judeo-Spanish in their daily interactions, suggesting a reluctance to fully transition to Turkish. Kaden, however, could only reply to her in a Spanish-based Judeo-Spanish, since she had learned Spanish as an Erasmus student in Spain. Learning Spanish, as Kaden acknowledges, not only increased her awareness of her linguistic heritage but also enabled her to use the language mainly with her grandmother and to discern the differences between Spanish and Judeo-Spanish. Ultimately, it strengthened her bond with her grandmother, as both she and her grandmother went on to reveal in the other parts of the interview. Kaden's perception of the emotional impact on the first generation when switching to Turkish are echoed by Fani, another third-generation consultant.

> **5-15. Fani**: I mean she [grandmother] loved speaking in Ladino and just loved the language and speaking to us in, in this language. She was always telling us: <You need to learn this language! > Yeah, she --- she was just loving speaking Ladino to us but, you know, once we were finding it very difficult and she would just speak to us in Turkish, which we could understand, made her very sad. [3rd-f-27-Spanish-fam9]

Fani's grandmother, much like Kaden's, grappled with feelings of isolation and estrangement within her own family due to the shift away from Judeo-Spanish. Both narratives highlight the profound impact of linguistic changes on the first generation, for whom Judeo-Spanish was the primary spoken language for routine conversations. Seeing their language dwindling, they perceive it not merely as a neutral means of communication, but as Shandler (2004: 22) aptly describes, as a "particular kind of social speech: internal, intimate, unofficial – the distinctive voice of minority diaspora communities". Perhaps the most poignant realisation for the first generation lies in the understanding that the loss of Judeo-Spanish represents more than just a linguistic shift;

it signifies a general erosion, if not the complete dissolution, of their sociocultural distinctiveness, as Sara candidly discusses below:

> **5-16. Sara:** Malorozaménte, pénso ke no va a puéder kedár múcho aki. Porké la jenerasyón muéva de aki, los izíkos, izíkas djudíos no ávlan el djudéo-espanyól i mízmo no lo entyénden. Ésta difikultád es --- mízmo kuándo dizímos --- los teátros no podímos invitárlos porké mos dezían <Pára kuálo merkár bilétos i venír pára vervos, no stamos entendyéndo?> I éra malorozaménte ke kuándo venían syértos mansévos, lo desíamos lo ke devíamos de djuguar en el teátro par eksempl la fráze entéra en espanyól, en djudéo-espanyól i después lo tra-- morvávamos, lo dezíamos en túrko pára ke puédan éyos entendérlo un póko lo ke está pasándo en la pyésa i pára ke puédan tómar plazér i reírse. […] I tambyén lo stan avlándo ke ay syértos, ya yo aɣóra enkontré múchas izíkas, mansévas, ijíkos ke no entendí, porké mízmo los bi-- los nómbres ke tyénen aɣóra son nómbres túrkos, kómo múchos, yaní, ke no estávan empleándo los nómbres djudéo-espa--, djudyós. I tambyén kon úna pronunsyasyón tan buéna ke verdadménte no se sta podyéndo entendér son djudíos éstos. I tyénen amígos túrkos i ay kazamyéntos míkstes múchos aóra porké están en l-- las eskólas kon amígos, en grúpos tódo kon túrkos.
>
> ('Unfortunately, I think not much is going to survive here. Because the new generation here, the youngsters, Jewish boys and girls, do not speak Judeo-Spanish and they don't even understand it. This difficulty is --- even when we said --- the theater performances, we could not invite them because they would tell us: <Why should we buy tickets and come to see you if we don't understand?> And it was unfortunate that when certain young people came, we were saying what we had to play in the theater, for example, the entire phrase in [Judeo-]Spanish, in Judeo-Spanish and then we repeated it, we translated it into Turkish so that they could understand a little what was happening in the play and so that they could enjoy and laugh. [...] And they are also saying that there are so --- well, now I have found many young boys and girls that I did not recognise because even the names they have now are Turkish names, like many, you know, who weren't using the Jewish names. And also with such good pronunciation that truly you can't understand if they are Jewish. And they have Turkish friends and there are many mixed marriages now because they are in --- schools with friends, in groups all with Turks.') [1st-f-75-fluent-ind])

Sara has firsthand experience with the challenges of preserving Judeo-Spanish amidst the broader cultural assimilation of the Jewish community, which is particularly evident among the younger generation. The gradual replacement of Judeo-Spanish in theatrical performances, as detailed in Section 5.6, serves as a poignant reminder for her of the growing disconnect from cultural and linguistic heritage. Furthermore, observations regarding the adoption of Turkish names, unaccented Turkish pronunciation, mixed marriages, and social mixing among the younger generation underscore the depth of cultural assimilation. These trends pose additional obstacles to the preservation of Judeo-Spanish heritage. Sara's tone and language use, marked by phrases like *"unfortunately", "unfortunate"* and the repeated mentions of these changes, convey her sense of disappointment, regret, and displacement, alongside a longing for tangible connections to her heritage that are increasingly elusive. These changes leave her navigating a complex landscape of cultural shifts and unfamiliar signs that she can no longer interpret ("young boys and girls that I did not recognise") compounded by a

perceived responsibility and guilt for not doing more to transmit the language, a feeling shared by Sandy:

> **5-17. Sandy:** Yo ya'stáva un póko de mi mádre, de mi granmamá, ya'stáva akeyándo, entendyéndo. Áma muy zor ya es zor úna língua. Ya es zor úna língua. A los kreatúras no los ambezímos mozós. La kúlpa tenémos en mozótros, ke no los ambezímos. Tódo en túrko avlár. […] Sigúro mos akeyámos ke no savémos ésta língua. Amá el 'such' mi pádre i mi mádre ke no mos ambezáron ésta língua. I se'sta agóra --- Estás peryéndo sigúro, estás yaní 'üzülüyorsun ki kaybediyorsun.' (>Tk. 'You are sad that you are losing it.] S'están akéyando kon túrko tódo. Úna kreatúra bíle no sáve náda! No sáve náda, náda!
>
> ('I was picking it up a little bit from my mother, my grandmother, I understood. But it's a very difficult language, It's a difficult language. It was us who didn't teach it to our children. We have the blame on ourselves, that we didn't teach them. We say everything in Turkish. […] Surely we realise that we don't know this language. But the guilt is on my father and mother for not teaching us this language. And and now is being ---. You are surely sad because you're losing it. Everything is mixed with Turkish. A child doesn't even know anything. Doesn't know anything, anything.') [1st-f-78-S-fluent-fam3]

This excerpt is particular as it exposes the intricate layers of Sandy's reflections, requiring a nuanced interpretation aided by insights from Sandy's grandson and by the extensive talks we had outside of the interview situation. Sandy expresses a profound lament and feelings of guilt for the waning presence of Judeo-Spanish in her family. Despite some exposure, she acknowledges only partial acquisition of the language in familial settings. My observations, however, reveal that Sandy and her husband are exceptional, fluent native speakers of Judeo-Spanish, capable of extensive conversations on diverse topics. Moreover, Sandy's grandson, Rafi, unveils the underlying fear and insecurity surrounding the use of Judeo-Spanish that persisted in his grandparents over the years.

Sandy, too, eventually grapples with regret and self-reproach for failing to transmit the language to the next generation. As the interview progresses and touches on unsettling memories from the early days of the Republic, Sandy associates the burden of guilt with her parents. Moreover, she detaches herself from the language by understating her proficiency in it *"Sigúro mos akeyámos ke no savémos ésta língua"* ('Surely we realise that we don't know this language') possibly as coping mechanism to manage the weight of responsibility in transmission and guilt. While expressing sorrow over the loss of the language, there is also a noticeable sense of detachment from it *"ya es zor úna língua"* ('It's a difficult language!') as well as resignation in Sandy's tone. Sandy notes that these feelings of guilt and regret intensified as they realised the imminent loss*: "Agóra ke'stámos akeyándo. Ántes no avía!"* ('Now that we are realising. Before, it wasn't like that!'). Her positive tone returns when she speaks about the new generation's renewed interest in the language and in particular her grandson's who

recently learned Judeo-Spanish and who is motivating them to awaken their Judeo-Spanish from its dormant state: *"agora es ke'stámos un póko avlándo"* ('Now, in fact, we are speaking a little more').

Out of the 23 first-generation consultants, Beri stands out as the sole consultant who reported exclusively speaking Judeo-Spanish with his children.

> **5-18. Beri**: [Avlo] ke no lo peryén el espanyól, m'entendítes? Porké en avlándo en túrko tódos ya sáven el túrko. No ay menestér. [Avlo] pára ke se pratíken ke --- la, la oréja se aúze a l'espanyól. […] Ya, ya savémos i en túrko. Mos nasímos akí, se díze.
>
> ('[I speak] so that they should not lose Judeo-Spanish, you understand me? Because by speaking Turkish, everyone already knows Turkish. There's no need. [I speak][So that they practice --- so that the ear gets used to [Judeo-]Spanish. [...] Yes, we already know Turkish too. We were born here, they say.') [1st-m-88-fluent-fam10]

Beri's distinctive commitment to maintaining Judeo-Spanish, which is evident in both his language behaviour and his acknowledgment of its importance, can be traced back to his travels in his youth and his exposure to diverse languages. Beri attributes his understanding of the practical value of Judeo-Spanish to these experiences. That positive attitude towards multilingualism and towards Judeo-Spanish has been passed down and upheld by his daughter, Viki.

> **5-19. Viki**: Yo i el túrko avlí, áma lez avlí muy, muy múncho en espanyól, daínda éyos ávlan en túrko, yo les doy repuésta en espanyól. Sugúro! I mis íjos i los dos, yo téngo un íjo de ochénti-- tréntiocho ányos i úna íja de kuarénta i dos ányos. Éyos entyénden muy byen en espanyól i mi íjo se hwe a la Spánya, hwe ovliɣádo de avlár i <Mamá> dísho <No te vaz a kreér, mersí muy, muy múncho ke mos avlátes en espanyól, kómo avlí yo áya i yo no se! [pride in her tone] […] E --- porké el tódo sta entendyéndo, oír, oír, oír! El oído se ínche ya sáves. En priméro kále ke se ínche el oído, dospués el meóyo.>
>
> ('I also spoke Turkish, but I spoke to them very, very much in [Judeo-]Spanish. They keep speaking Turkish, but I reply to them in [Judeo-]Spanish. Of course! And my children, both of them, I have a son who is 38 years old and a daughter who is 42 years old. They understand very well in [Peninsular]Spanish, and my son went to Spain, and was compelled to speak. <Mom>, he said, <you won't believe it, thank you very, very much for speaking to us in [Judeo-]Spanish, you would not believe how I could speak there and I could not believe it myself! [tone of pride] Of course, because he understood everything, hearing, hearing, hearing! hear, hear, hear. The ear gets full. First, the ear gets full, then the brain.') [2nd-f-63-S-fluent-fam10]

Today, Viki plays a leading role in fostering language maintenance efforts both within her family and in the broader community through theatre performances. As a result, this family stands out as the only one among the consultants in this project in which the transmission of Judeo-Spanish has remained uninterrupted up to the third generation. The consultants' pride in their children's linguistic abilities is evident, as they express gratitude for the opportunity to communicate in Judeo-Spanish but also Spanish, which they perceive as contributing to their children's linguistic flexibility and cultural integration. This family's language use dynamics underscore, once again, the role of direct

transmission and listening in effective language acquisition: *"En priméro kále ke se ínche el oído, dospués el meóyo"* ('First, the ear gets full, then the brain').

Second generation and intergenerational perspective

Among the second generation, three prevailing sentiments emerge regarding non-transmission: (1) a lack of awareness regarding their role in language transmission, (2) feelings of regret and powerlessness, and (3) language insecurities based on their perceived or actual incomplete language acquisition. This is illustrated by Binyamin's account (cf. 5-25), in which he reflects on his father's unawareness of the impact of not transmitting Judeo-Spanish: "*He actually sounds like he is not aware of what he did to me* [by not transmitting the language]*".* Many consultants from this generation share a similar sentiment. Others experience regret, stemming from the realisation that they could not or did not exert sufficient effort to preserve Judeo-Spanish before it was too late, as expressed by Edna.

> **5-20 Edna**: Yo sólo puodía avlár kon mi mádre. Kon éya avláva i éya éra muy --- [period of silence, then started crying]. Syémpre moz enkomandáva ke, <Devéj avlár el espanyól. Ésta ez la língua de mos avuélos. No kále desharla. Kále ke la emplesh i ambezár a las kreatúras!> […] Ama no puide avlár, pórke mi marído se engrandesyó en la eskóla fransésa i no súvo múcho en káza. El meldó en el *Saint-Joseph*. […] Pór módo d'ésto no sentyó múcho el ladíno i no lo sáve muy, muy buéno, ma entyénde tódo. En káza no pudímos avlár.
>
> ('I could only speak with my mother. She would speak, and she was very --- [period of silence, then started crying]. She always told us, <We must speak [Judeo-]Spanish. This is the language of our grandparents. Don't abandon it! You should speak it and transmit it further to your children.!> [...] But I couldn't speak, because my husband grew up in the French school and didn't use it much at home. He studied at *Saint-Joseph*. [...] Because of this, Ladino didn't hear much Ladino and he does not speak it very well, but he understands everything. At home we couldn't speak.') [2nd-f-60-fluent-fam9]

This narrative sheds light on the challenges faced by Edna in maintaining Judeo-Spanish within her family and the impact that non-transmission has had on her. While her mother encouraged her to uphold this linguistic tradition, Edna's ability to converse in Judeo-Spanish was limited to interactions with her mother alone. Edna's husband's educational background, shaped by attendance at the *Saint-Joseph* French school, resulted in a diminished emphasis on Judeo-Spanish within their household and thus in insecurity when using Judeo-Spanish. Interestingly, her husband had a fair knowledge of Judeo-Spanish and I found him to be an agile narrator in Judeo-Spanish, being able to hold entire conversations in the language. His refusal to speak Judeo-Spanish in their household seems to be the result of his negative attitudes towards Judeo-Spanish as a graduate of the French high school and in competition with French. Nevertheless, in Edna's home, Judeo-Spanish gradually lost significance in their daily interactions,

leaving Edna with a sense of unfulfilled responsibility in not transmitting the language to her children. Despite her efforts to improve her language skills through resources like dictionaries and active participation in events dedicated to Judeo-Spanish, Edna's struggles highlight the broader challenges of language maintenance in the face of diverging attitudes and the perceived or actual fluency of different family members. Notably, Edna's daughter, Fani, displayed positive attitudes towards Judeo-Spanish and expressed the desire to learn the language "in-depth at some point".

> **5-21. Fani**: Yeah, there were some moments that I wish I knew how to express myself deeply in, in this language. I wish to learn it in-depth at some point. [3rd-f-27-H-Spanish-fam9]

Delayed language learning, as demonstrated in Section 5.3.1, is characteristic of this generation, whose language transmission was interrupted due to ideological pressure. Emel (cf. 5-21), like Beki (cf. 5-7) and Meri (cf. 5-8) and three other second-generation consultants, embarked on her journey of speaking and refining her Judeo-Spanish skills in adulthood.

> **5-21. Emel**: I veraménte éya me avláva tódo en túrko. Mi pádre kon mi mádre avlávan éntre éyos en djudéo-espanyól. La mádre de mi mádre, mi nóna bivía kon mozótros, muy, muy úna mujér muy entelijénte, éya nasió en Edírne. I éra profesőra en la *Alliáns Fransés* de Edírne. Éya me avláva en fransé. [?] Dingúnos no me avlávan en Espanyól! Éntre mi granmamá i mi pádre ke avlávan éntre éyos en espanyól, los oídos me se inchéron. [...] Entónses mi, éntre mozótros lo ke avlávamos yo en túrko kon mi mádre i pádre, i en fransé kon mi nóna. En espanyól, no avlí núnka! Núnka no avli! Agóra ésto muy ansyóza veraménte, porké mi suégra avláva a mi íja en espanyól i éya entyénde tódo, ma no puéde avlár. Mi ího dísho <De ke a mi no me ambezátesh?> Porké i yo, kómo mi mádre, ke sépa buéno el túrko. [...] Éra --- no ay ke ázer éste módo. Agóra se van a ir a Servántes pará ambezárse en espanyól. Veraménte pekádo, pekádo! [tone of disappointment] Veraménte pekádo, porké, yo no, mi ermáno tyéne sukuénta ányos; a los kuarentísinko ányos es la jenerasyón de ał kávo ke sáven el espanyól akí. No avlímos a los mansévos, izímos úna gránde erór! Muy gránde! Veraménte!
>
> ('And indeed, she spoke with me entirely in Turkish. My father and mother spoke between themselves in Judeo-Spanish. My mother's mother, my grandmother, lived with us, a very intelligent woman, she was born in Edirne. She was a teacher at the *French Alliance* in Edirne. She spoke to me in French. [?] None of them spoke to me in [Judeo-]Spanish. Between my grandmother and my father, who spoke to each other in [Judeo-]Spanish, my ears absorbed it. [...] So, among us, I spoke Turkish with my mother and father, and French with my grandmother. I never spoke in [Judeo-]Spanish! Never! Now this was indeed worrying, that my mother-in-law spoke to my daughter in [Judeo-]Spanish and she understands everything but cannot speak it. My son said, <Why didn't you teach me?> Because I, like my mother, wanted them to know Turkish well. […] It was --- we shouldn't have handled it this way. Now they're going to Cervantes to learn [Peninsular] Spanish. Truly a pity, a pity [tone of]. Truly a pitty because, you know, my brother is sixty years old; at forty-five, it's the last generation here that knows [Judeo-]Spanish. We didn't speak to the young ones, we made a big mistake! A very big one! Truly.') [2nd-f-64-fluent-fam4]

Emel's narrative underscores the reluctance of older generations to pass on the language, as highlighted by her poignant statement: *"Dingúnos no me avlávan en*

Espanyól!; I never spoke in [Judeo-]Spanish! Never!" ('None of them spoke to me in [Judeo-]Spanish!; I never spoke in [Judeo-]Spanish! Never!') Like Beki (cf. 5-7), she learnt Judeo-Spanish through indirect exposure. Despite embarking on her own journey to learn Judeo-Spanish as an adult and recognising its value, Emel acknowledged that she had perpetuated the same transmission patterns she experienced, prompting her children to question: *"De ke a mi no me ambezátesh?*" ('Why didn't you teach me?'). By the time her children posed these questions, Emel had overcome her fears and recognised the importance of language maintenance in general. However, as she revealed, she remained concerned regarding the transmission of Judeo-Spanish within her family. These ingrained fears, stemming from the unconscious replication of her parents' transmission patterns, were driven by the concern that their children might adopt a discernible Jewish accent when speaking Turkish (cf. § 6.3.2). Emel emphasises that the primary obstacle to Judeo-Spanish transmission by grandparents and parents, in addition to migration and schooling, was their desire for their children to speak Turkish devoid of any accent. The shift in her tone, accompanied by the emphasis on the adverb *veraménte* 'truly' and the adjective *grande* 'great', highlights the significant impact she experiences as a result of her perceived failure to pass on the language: *"No avlímos a los mansévos, izímos úna gránde erór"* ('We didn't speak to the young ones, we made a big mistake!'). It reflects her deep sense of loss and regret due to the disruption in the transmission of Judeo-Spanish. She believes that her mother's generation deprived them of the opportunity to maintain a connection with the language. As observed throughout this section, her greatest disappointment is that the younger generation now find themselves with no other alternative than establishing a connection with their heritage by reclaiming Spanish and attending language classes at the Cervantes Institute. This irony of the Turkish Sephardim reclaiming a language that was once their own is not lost on Emel. From a linguistic perspective, as noted in Beki's narrative (cf. 5-7), Emel's accounts similarly exhibits considerable attentional control in her pronunciation. She alternates between the voiceless velar fricative /x/ in *íjo* 'son' and the voiced postalveolar fricative /ʒ/ in the same word. This variation underscores her heightened awareness of the phonological distinctions between Judeo-Spanish and Spanish, while also reflecting the use of linguistic accommodation strategies tailored to the specific context and audience.

As Emel plunges deeper into her thoughts and feelings regarding non-transmission, she provides a lucid understanding of how the shifts in language attitudes she experienced have been shaped by various stages of her life, external influences (cf.

Sallabank 2013:64), and notably, by the perceived evolving status of Judeo-Spanish (cf. Garrett 2010).

> **5-23. Emel:** Ma malorosaménte yo estó topándo la kúlpa a la jenerasyón muéstra, ke no les avlímos ésta língua presyóza. [...] Si. Aγóra, mi jenerasyón es fransés i túrko. Es frankofón, úna jenerasyón. Porké estudyémos en las eskólas fransésas. Trokó ésto del tyémpo de mi mádre *Vatandaş Türkçe Konuş*, de muéstro tiyémpo estámos bivyéndo akí, ke se ambézen el túrko buéno. Ke mãntalitá ke tuvímos! Si éra aγóra, siγuraménte ke les ambezáva i avláva en djudéo-espanyól. Veraménte! Porké el túrko ya lo van, ya se van a ambezár en el la skóla. I en la vída.
>
> ('But unfortunately, I am finding the fault with our generation, that we didn't speak to them in this precious language. [...] Yes. Now, you see, my generation is French and Turkish. It's a francophone generation. Because we studied in French schools. Unlike in my mother's time, where it was *Citizen Speak Turkish!*, we were always influenced by this: that they should speak good Turkish. What a mentality we had! If it was now, I would surely teach them and speak to them in Judeo-Spanish. Truly! Because Turkish, they are already learning it, they are already learning it in school. And in life.') [2nd-f-64-fluent-fam4]]

Reflecting on past decisions, Emel expresses a profound shift in attitudes towards Judeo-Spanish and its significance for Sephardic identity: *"Ke mãntalitá ke tuvímos!"* ('What a mentality we had!'). Today, she stands at the forefront of language preservation efforts, regretting missed opportunities: *"Si éra aγóra, siγuraménte ke les ambezáva i avláva en djudéo-espanyól*" ('If it were now, I would surely teach and speak to them in Judeo-Spanish'). In the meantime, Emel has grandchildren. She admits to not speaking Judeo-Spanish with them. This highlights once again, in Emel's case, (once with her children, once with her grandchildren) the influence of habitus in language transmission habits, internalised ideologies, and fears of discrimination on language dynamics. This narrative serves as a further example of the disjunction between attitudes and behaviour. Another significant phenomenon, which has been overlooked in scholarly discourse, pertains to the lack of awareness of existing language skills among both the second and third generations, as evidenced in Viki's accounts (cf. 5-19). Her son's astonishment at his previous unawareness regarding his actual proficiency in Judeo-Spanish is exemplified by his statement to his mother: *"you would not believe how I could speak there and I could not believe it myself"* ('No te vaz a kreér, mersí muy, muy múncho ke mos avlátes en espanyól, kómo avlí yo áya i yo no se'). Similarly, Meyir[75] recounts instances when he unexpectedly discovered his ability to communicate with Spanish speakers while traveling. Meyir has been exposed to Judeo-Spanish up through the present, simply by living in his family home. Howeve, Meyir's awareness of his ability to speak Judeo-Spanish dawned upon him only during a trip to the US, where he found

[75] [2nd-m-45-semi-fam8]

himself effortlessly conversing with other Spanish speakers in Judeo-Spanish. This realisation sparked Meyir's determination to transmit Judeo-Spanish to his children, leading to a renewed commitment to preserving his linguistic heritage. Today, he uses Judeo-Spanish primarily as a code language.

These linguistic journeys as presented by Viki's children and by Meyir underscore the significance of Judeo-Spanish in cross-cultural communication and interactions with speakers of Spanish but also other romance languages. Their narratives highlight how "undiscovered" language knowledge has enabled the survival of Judeo-Spanish to this day, despite having been classified as a highly endangered language since the latter half of the past century.

Third generation and intergenerational perspective

Remarkably, the third-generation cohort exhibits the highest proportion (80%) of negative attitudes towards non-transmission, as depicted in Figure 13. Ch. 5. The other 20 percent of this cohort expressed neutral attitudes, or believed that Spanish represented a better option for the Turkish Sephardic community. Among those who expressed negative attitudes toward the lack of language transmission, three distinct emotional responses emerged: (1) expressions of regret, (2) F, and (3) a strong desire for uninterrupted language transmission. The dominant sentiment within this group aligns with point (3), reflecting a desire to have been raised with their heritage language, as conveyed by Emel's son (cf. 5-21) echoed by Binyamin below.

> **5-25. Binyamin**: I remember, for example when they're speaking Ladino, my father, my mother and my grandmother, I was asking <Ok. I am not understanding the subject right now.> And my father was saying: <You should speak also Ladino!> But I responded to him: <Ok, you didn't teach me Ladino. How can I speak?> They also didn't teach us, but that's not the point, you know. They were speaking all the time Ladino with them [grandparents], so they learned somehow, but I didn't. He actually sounds like he is not aware of what he did to me [by not transmitting] but yes, we talk about this sometimes. [3rd-m-22-heritage-fam5]

Binyamin's discourse sheds light on a critical aspect of his family's language dynamics: his father's seeming unawareness of the interruption in language transmission, alongside Binyamin's fathers own sense of guilt toward his parents for this lapse. Binyamin articulates his feeling of being disconnected from his heritage language, noting that while he could grasp it to some extent, he did not fully understand it when his family communicated in Judeo-Spanish. When talking about the feelings he has towards non-transmission, Binyamin acknowledges:

> **5-26. Binyamin**: It make me sad. Makes me angry, because like, why? Because we're using it you know, we're speaking it. They were speaking it, they're speaking it still. Why is it dying? I know the reason actually. Because language dies, when you don't educate with the language. And yes it makes me sad. Because it's so little that

> people write books about with Ladino, poems with Ladino. It's little. Now it's none, I think. So that's the reason. As I think, I don't know. [3rd-m-22-heritage-fam5]

Binyamin's frustration primarily stems from the perceived contradiction in his family dynamics regarding the vitality of Judeo-Spanish. He observes that the language is actively spoken within his family circle, yet its transmission to him was denied, effectively burying it alive, a metaphor used by Yudit Namer, a third-generation consultant featured in *Las ultimas palavras* (2015: min. 27:42 – 28:16): "The language continues, let's say, but people who make it continue are not there anymore. As if it was buried alive. The language is alive, but there is no one to take care of it". Additionally, Binyamin highlights the unawareness within his generation about language revitalisation efforts and available materials for learning Judeo-Spanish. This lack of awareness reflects broader challenges in engaging younger generations in language preservation initiatives.

These feelings of anger and frustration, as expressed by Binyamin, often manifest as outright rejection of indirect exposure to Judeo-Spanish in the family context, as noted by Treysi.

> **5-27. Treysi**: I was raised by my grandparents, while we moved to Istanbul, we lived with our, with my grandparents. And they spoke Ladino probably half of the day. But only among themselves. We would get mad at them and say: <Repeat it in Turkish, cause we don't understand. We would not want to hear Ladino>. [3rd-f-40-passive-fam11]

Treysi's reaction seems to arise from the noticeable gap in language proficiency between generations, compounded by the frustration expressed by the third generation, who often struggled to understand and engage in communication during their childhood. This does not reflect a situation of "nonreciprocal[76] use of the heritage language" observed by Pauwels (2016: 91) but rather the conscious decision of non-transmission that seems to have greatly impacted this generation.

However, later in the interview, Treysi acknowledges:

> **5-28. Treysi**: […] but it's actually pretty sad that it's lost, but I can only speak for me and for my sister, we always thought that they were talking about us or the helper, when they spoke Ladino. That's why we had a little bit of reflex when we heard it [apologetic in her intonation]. [3rd-f-40-passive-fam11]

This perspective: "it's actually pretty sad that it's lost" points out that, rather than a rejection of the language, as it initially appeared, seems to come from a desire for inclusion and proficiency in the language. This sense of exclusion seems to be the underlying ground for another prevalent attitude among this generation: the belief that

[76] this term describes a situation when the parents speak to their children in the heritage language but the children do not (cf. Pauwels 2016: 91).

Judeo-Spanish is an inaccessible language, a language shrouded in mystery, as portrayed by Albert Nahum (*Las ultimas palavras,* 2015, min. 16:41) in 5.4.5 and requiring familial proximity and a cohesive Jewish neighbourhood and community, as captured by Albert.

> **5-29. Albert**: We didn't, what I felt was that [it was a] hard language to understand, that I had the feeling that I [was] never going to learn it because, the thing is, families used to live together fifty years ago. Everybody lived together, grandparents, parents, cousins and everything so they talk the same language. But nowadays everybody lives in their houses which they talk the language they know. I mean, if my grandparents were living in my house when I was a kid, most probably I would have learned the language. [...] But there was no one talking the language in our house, that's why I didn't learn anything. [3rd-m-35-passive-ind]

As generations began to live in separate households, intergenerational Judeo-Spanish transmission faced significant challenges. According to Albert, his father's lack of fluency in Judeo-Spanish and the insecurities related to it influenced his choice to exclusively speak Turkish at home. Albert acknowledges that this circumstance has instilled feelings of frustration and a life-long complex that he will never be able to learn Judeo-Spanish in him.

Today, among the third generation of Sephardim, learning Judeo-Spanish often occurs through exposure to Spanish, either in Turkey or through programs like Erasmus in Spain. For some, tapping into their heritage language through Spanish language courses represents an act of identity (Tabouret-Keller & Le Page 1985). For others, the motivations for learning Judeo-Spanish are more pragmatic, driven by professional needs (e.g. scholars, tour guides, Spanish teachers) or sparked by travelling rather than as a symbolic gesture of allegiance to the language (see Shandler 2000 and Verschik 2018 for a similar use of Yiddish). Naftali reminisces about the gratification he feels when showcasing his proficiency in Judeo-Spanish during his travels abroad.

> **5-30. Naftali**: I showed off. I showed off well, there. I me plazyó ésto. Muy, muy múncho. Oy en día, si me vo en la Espánya, si me vo en la Amérika Latína, en l'Amérika Latína, es muy, muy, muy, muy fasíl. Mas, mas fasíl. Yo puédo --- no, no me v'a kedár ámbre. No me v'a kedár ambiyárto. [2nd-m-45-fluent-fam12]
>
> ('I showed off. I showed off well there. I liked this. Very, very much. Nowadays, if I go to Spain, if I go to Latin America, it is very, very, very, very easy. Much, much, easier. I can --- I won't go hungry. I won't go hungry')

Naftali reflects here on his ease in navigating through various environments, including Spain and Latin America, indicating a sense of confidence, linguistic adaptability, and pride stemming from his proficiency in Judeo-Spanish.

The data reflected in Figure 14. Ch. 5 below illustrates the contexts of language exposure and acquisition across different generations, confirming these trends.

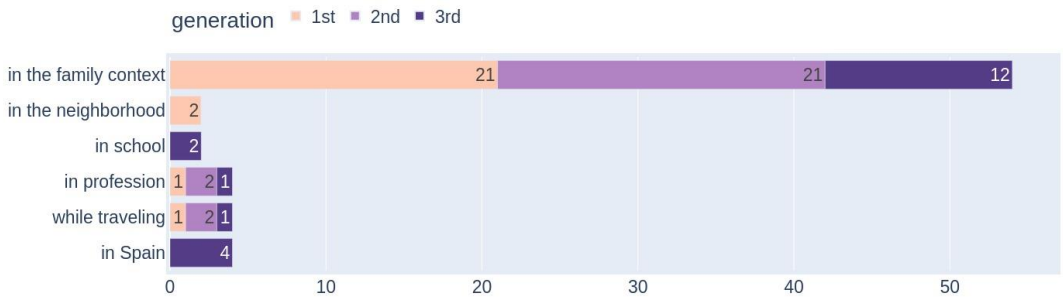

Figure 14. Ch. 5: *JS. language acquisition contexts – by generation*

For the learning contexts of “in school” and “while traveling”, particularly “in Spain”, consultants indicate that they acquired Judeo-Spanish knowledge primarily through formal education or through interactions with other Spanish-speaking individuals. Lola’s narratives about her son’s persistent inquiries to her grandmother paint a vivid picture of the attitudes prevalent in the third generation regarding non-transmission, as well as their adaptation approaches to language acquisition, which are also outlined in Section 5.3.1.

> **5-31. Lola**: <Ah, granmamá, kómo no me avlátez i a mi en espanyól!>, <Ven íjo, vénte avlár en ---> ya stáva gránde. Dospués ke úna persóna se agrandesyó tánto --- i te dizéra, ay ótras kózas. Yo kuándo éra chíka se bevía kon laz granmamás i granpapás, --- dospués e-- no es por aɣóra, no se bíve kon las granmamás i granpapás, es sólos kon mádre i pádre. Dúnkue, yo si bivía sólo kon mi pádre i mádre, puéde ser no me ambezáva. Ma, kon laz granmamás i granpapás se ambéza. Ma alóra, aɣóra no se móra mas kon los vyéjos, dúnkue aɣóra se stan índo pára ambezárse en, la língua espanyóla, [laughing] a los kúrsos. [2nd-f-61-fluent-ind]
>
> (‘Ah grandma, why didn't you speak to me too in [Judeo-]Spanish!> <Come here, come talk to me!> But I already grew up. After a person grows up so much --- and I will tell you, there are other things. When I was little, I used to live with my grandmas and grandpas. But now it’s not like that, now it’s only with mom and dad. So, if I lived only with my mom and dad, maybe I would not have learned. But one would learn with the grandmas and grandpas. But now, we don’t live with the old ones anymore, so now they’re going to·learn [Peninsular]Spanish [laughing] in language courses.’) [2nd-f-61-fluent-ind]

Lola’s descriptions of her son’s reflective engagement with language transmission convey a clear sense of disappointment and frustration regarding the lack of continuity of language transmission. Like Albert (cf. 5-27. Albert), Lola attributes this interruption in transmission mainly to changes in family dynamics, noting her own acquisition of Judeo-Spanish from her grandparents, as shown in Figure 15. Ch.5 below (cf. Romero 2012: 110-112). Her seemingly amused tone hints at the irony of having to tap into one’s heritage language through external language courses, such as those offered by the Cervantes Institute.

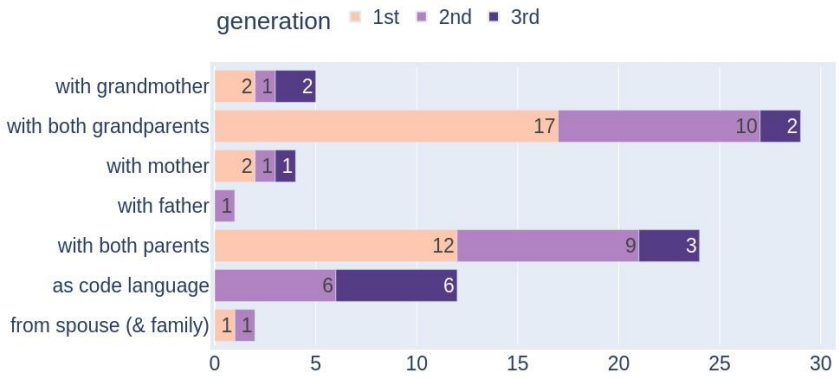

Figure 15. Ch. 5: *JS. acquisition – in the family context*

Finally, the comparison of language preservation matters with the other minorities of Turkey, such as the Greek community, is striking. The example of Greek and Armenian is always cited by all generations, as exemplified by Jak (cf. 6-24 for Jak's full citation).

> **5-32. Jak**: De sórte ke, mos evitímos de no azér provokasyón i, kómo godreríkos, akseptímos tódos. Ma los grégos, i me paresí los ermenís kontinuáron la eskuéla mas fuérte de mozótros, mas [?] izyéron. No se, mozótros, según mi idéa, ke mas sekadúra de kavésa!
>
> ('To that extent we avoided provocation and, like goats, we accepted everything. But the Greeks, and it seems to me the Armenians, continued the school more strongly than us, they made [?]. I don't know, in my opinion, what a misguided way of thinking!

In people's discourses, there seems to be a regret that, compared to the other minorities in Turkey, they have not been able to preserve their language.

As I have argued in this section, individuals from different generations have been socialised in and been provided with more than one mother tongue, indicating the process discussed by Myhill (2003) in which languages adapt to a cultural habitus rather than solely shaping it. In this context, I propose an interpretation of the reported mother tongue, which reflects the language "in which we think, classify, interpret, imagine, and dream" (Joseph 2004: 185), as a central element in shaping the speaker's linguistic identity. It represents a claim about national, ethnic, or religious identity, or any combination thereof, which speakers make and listeners interpret (Joseph 2004: 185). However, in line with the constructivist (cf. § 3.1.3) and the strategic essentialist (3.1.4) approaches, the transmission of multiple mother tongues among the Sephardim need to be embedded in a broader discourse about small and local languages. According to Bucholtz (2003) and Bucholtz & Hall (2004: 376), identities are not fixed attributes of individuals or groups but are embedded within social actions. This perspective allows identities to adapt to new contextual situations and to be perceived with an awareness of their limitations over time. In this dynamic view, identities can shift and combine as

needed in response to changing circumstances, challenging the traditional notion of identities as stable and unchanging psychological states or social categories (Şaul 1983). Many individuals who abandon their traditional languages may do so deliberately, driven by the desire to forge an identity closely linked to modernity (Joseph 2004: 23) or by the wish to keep a low profile and avoid discrimination. The difference between the two lies in the way these changes are induced: by force or by volition. It is precisely in this difference that the interpretations of effects that interruption in transmission can have on individuals lie. This multiplicity of stances is accounted in this dissertation, with consultants feeling connected to and remembering the most intimate affective memories of their parents and their childhood, not in one, but in two languages, as Lola recounts.

> **5-33. Lola**: No, te va a dezír, en túrko i en espanyół ez --- ez véro. En túrko i en espanyól me sta vinyéndo únas kózas ke mi mádre lo dezía ansína, dúnkue víno éntre mi, si! Kon la léche de la mádre, si! E, maz esto bivyéndo maz me --- si, aẏóra téngo inyéto le estó dizyéndo únas kósas --- ke --- kómo mi mádre lo dizía a sus inyétos: *korasón de káza*, *presyádo* --- éstas kózas mi --- mi íjo: <Kuálo stas dizyéndo?>, kómo mi mádre les dizía 'presyádo de káza' i yo 'presyádo de káza'.
>
> ('No, I'm going to tell you, in Turkish and in [Judeo-]Spanish --- it's true. In Turkish and in [Judeo-]Spanish, there are things that my mother used to say like this, and it's coming back to me now, yes! With the mother's milk, yes! And the more I live, the more I --- yes, now I have a grandson, I'm saying some things --- like --- how my mother used to say to her grandchildren [Lola's children]: *heart of the house*, *precious* [one]--- these things, my --- my son: <What are you saying?>, like my mother used to say to them 'precious of the house' and I say 'precious of the house') [2nd-f-61-S-fluent-ind]

The expressions she now imparts to her grandchildren are the same ones in which she and her children was initially immersed, enduring after decades of language transmission. According to her, she conveys them with the same affection, even in Turkish, which she considers her second mother tongue. As she puts it, *te va a dezír, en túrko i en espanyół ez --- ez véro* ('No, I'm going to tell you, in Turkish and in [Judeo-]Spanish, it's true.'). Her emphasis on "it's true" is the realisation she had during our discussion that, for her, there is no affective difference between the two languages, as both were transmitted from early childhood.

Thus, the significance of the multiplicity of mother tongues of the Sephardim and, as a result the multilayered linguistic identities emerging from it will be interpreted throughout the dissertation in connection with socioeconomic, ideological, and attitudinal factors. The next sections will examine the various domains of postvernacular language use and explore the implications and meanings that postvernacular use entails for different generations.

5.4 The domains of family and intra-group group communication

Judeo-Spanish, like the majority of non-territorial languages, has never held an official status in the public sphere in Turkey. Although there were religious works published in Judeo-Spanish (Benbassa & Rodrigue 2000: 51), Sephardic religious culture was written mostly in Hebrew. Therefore, Hebrew represented the language of the Jewish elite invested with linguistic prestige opposed to Judeo-Spanish, the spoken language of the masses (Bunis 2000: 9). During the 19th and 20th century, many secular work, translations of novels, Judeo-Spanish press and original works have been published in Judeo-Spanish (Benbassa & Rodrigue 2000: 111-112). However, the lack of a linguistic standard form for Judeo-Spanish and existence of several varieties weakened its perceived cultural value.

Since the mid-19th century, the educational systems established in the countries of the former Ottoman Empire, where the Sephardic community resided, as well as Jewish and non-Jewish "colonialist-oriented educational institutions" (Bunis 2018: 189), have played significant roles in influencing linguistic practices that remain in place today. Institutions such as the *Alliance Israélite Universelle* founded in 1860 and the *Società Dante Alighieri*, established in 1889, promoted the adoption of French and Italian, respectively. This shift affected not only linguistic practices but also the cultural values upheld by these institutions. Consequently, Judeo-Spanish became a language of little practical and cultural value, a development with a strong impact on intergenerational transmission.

Consultants' narratives on intergenerational language transmission (cf. § 5.3) reveal that until approximately 1950, Judeo-Spanish existed primarily within the private domain of the family and in public interactions within Jewish neighbourhoods, as evidenced by Berta's account.

> **5-34. Berta**: A, éramos káles, éramos géto tódo, éramos, avlávamos el espanyól, éramos vezínos, mos ívamos de párte a párte, emuéven, tódo módo de kóza, éramos endjúntos. El, el portié tódo éran dju-- hudíos, tódo, tódo. Si, i el ke vendía frúta i el ke vendía kárne i el ke vendía --- tódos erán hudíos. No avía un védre, no konosiámos! Aɣóra si son tódo de éyos, káda úno, un hudío kédo kon mil védres, estámos, no stámos konténte de star adéntro los védres [tone of disappointment, frustration and anger].
>
> ('Ah, we were streets, we were the whole ghetto, we were, we spoke [Judeo-]Spanish, we were neighbours, we went from one place to another, mingling, all kinds of things, we were together. The doorkeeper, they were Jews, all of them, all of them. Yes, and the one who sold fruit and the one who sold meat and the one who sold --- they were all Jews. There was no non-Jewish person, we didn't know any! Now yes, they are everywhere, everyone, a Jew among a thousand green ones [Muslims], we're, we're not happy to be inside the green [Muslims] [tone of disappointment, frustration and anger].') [1st-f-76-E-fluent-fam7]

Berta's narrative sheds light on a sense of cohesion cultivated by the close-knit community and the widespread use of Judeo-Spanish in both familial and neighbourhood contexts. She reminisces about a time when virtually everyone in her immediate vicinity was Jewish, emphasising the pivotal role of the family environment in preserving Judeo-Spanish until the advent of Turkification policies and subsequent societal transformations (cf. § 6.2). However, from the latter half of the 20th century onward, demographic changes (cf. § 6.2.2) and shifting language ideologies (cf. § 2.3.6) led to the predominance of Turkish in all aspects of family and intra-group communication. Berta's poignant expression, *"un hudío kédo kon mil védres"* ('one Jew remained among a thousand Muslims'), not only underscores significant demographic and societal shifts but also exposes underlying tensions in intergroup relations arising from these transformations. Berta's choice of language hints at a feeling of discomfort stemming from being surrounded by the Turkish Muslim majority: *"no stámos konténte de star adéntro los védres"* ('we're not happy to be inside the green').

This ongoing division between insiders and outsiders, as highlighted by Barth (1998 [1969]: 14), underscores the social divide between the Sephardim and Muslims, the latter being labelled as *vedre* ('green', meaning "Muslim"). This delineation emphasises the perceived social opposition and a clear awareness of boundaries between the minority and majority populations, which are integral to the construction of individual and collective identities, as discussed in section 3.2.2. This perception of boundaries is echoed by other consultants, particularly those from the first-generation cohort, who primarily define group identity based on ***objective*** religious/ethnic criteria rather than linguistic distinctions. However, as Yusuf demonstrates, language serves as a strong indicator of the Sephardim's religious affiliation in the case of the Turkish Sephardim:

> **5-35. Yusuf**: You know, the Jewish community in general usually keeps a low profile. So you don't immediately want to put out that you're of a different religion. Correct? So you don't speak Ladino in public, in Burgaz and Büyükada in the islands you do speak because everybody around you, in that little niche, in that little club, is Jewish. There, they feel more comfortable, so if that generations that speaks Ladino, speaks Ladino among themselves then they don't mind speaking in louder tones. But when you are in the city for example, if you do speak Ladino or Hebrew or anything that is strange, you try to keep it low profile. So, you speak Turkish. Mostly you speak Turkish. [2nd-m-65-H-passive-ind]

These findings resonate with Haarmann's assertion that language often plays a pivotal role in demarcating ethnic boundaries (Haarmann 1986: 261) (cf. § 3.2.2). Yusuf's insights shed valuable light on the significance of Jewish clubs as safe zones for a community accustomed to maintaining a discreet presence. Throughout my fieldwork, I encountered three prominent Jewish clubs: *Göztepe Kültür Dernegi* (Göztepe Culture

Club), *Yildirim Spor Klübü* (Yıldırım Sports Club, referred to as *Yıldırım*), and *Dostluk Yurdu Dernegi* (Friendship Homeland Association, referred to as Dostluk)[77]. These establishments serve dual purposes as community hubs and youth centres operating under the auspices of *The Jewish Community of Turkey*[78].

During the summer season, both Jewish and non-Jewish swimming clubs on the Princes' Islands become focal points for communal gatherings, especially among Istanbul's Jewish population, many of whom own summer residences there. While *Yıldırım* remains an exclusive Jewish club with rigorous entry regulations[79], many Sephardim are members of other swimming clubs on all the Princes' Islands. During the summer months on Büyükada, the largest of the Princes' Islands, the vibrant Jewish community is clearly visible even though the traditionally calm islands have become busier with the increase in international tourists over the past decade. As Yusuf and numerous other consultants emphasised, these clubs and the Princes' Islands continue to hold special significance as havens where Jewish individuals and other minorities can congregate in a secure and welcoming atmosphere.

In these spaces, where individuals feel more comfortable and no longer need to conceal their religious identity, Judeo-Spanish resurfaces in inner group communication. These observations point to underlying motivations influencing language choices within such contexts. Notably, Yusuf highlights that within the club setting, community members feel "more comfortable" speaking in Judeo-Spanish "in louder tones" without fear of scrutiny or discrimination. Based on my first-hand observations during repeated visits to these clubs, it became evident that specific groups, primarily consisting of elderly women, used Judeo-Spanish in a performative manner (cf. Shandler 2004). This involved demonstrating their fluency to both their fellow group members and neighbouring groups, presumably less proficient in the language. Yusuf's narrative further indicates that outside these secure venues, individuals often adopt assimilative strategies to navigate interactions with the majority group and avoid potential negative evaluations (cf. Giles & Johnson 1987): "*When you are in the city, for example, if you do speak Ladino or Hebrew or anything perceived as unfamiliar, you tend to keep a low profile. So, you primarily speak Turkish. Mostly Turkish".*

The decision to maintain a low profile, a concept extensively discussed in Section 6.3.2, has become deeply embedded in individuals' *habitus* (Bourdieu 1991), leading to the

---

[77] *Yıldırım* and *Dostluk* clubs were recently unified to *Alef*.

[78] *The Turkish Jewish community* is represented by the *Jewish Community of Turkey*, www.turkyahudileri.com, accessed on May 20, 2024.

[7979] My entry had to be approved by the *Jewish Community of Turkey*.

adoption of linguistic accommodation strategies such as switching to Turkish, having a Judeo-Spanish and a Turkish version of their names (cf. § 5.4.4) or using a code language in public settings (cf. § 5.4.3). While these practices serve to minimise linguistic and ethnic distinctiveness, they pose major challenges in accurately assessing language use patterns within family and intra-group communication.

From the beginning of this study, it became apparent that over the past several decades, the perception of Judeo-Spanish as endangered has been significantly influenced by this imperative to downplay one's linguistic identity, resulting in discrepancies between self-reported and actual language use. Employing an intergenerational approach to delineating language domains proved instrumental in unravelling these complexities. For instance, while Lusi reported limited use of Judeo-Spanish at home or with family members, her nephew Elias provided contradictory information, highlighting the disparities between perceived and actual language use.

> **5-36. Elias**: My grandmother usually speaks Ladino in my house and, when she talks with siblings she always speaks Ladino. [3rd-m-26-heritage-fam2]

Today, in family and inner-group contexts, Judeo-Spanish is used as a vernacular for communication among or with elder family members. Among peers across all generations, Judeo-Spanish is employed to different extents as a code language, allowing for discreet communication within different social circles. Out of the 60 consultants, 20 (out of 23) individuals from the first generation, 14 (out of 22) from the second generation, and seven (out of 15) from the first reported using Judeo-Spanish to varying degrees across different family and community contexts. Additionally, Judeo-Spanish remains prevalent in naming practices within the community. The following subsections investigate these specific domains of language use, examining the reasons and perceptions behind their use or non-use among different generations.

5.4.1 Language of the elders

One of the subdomains in which Judeo-Spanish still maintains its communicative role is in interaction with or among elder family members. Suzan describes the situation in which Judeo-Spanish is used among elder family members in her family.

> **5-37. Suzan**: My parents don't talk in Ladino to each other, but my other grandmother and my other grandfather talks a lot with each other and, consequently, my mother talks with my other grandmother a lot. [3rd-f-22-Spanish-fam1]

Suzan's account delineates the intricate dynamics of language use within a typical Sephardic family, exemplifying how various family members may exhibit distinct language proficiency levels, preferences and communication patterns. However, within

the extended family context, there may be fertile ground for extensive communication among family members who share the same attitudes towards the use of Judeo-Spanish. Michael provides an estimate of language use within his family as follows:

> **5-38. Michael**: Y'ay. I y'ay, áma, yáni, sínko por syán. Sínko por syán se ávlan. Se ávlan. Akí, los mansévos, la mansevés no ávlan el ladíno. No les pláze. No ávlan, no se auzáron. No se auzáron. Pue' ser ke mozós lo kulpámos un póko, siγúro, yáni. buen karár lo kulpámos! Áma éyos no ávlan. Áma yo i mi mujér, éstos ányos, ya avlámos un póko. Tránta por syán, träntisínko por syán. Éste kadár.
>
> ('It is. it is, but, I mean, five percent. It is spoken around 5 percent [of the time]. Here, the young ones, the youth don't speak Ladino. They don't like it. They don't speak, they weren't accustomed to it. They weren't accustomed to it. Maybe we are a bit to blame, sure, yes. We are to blame a great deal! But they don't speak. But me and my wife, the past few years, we speak a little. Sometimes thirty [percent], sometimes thirty-five [percent]. That much.') [2nd-m-67-fluent-fam5]

Michael's account reveals three primary tendencies in language use within the family that emerged during my field research. Firstly, it highlights a notable discrepancy between self-reported estimates of Judeo-Spanish use within the community and actual observed language use (cf. § 5.4). My observations indicate that Judeo-Spanish is employed to a greater extent than what is typically reported. According to Michael, fluent Sephardim speak approximately 5 percent Judeo-Spanish at home. However, in his family, he estimates this use to be higher, around 30 to 35 percent, particularly in the communication between himself, his wife, and his mother-in-law. These deviations between self-reported use and actual use shed light on the factors behind the resilience of Judeo-Spanish, which has survived despite predictions of its demise for almost a century. Today, the primary reason for these discrepancies is different from those in the past. While in the past, the direct fear of repercussions and the low prestige associated with the language may have been the primary factors for consciously downplaying the actual use of Judeo-Spanish, today, that same tendency to downplay actual use seems to be the result of a habitual unconscious reproduction of internalised negative attitudes towards Judeo-Spanish. Michael's comparison between the language use in his family and the percentage he attributes to the broader Sephardic community underscores the evolving attitudes, reflecting a growing pride in the use of Judeo-Spanish. This contrast highlights a shift in how the language is perceived and embraced within the community: *"Áma yo i mi mujér, éstos ányos, ya avlámos un póko"* ('But me and my wife, the past few years, we speak a little'). Michael clearly differentiates himself from the perceived general trends in the Sephardic community. Rafi's account reinforces this widespread dynamic of downplaying the language proficiency and use of others as compared to one's own household.

> **5-39. Rafi**. In general, I think, in our generation is very few [those who speak Judeo-Spanish]. But in my family, I --- really even some jokes, when we were in Shabbat

> dinners. They are always in Ladino. Or even some words at least. You hear it daily. And when I'm with my grandmother. She used to come in Passover time for a week, two weeks to our place, and she was talking to us the whole time in Ladino. And when I grew up, I started understanding it, more even more. And that's how I was exposed more than a, more than the friends that I have around. [3rd-m-22-neo-fam3]

Secondly, Michael (cf. 5-38) underscores that the younger generation does not employ Judeo-Spanish due to both a dislike for the language: "*no les pláze"* ('they don't like it') and a lack of familiarity with it: "*no se auzáron"* ('they weren't accustomed to it'). He articulates a sense of disappointment while recognising that his own generation bears responsibility for the current state of affairs: "*Pue' ser ke mozós lo kulpámos un póko, siγúro, yáni. buen karár lo kulpámos!"* ('Maybe we are a bit to blame, sure, yes. We are to blame a great deal!'). This expression of regret, coupled with repeatedly acknowledging guilt, underscores his recognition of his role in language transmission.

Thirdly, Michael's narrative aligns with a prevalent trend observed among the majority of the first and second-generation consultants who are fluent in Judeo-Spanish. As they age, they are more inclined to employ Judeo-Spanish among themselves: *"Áma yo i mi mujér, éstos ányos, ya avlámos un póko"* ('But me and my wife, the past few years, we speak a little').

Of the 60 consultants, 41 reported using Judeo-Spanish in communication with elders, predominantly through code-switching and code-mixing, as Solita explains.

> **5-40. Solita**: Ma núnka lo'sto uzándo avlár. Kon mi mádre empéso dos palávras, empesámos a turk-- än túrko. [2nd-f-63-H-semi-fam6]
>
> ('But I never use it when speaking. With my mother, I start with two words and then we switch to Turkish.')

Naftali and Rafi are two individuals within this group of 41 consultants who engage in conversational situations using Judeo-Spanish with their elder counterparts in order to improve their Judeo-Spanish.

> **5-41. Naftali**: De ótra párte la língua míya, lo ávlo. La ávlo. Lo ávlo. Tängo úno grúpo de de amígas ke son aedádas mas de setänta ányos. I ve-- a vézes, kuándo kuándo ávlo kon mis, a kon mis, kon mis amígos les dígo < Oy no puéde vinír porké tängo de ver mis amígas, el grúpo, äl mis amígas de de sesénta.> I éyos, they are making, they are the intermediary for me to meet my lover [Ladino].
>
> ('On the other hand, my language, I speak it. I speak it. I speak it. I have a group of friends who are over seventy years old, and sometimes when I speak with my friends, I tell them, <Today I can't come because I have to see my friends, the group, my friends who are sixty!> And they, they are making, they are the intermediary for me to meet my lover [Ladino].') [2nd-m-45-fluent-fam12]

Naftali's linguistic exchanges during these gatherings transcend mere generational connection or social interaction. His metaphor — *"They are the intermediary for me to meet my lover [Ladino]"* — reveals the deep personal bond he holds with Judeo-Spanish. These meetings create a heritage space where he reconnects with the language,

highlighting its emotional and intimate significance. The metaphor is reinforced by the use of the possessive pronoun: *la língua míya* 'my language', and the repetition of *lo ávlo. La ávlo. Lo ávlo* ('I speak it, I speak it, I speak it'), illustrating not just his attachment but also his agency in its maintenance.

Judeo-Spanish further serves as a crucial means of communication with elder relatives residing in the diaspora (mainly Israel), where individuals do not share any other common language, as elucidated by Binyamin's accounts (cf. Romero 2017: 277-278).

> **5-42. Binyamin**: For example, now, I have a cousin in Israel, she's like 60 something years old. And my father, when he speaks to her he speaks Ladino. Because he doesn't speak Hebrew, he doesn't speak English. And she doesn't speak Turkish, she doesn't speak English. So, they have the chance to communicate in Ladino. Also [this is the same case with relatives] from America. [3rd-m-22-heritage-fam5]

Binjamin's father and his family in Israel face a linguistic barrier, as they are not proficient in each other's languages (Hebrew, English, Turkish). Judeo-Spanish, in this case, becomes the shared medium through which they can effectively communicate. The data suggests that this is not an isolated occurrence but rather a recurring pattern among many families. Judeo-Spanish, in such instances, emerges as a valuable tool for maintaining communication and connections with relatives residing not only in Israel but also in different parts of the world. David further reveals that Ladino's role as a bridge enabling communication with relatives in different global locations is predominantly reserved for the elder generation.

> **5-43. David**: Loz vyéhos vyéhos, en espanyól. Maz no tenémoz ótra remédyo. Kon éyoz en espanyól, ladíno. Loz mansévos, si sáves en i-- en ivrít, estás puedyéndo avlár, si no sávez, no puédes avlár náda.
>
> ('The very old ones [speak] in [Judeo-]Spanish. We don't have any other alternative. With them, it's in [Judeo-]Spanish, Ladino. The young ones, if you know Ivrit, you can speak, if you don't know, you can't speak at all.') [1st-m-72-S-fluent-ind]

These intricate dynamics of language use within a multigenerational family with diverse linguistic backgrounds and knowledge can pose real challenges, as revealed by Rafi.

> **5-44. Rafi**: When we went to Israel, or like when our relatives come and then like they speak Hebrew, we don't speak Hebrew, then the only communication with the new generation was Ladino. And they were speaking it and we couldn't. And with the youngest generation we were speaking in English. Which the others felt excluded also. It was, a chaos actually in these family meetings where everybody speaks something different. Actually my generation in Israel, or in between my mother's generation speaks Ladino very well. And now since I started talking to them in Ladino, now we can communicate. But before it was only English, which I feel also a bit pity. Because they are my family and I speak in a totally foreign language with them. [3rd-m-22-neo-fam3]

Interaction between the second and third generations and their peers in Israel is predominantly conducted in English, leading to a communication gap with older relatives who are unfamiliar with English or Turkish. This lack of a shared language can make

individuals feel marginalised during interactions. Rafi juxtaposes his sense of exclusion before learning Judeo-Spanish with the relief he experienced afterwards. His regret about mainly using English to communicate with family members reflects a desire for a more 'familiar' language: *"Because they are my family and I speak in a totally foreign language with them".* Learning Judeo-Spanish thus becomes more than just a linguistic choice for Rafi; it becomes an effort to overcome language barriers and establish a deeper connection with family (cf. Kirschen 2020).

Much like Rafi (cf. 5-44) and Albert below (cf. 5-45), the majority of third-generation consultants feel excluded from family gatherings where the elders frequently converse in Judeo-Spanish.

> **5-45. Albert**: For example, we were sitting in a Shabbat table dinner in Friday evening in our house, like couple of years ago, and my grandparents, let's say mother of my father starts to talk in [Judeo-]Spanish, starts talking Ladino and I looked at her face and said that: <I don't understand, just tell me something in Turkish!> but I get some words in between, that's all I think. They don't talk to me in [Judeo-]Spanish, in Ladino, but when they talked in between themselves, I understand some words, that's all I get. […] they talk because it's their normal language to talk in between themselves. [3rd-m-35-passive-ind]

Albert acknowledges his limited understanding of Judeo-Spanish, admitting difficulty in keeping up with the conversation. This linguistic barrier leads him to request a switch to Turkish for easier comprehension. Such scenarios often leave third-generation members with a strong sense of frustration. Additionally, the use of Judeo-Spanish during family gatherings, particularly in conversations between his parents and grandparents, underscores its role as the language of intimacy and a habitual practice within the family. The statement, *"they talk because it's their normal language to talk in between themselves"*, emphasizes the habitual use of Judeo-Spanish in these settings, highlighting its status as the preferred language for intergenerational communication among older family members, even when grandchildren, who have only a limited understanding, are present.

5.4.2 Peer domain

Social networks play a crucial role in shaping individual language practices (Pauwels 2016: 11). The dispersion of Turkish Sephardim throughout Istanbul has altered the dynamics of social connections and interactions between Sephardim and the wider community. Most consultants, particularly those in the second and third generations, reported having both Turkish and Jewish friends with whom they frequently interact. However, for the first generation members, many of whom are retired, maintaining regular contact with predominantly Jewish friends and peers appeared to be essential.

For instance, Beri sees his friends at the non-Jewish *Cercle d'Orient Club* in the vibrant Beyoğlu district. During these gatherings they mostly engage in playing cards.

> **5-46. Beri**: Si ya téngo akí [amigos], me vo káda ał día, akí tenémos un luguár, ke mos arekojémos los djudíos, ke se yáma Dernék. Mos vámos ayá, en káda ał día a las dódje. Médya, mos asentámos, djuguámos, avlámos i tornámos a káza.
>
> ('Yes, I have [friends] here, I go there every day, there we have a place, called Dernék. We go there, every day at twelve. Noon, we sit, play, talk, and then return home.') [1st-m-88-fluent-fam10]

During these encounters, Beri speaks both Turkish and Judeo-Spanish. For this generation, which is fully proficient in both languages, language choice, code-switching and code-mixing among peers are not marked (Eastman 1992; Myers Scotton 1983), according to Beri.

> **5-47. Beri**: Ayá, i en espanyól avlán, en la mezá porké son djudíos, i en túrko ávlan. Mas múcho [depende] --- kómo se úza la persóna. Aɣóra kuándo es, aɣóra si me ávlan a mi en espanyól i en túrko pára mi no me diféra, m'entendítes?
>
> ('There, they also speak [Judeo-]Spanish at the table, because they are Jews, and they also speak in Turkish. Much more depends on each person's habits, now when it is, now if they speak to me in [Judeo-]Spanish and in Turkish, it doesn't matter to me, you understand?') [1st-m-88-fluent-fam10]

For Beri, what is truly essential is the ability to understand his interlocutor: "*entendér el de-- entendér lo ke sta avlándo, entendérlo el de enfrénte"* ('to understand the --- understand what he/she is saying, to understand the person in front of you'). On the other hand, Jak perceives mutual understanding among peers as insufficient. Therefore, he actively and consciously steers his peers towards switching to Judeo-Spanish during their interactions.

> **5-48. Jak**: El los ke son de mi edád, lo ávlo. De ké? Porké tómo plazer. M'esta plazyéndo. Áma, kon los mansévos, avlár ał aíre. A ken éstas avlándo? [1st-m-75-fluent-fam8]
>
> ('With those who are my age, I speak Judeo-Spanish. Why? Because I take pleasure in it. I like it. But speaking it with the younger ones feels like talking into the air. With whom do you speak?')

Here, Jak reveals a nuanced perspective on intergenerational communication dynamics. He expresses a clear generational distinction in language use. With his peers who are fluent in Judeo-Spanish, the speaker engages in conversation and derives personal satisfaction from communicating with them in Judeo-Spanish, as suggested by the phrase *"tómo plazer, m'esta plazyéndo"* ('I take pleasure, I like it'). However, when it comes to younger individuals, he uses a metaphorical expression *"avlár ał aíre"* ('talking into the air'). This metaphor conveys a sense of futility in trying to converse with the younger generation when they don't even understand the language. The rhetorical question "*a ken éstas avlándo?"* ('with whom do you speak?') further emphasises the sense of isolation in having no response back. Contrary to my initial expectations, which were

derived from the literature review, the data revealed that, among the first generation, every individual reported using Judeo-Spanish with their peers. This practice took place predominantly in a code-switching fashion. Within this generational cohort, Jüdit[80] stands out as the sole consultant who exclusively communicates with her friends in Judeo-Spanish when they gather at the swimming club on the Islands: "*Si espanyol. Todo espanyol. Sí."* ('Yes, in [Judeo-]Spanish, all in [Judeo-]Spanish. Yes.'). Reported use in this case is in line with my field observations.

The second and third generations, for the most part, displayed a consistent pattern of frequent interactions with both Turkish and Jewish friends. Second-generation consultants primarily communicate with their peers in Turkish. 15 individuals (8 females, 7 males) reported incorporating Judeo-Spanish into their conversations with their Jewish peers, often in the form of individual expressions or words within a predominantly Turkish context as Lola reveals below.

> **5-49. Lola**: No! No téngo maz, maz no téngo. Avlámos tódo en túrko, ma aɣóra, en vézes, metémoz únaz --- advérboz, únos provérboz, los kulaneámos éstos provérbos en espanyól ke moz ambezímos de muestras mádres.
>
> ('No! I don't have any [friends with whom she communicates in Judeo-Spanish] anymore, I don't have [them] anymore. We say everything in Turkish, but now sometimes we insert some --- adverbs, some proverbs, we use these proverbs in [Judeo-]Spanish that we remember from our mothers.') [2nd-f-61-S-fluent-ind]

As is evident in consultants' language profiles in Appendix 1, 13 out of 22 second-generation consultants claim fluency in Judeo-Spanish. These individuals could effortlessly conduct interviews and engage in intricate conversations in Judeo-Spanish. Nevertheless, as indicated by the majority of consultants, Judeo-Spanish continues to manifest primarily through individual expressions and words in an increasingly marked manner and, in the past decade, more often.

In the third generation, three individuals (Salamon[81], Suzan[82], Rafi[83]) reported intentionally and purposefully using Judeo-Spanish with their friends. What unites these three individuals is a shared aspiration to actively contribute to the reversal of language shift and to access Sephardic cultural heritage directly, without mediation through the Turkish language. Unlike the second-generation consultants, these individuals do not share the same level of fluency and language exposure and acquisition. Among this generation, the use of Judeo-Spanish between friends comes in the form of individual

[80] [1st-f-83-fluent-fam6]
[81] [3rd-m-43-fluent-ind]
[82] [3rd-f-22-Spanish-fam1]
[83] [3rd-m-22-neo-fam3]

words, which this generation call “the last words”, a topic discussed separately in Section 5.4.5. These last words form a list of around 50 words which the third generation of heritage speaker can actively produce or passively recognise. In the intricate tapestry of Turkish Sephardic multilingual practices, these last words resemble clandestine whispers echoing through the corridors of Sephardic tradition and heritage.

5.4.3 Code language

One of the strongest roles that Judeo-Spanish still holds among the Turkish Sephardim is that of a code-language between the fluent and less fluent Sephardim, in both the public and the private domain (Altabev 2003: 70; Harris 1982a: 94; 1994: 167; Romero 2008). As Mendi asserts, Judeo-Spanish has consistently fulfilled its primary role as an in-group code language since its very beginning.

> **5-50. Mendi**: Tenémos la ávla espanyóla. Ésta ávla espanyóla, no es ke tuvímos múncha amór a Espánya. La verdád dirémos. Eh, de ke? Kuálo es ésto? Porké tuvímos el menestér de tenér úna língua, un kálko éntre mozótros ke ótros no la entyénden, no la komprénden, i tenémos u tuvímos el menestér de avlár éntre mozotros pára ke ótros no syéntan i no entyéndan. Es por ésto ke tuvímos el espanyól mozótros. [1st-m-70-fluent-ind]
>
> (‘We have the [Judeo-]Spanish language, this [Judeo-]Spanish language is not because we ever had much love for Spain. Let’s be honest. Eh, why? What is this? Because we needed to have a language, a calque among ourselves that others don’t understand, and we needed or have the need to speak among ourselves so that others do not hear or understand. This is why we have had Spanish.’).

Mendi’s perspective on the use of Judeo-Spanish among the Sephardim is marked by a mixed stance. On the one hand, he clarifies that the Sephardic community’s adoption of Judeo-Spanish is not rooted in “*múncha amór a Espánya”* ‘much love for Spain’. According to Mendi, the maintenance of Judeo-Spanish has been a necessity in order to have an in-group language that remains *intentionally* incomprehensible to the majority. As Mendi explained in the follow up questions, this need for an intra-group language serves a dual function: maintaining privacy as a means of protection and reinforcing group distinctiveness. This function aligns with Barth’s concept of the “continuing dichotomization between members and outsiders” (Barth 1998: 14) (cf. § 3.3.2).

Of the 60 consultants in this study, 45 consultants (78.3 percent) acknowledged using a code language in a variety of settings, including family interactions and public spaces like shops, taxis, school, while travelling, etc. Among them, the majority, 41 consultants, employ Judeo-Spanish, while three prefer French, two resort to Greek, one uses Hebrew, and another English as their code language. Notably, two respondents initially used Judeo-Spanish as their code language before transitioning to French. A code language is employed by all generations in various ways, regardless of their level

of fluency (cf. Christodouleas 2008: 33; Romero 2017: 277). A typical scenario occurs when the first and second generations wish to convey something without the younger generation understanding, as Naftali discloses.

> **5-51. Naftali**: Puédes, puédes tenér únas kózas ke vas as avlár kon tu mádre i kon tu íjo no kéres ke tu íjo entiyände. Éstos kózas. Kuándo, kuándo ay kózas kómo ésto, lo avló, ésta avlándo kon mi mádre en djudyó. Kómo éra en el kávzo en la káza de mi nené.
>
> ('You can have things that you talk about with your mother and you don't want your son to understand. These things. When there are things like this, I talk about them, I'm talking with my mother in Judeo[-Spanish]. Like it was in the past, in my grandmother's house.') [2nd-m-45-fluent-fam12]

In Naftali's household, Judeo-Spanish serves primarily for private conversations with his mother and for subjects he prefers his child not to understand. Additionally, he suggests a perpetuation of communication practices passed down from his grandparents to his parents. Conversely, Salomon, a fluent speaker of the third generation, employs Judeo-Spanish exclusively as a code language in public contexts:

> **5-52. Salamon**: Mozótroz avlámoz en túrko. Múchaz, múchaz vézez, kuándo salímoz a la káye, kuándo no kerémoz ke nos --- ke moz entyéndan, avlámoz en ladíno.
>
> ('We speak in Turkish. Many, many times when we go out, when we don't want other to --- to hear us, we speak Ladino.') [3rd-m-43-fluent-ind]

Being exposed to Judeo-Spanish as a code language sparks ambivalent feelings in most third-generation consultants (cf. § 5.3.1; 5.3.2). Metin explains how the use of Judeo-Spanish as a code language made him feel excluded from the conversation.

> **5-53. Metin**: I was shouting, I was arguing that <I don't want to hear you talking in [Judeo-]Spanish, because I want to understand what you are talking about and I don't understand [Judeo-]Spanish!>. And I was shouting, I was arguing and I didn't, I was closing my ears not to hear it, because it was making me feel like they are trying to speak private things, that they don't want me to understand. So, I didn't try to understand the words, I was trying to change them. Nowadays, I understand that I was doing something wrong. But, as a child, you can never know what will happen. [3rd-m-30-S-Spanish-ind]

Metin's account of his reactions to hearing Judeo-Spanish (closing ears, shouting, arguing) reveals a major discomfort caused by not understanding the language and by the feeling of intentional exclusion: *"it was making me feel like they are trying to speak private things".* Metin acknowledges a conscious shift in perspective over time, however, his negative attitudes towards Judeo-Spanish expressed at the different times during the interview might be an indicator of the unconscious response patterns he developed in his childhood.

In the majority of second-generation consultants, on the other hand, the use of languages as code languages sparked a heightened interest in and ultimately facilitated the learning of these languages.

5-54. Luna: Múchas vézes la khénte usáva el ladíno pára avlár kósas ke no kerían ke sus íkhos enterásen, péro mésma así sírve. Sírve, porké los nínyos son aténtos. Van atrás de tódo. Aún así, és preferído ke avlásen en kása pára eskondér las kózas. Vále, pára lo ke séa.

('Many times people used Ladino to talk about things they didn't want their children to understand, but even so, it works. It works because children are attentive. They are behind everything. Still, it is preferable for them to speak at home to hide things. It serves, only for it to be.') [2nd-f-55-H-fluent-ind]

Luna's remarks are reinforced by Edna's (cf. 5-55) and Moshe's (cf. 5-56) accounts below, which reveal that the use of several languages in their families as code languages sparked their interest in learning these languages.

5-55. Edna: Mozótros sólo, sólo aƀlámos en espanyól. Mi mádre i mi pádre aƀláƀlan en espanyól. Un póko, un póko en fransés aƀláƀlan. No syémpre. Kuándo kerían ke no, ke kóza, pára guadrár de mozótros, pára ke no --- no kerían ke énten—entendyérmos, akél tyémpo i noz aƀláƀlan en fransé, ma, en muy, muy kúrto tyémpo, ésta vez empesímos a entendér i en fransé. Ma syémpre se aƀláƀla en ladíno.

('We only spoke in [Judeo-]Spanish at home. My mother and my father spoke in [Judeo-]Spanish. They spoke a little, a little French. Not always. When they wanted, for certain things, to keep it from us, they did not want us to understand, at that time, so they spoke in French, but, in a very, very short time, this time we started to understand French as well. But Ladino was always spoken.') [2nd-f-60-fluent-fam9]

5-56. Moshe: My parents also my grandparents when they wanted something that I will not understand they would speak French. But let's say, 15-16 years old, I started a French course, and I started to speak a little bit French and so it couldn't be their secret language. And if they wanted to speak something in secret, they would choose Greek, they were not very competent in that, but they could carry on small-talks. [2nd-m-42-semi-fam7]

Moshe's narrative indicates that his parents employed various languages as code languages over the years (Judeo-Spanish, French, Greek), which resulted in him learning all of them until they no longer had a distinct code language to rely on. During the interview, Moshe revealed his active engagement with Greek language and culture, including listening to podcasts, spending summer holidays in Greece, and showing a keen interest in Greek music. He considered the use of code languages as a valuable mechanism that enhanced his foreign language learning. These accounts suggest that, in the absence of direct language transmission, the use of code languages has inadvertently become the most effective channel for transmitting Judeo-Spanish to the next generations. Because this process of language acquisition occurs unconsciously, consultants often do not realise their ability to speak Judeo-Spanish until another situation where a code language is required arises, as highlighted in Milen's accounts of her brother's army experience, which revealed his previously unrecognised proficiency in Judeo-Spanish.

5-57. Milen: I, el ányo pasádo, mi ermáno de chíko fwi al --- mi-- servísyo militár i ayí kyére avlár kon nosótros, péro kére eskondér de la hénte, i ensúpito ávla en ladíno. I yo digó a mi mádre [laughing]: <Kómo se puéde?> No lo se, no lo sáve en náda i

> aóra ávla porké eskuchó múcho, i por éso ávla. Si, ávla muy buéno!
>
> ('Last year, my younger brother went to do his military service, and there he wants to speak with us, but wants to hide from people, so immediately speaks Ladino. And I say to my mother [laughing]: <How can this be?> I don't know, he does not know either, and now he speaks because he listened a lot, and that's why he speaks. Yes, he speaks very well!') [3rd-f-38-neo-ind]]

To reconcile a lack of privacy with his wish to conceal his ethnic identity, he opted to communicate with his family in Judeo-Spanish as a code language. As discussed in Sections 5.4.4. and 6.4, young recruits often choose to conceal their identity during military service due to the historically elevated risk of antisemitic behaviour. Five additional consultants have corroborated the use of Judeo-Spanish as a code language during their military service.

Finally, the habitus of using Judeo-Spanish as a code language in public settings is underscored by Bensyon's humorous narrative of his experience in Spain.

> **5-58. Bensyon**: Ayóra si mos vámos, akí en túrko en la Túrkiya, dizémos kon los amígos en un lugár, si mos estámos pára si'stámos avlándo úna kóza enríva de la Túrkiya, lo avlámos ésto en Ladíno; mozós ke mo'stámos auzádos avlámoz en ladíno. I mos fuímos ayá a un lugár a bevér un kafé, úna bíra i mozós, pára ke no entyéndan, avlímos en ladíno. En vedrá! D'ayá dísho un ómbre: <Ya entendímos tódo!> Akél púnto mos despertímos: <Tódo ya lo entendí,> dísho <lo ke'stáysh avlándo!> Ma no avlímos úna kóza négra. Kómo stámos auzádos akí pára ke no entyéndan, éste módo un kávzo mos pasó ayá. <Ya lo entendí tódo!> dísho! [laughing].
>
> ('Now, if we go, here in Turkish, in Turkey, let's say, with friends in one place, if we are talking about something related to Turkey, we talk about it in Ladino; we who are used to this, we talk in Ladino. And we went there to drink a coffee, a beer, and for them not to understand, we speak in Ladino. Really! From there, a man said: <We understood everything!> At that point, we woke up: <I understood everything,> he said <what you're talking about!> But we didn't say anything negative. How we are used here, so they don't understand, this happened to us there. <I understood everything now!> he said [laughing]!') [2nd-m-61-fluent-ind]

Bensyon and his friends employed Judeo-Spanish in Spain, much as they did in Turkey, as a deliberate choice to facilitate private communication and exercise discretion within a shared, public space. As Bensyon's surprise at discovering the mutual intelligibility of Spanish and Judeo-Spanish in the Spanish context suggests, this habitual code-switching in public has become an unconscious habitus and practice for him. I noted this nearly automatic transition to Judeo-Spanish in public settings, which had become so ingrained that consultants were unaware that everyone in Spain could understand them. These insights bring us back to Mendi's initial thoughts on the necessity of an in-group language that remains *intentionally* incomprehensible to the majority, but also to family members who, in certain contexts need to be excluded from the conversation. As observed, this practice not only facilitates language learning and multilingualism among the younger generations but also sustains intergenerational language transmission to

this day. Furthermore, it serves as a protective measure in situations when revealing one's ethnic identity could be detrimental, such as in the military. Finally, the use of a code language seems to represent an in-group strategy used by the Sephardim to enhance group boundaries and distinctiveness.

5.4.4 Onomastic

Beyond religious affiliation and language, names serve as vital identity markers (Edwards 2009: 34; Joseph 2004: 176-178). Naming practices are strongly reflective of communal traditions and represents "a social act with symbolic and political significance" (Ender 2016: 9). Particularly in minority contexts, the enduring presence of names showcases the social cohesion within an ethnic group and the minority's commitment to preserving their ethnic identity. Although it remains a prevalent tradition among Turkish Sephardim to name children after grandparents in a specific order that starts with the paternal grandparents, the dynamics of naming practices constitute a complex phenomenon that requires closer examination. As effectively shown by Walkowiak (2011), the dynamics of personal names can reflect covert mechanisms of language policies and form part of a wider set of practices which underlie language policy.

Moreover, a shift in names can strongly indicate an individual's inclination to conceal their ethnic affiliation, driven either by the fear of potential reprisals or a desire to align with the majority group and access the same opportunities. In the Sephardic tradition in Turkey, naming, like language, has been subjected to external pressure to varying degrees since the beginning of the Turkish Republic (cf. § 2.3.6). Although the Jewish minority, like the Greek and Armenian minorities, was not required by the *Surname Law* (January 1935) to change their names, its symbolism, which is deeply anchored in the myths of cultural nationalism and the *Citizen speak Turkish!* campaign, still reverberates today among the Sephardim and the other non-Muslim minorities of Turkey (cf. Ender 2016). In my interviews, many individuals expressed feeling what Türköz (2018: 143, 149) called "semiotic burden" in their names and pressure to adapt their names in order to avoid being identified as Jews.

> **5-59. Treysi**: In Turkey, people, Jews, don't often want to know that the non-Jews know that they are Jewish. So, they don't speak it outside of their homes because it draws attention. Also their names are not Turkish, they also have Turkish versions of their names. We are a very closed community. We are a little bit afraid of being known as Jews. [3rd-f-40-passive-fam11]

Treysi attributes the reluctance to reveal non-Turkish names to a desire to keep a low profile (cf. § 6.3.1; 6.3.2). The adoption of alternative typically Turkish names suggests a strategic effort to blend seamlessly into the broader Turkish culture, aiming to lower visibility as members of the Jewish community. Blending in does not necessarily imply a desire to smooth out the boundaries between different groups. Instead, it often points to an observed tendency to conceal one's Jewish identity outside the home or circle of trust (cf. § 6.3.2). This awareness, frequently highlighted in personal narratives, acknowledges potential challenges such as discrimination and prejudice. Additionally, there is often a preference to avoid being categorized within a hierarchy of belonging that marginalizes the Sephardim.

In an interview given to Türköz (2018: 155-156) in preparation for the launch of her book on June 13, 2000, Rifat Bali stated that the Jews were "those who wanted to completely disappear" and were among the first to transition to a Turkish identity. Prominent Jewish figures like Munis Tekinalp[84] (Moiz Cohen, 1883-1961) led the Turkish Nationalist movement (Türköz 2018: 156) and were key supporters of the Kemalist reforms and the *Surname Law*. despite these Turkification efforts, the Jews' attempts appeared 'inauthentic' and 'insincere', as reflected in contemporary antisemitic publications (Mallet 1996).

> As if it is not enough that they are creating commercial and economic damage, now they have reached to the most sacred places. They are stealing the blessed names of the heroic Turkish race. How can Oğuzhan, Kayihan, Tekinalp, Cengiz, Bozkurt be the name of a thankless Spanish Jew? (Milli Inkilap July, 1934 No. 5, p. 6 cited in Türköz 2018: 159)

In an effort to downplay their ethnicity, Sephardic individuals have 'voluntarily' adopted various strategies for name dissimulation. Some have opted for (1) Turkish names or names with a 'more Turkish' sound, such as *Rifat* (derived from Raphael) or truncated forms like *Deyvi* (derived from David). (2) Others have chosen a Muslim version of a Jewish name, such *Moris* becoming *Metin* or *Joseph* becoming *Yusuf* (cf. Türköz 2018: 156) or a direct Turkish translation of a Sephardic name, as seen in the pairing of ***Güneş*** (> Tk. 'sun') and the Sephardic name *Soli* (> JS. for 'sun'), the former being the official name in the documents and the latter being used within the community. Another female individual officially goes by *Mazalto* (> Hebr. *טוֹב מַזָּל*, 'good fortune'), but within the community, she is known as *Tuna* (> JS. *Fortuna* 'good fortune'). Notably, in this shortened form, 'Tuna' is also a Turkish name, though typically for males.

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[84] Among Tekinalp's most significant publications were *Türkleşme* ('Turkification'), published in 1928.

These results are in line with Ender's findings in *İsmiyle Yaşamak* (2016) ('To Live on with One's Name'), based on the analysis of a collection of 45 interviews with non-Muslim Turkish individuals from Jewish, Armenian, Greek, and Assyrian backgrounds. Ender found that the great majority of her consultants remembered and reproduced the narratives of the 1930s, which influenced their choices to adopt a system of double names, use only Turkish names, truncated forms of Sephardic names, or opt for names with a more western resonance.

> I have two names: Suzan and Gilda. Suzan sounds more Turkish and public officials prefer to call me by that name. But… one question really pisses me off: 'Are you a foreigner?' I hear this question from the people that I would never expect to hear (…) We [the Jewish community in Turkey] did not have a relationship with the outside, I mean, Anatolian cities, state bureaucracy. While I was becoming professional [in journalism], I started to interview with [ordinary] people, then I felt the heaviness of my name. You feel that because people shows that you are different from them. You feel this difference from people's questions. (Ender 2016: 130)

Gilda's frustration is rooted in the question: *"Are you a foreigner?",* which she interprets as a mechanism of assigning identity based on her distinctive-sounding name. For Gilda, and as observed with several consultants, the perceived linguistic difference in their names has repercussions on how they are perceived within certain social groups or Turkish society as a whole. Male Sephardim, especially those serving in the army, appear to be particularly affected by the consequences of their Sephardic names, according to Emel. Perceptions of antisemitism can significantly impact how individuals name their children. Emel chose non-Jewish-identifiable names for her children to shield them from discrimination.

> **5-60. Emel**: Le díshe a mi suégro: <Si kerés tu nómbre Izak, ya puédo metér.> Porké éste nómbre lo kéro múncho. I mi suégra dísho: <No! A la ija le metímos en Túrko. I a el se va metér en Túrko.> I izímos Ilker, el nómbre. Éste módo fué. Mísmo éste módo, en el servisío militár, ke mi íjo kómo eskápo üniversité en Master, en Erzurum, mísmo ke ízo sínko méses, muy póko; el guadró ke éra djudío. Se'spánto tánto de los ke aví. Guadró. Ilker es un nómbre túrko. Dingúnos no se'stávan puedyéndo imajinár kuálo es Gaón. I un día le demandó <Gaón, Gaón!> No stan puedyéndo ni dizír, i el ayá dísho ke es hudío. Ayá dísho ke es hudío. I dospués, fin a terminó, veraménte, pasó un tyémpo muy difisíl. Muy, muy difisíl. Antisemítos. Éra el sólo hudío éntre kuátro mil persónas. En sínko mézes peryó dyéz kílos. Es muy difisíl akí. Veraménte, y'ay mas de kinyéntas ányos ke'stamós akí, ma no sómo d'akí. Sómos hudíos i en Israél sómos túrkos.
>
> ('I said to my father-in-law, <If you want, I can name him like you, Izak>. Because I really like this name. And my mother-in-law said, <No! We gave the daughter a Turkish name. And he will also have a Turkish name.> And we named him Ilker. This is how it happened. The same way, during military service, as soon as my son finished his master's degree, Erzurum, even if he did five months, very short; he kept it a secret that he was Jewish. He was so scared of those people there. He kept it to himself. Ilker is a Turkish name. No one could imagine what Gaon is. And one day they asked, <Gaon, Gaon!> They couldn't even pronounce it, and he said he is Jewish there. He said he is Jewish. And from then on, until the end, he really experienced a very difficult time. Very, very difficult. Antisemites. He was the only Jew among four

thousand people. He lost ten kilos in five months. It's very difficult here. Really, we've been here for more than five hundred years, but we're not from here. We're Jews and in Israel we're Turks.') [2nd-f-64-fluent-fam4]

Emel's insights illuminate the fear of being identified as part of a minority in general and as Jewish in particular. Ilker could dissimulate his ethnicity by bearing a Turkish given name until his peers started inquiring about his family name. When his Jewish identity was revealed, he suffered marginalisation and a great deal of pressure. Emel's accounts reveal a pervasive sense of liminality, a lasting feeling of not experiencing complete acceptance in any of the countries where Turkish Sephardim reside or seek to immigrate, be it Turkey or Israel, despite the centuries they have resided in Turkey. Additionally, Emel wryly alludes to a further trope in their identity construction, Spain, highlighting the weariness expressed by numerous Jewish individuals concerning the bureaucratic complexities involved in acquiring Spanish nationality. She remarks: *"Agóra no se, en Espánya kuálo vámos a 'star! Kon las léyes, no se las kuálo va ser, no se veraménte"* ('Now I don't know what we are going to be in Spain! With the laws, I don't know what is going to happen, I really don't know.')

Today, however, a shift in this narrative is observable within the third generation. Consistent with the perspectives on language shift explored in sections 2.3.7 and 5.3, the third generation exhibits a discernible positive inclination towards reintroducing Sephardic names for their children. This trend implies that Sephardic names have regained symbolic significance as the last remaining elements of the Sephardic collective experience (cf. Türköz 2018).

5.4.5 "The last words"[85]

All generations of the Turkish Sephardim predominantly use Judeo-Spanish in a code-mixing mode. Among the first generation of fluent speakers, and to a lesser extent among semi-speakers of the second generation, Judeo-Spanish is employed as an unmarked spoken vernacular within specific domains of daily life. For instance, Mendi employs Judeo-Spanish in situations dictated by particular religious or cultural contexts of his involvement in the Turkish Jewish community. In these instances, the use of Judeo-Spanish inserts communicates the speaker's intended message more effectively.

5-61. Mendi: Mas múncho yo estó empleándo el Ladíno akí, en avlándo kon los rabínos pára dizír un provérbo, pára dizír úna eskpresyón, pára amostrár o pára tradusír el Ebréo kon byérvos adekuádos, lo empléo el Ladíno akí. Péro, en mi káza,

[85] This title is derived from the English translation of the film title *Las ultimas palabras* (2015) ('The last words') by Rita Ender and Yorgo Demir. As several consultants described their linguistic repertoire as their "last words," I adopted this term in this dissertation.

> kuándo éra en káza i mi mujér éra sefaradía, en káza avlávamos en Túrko.
>
> ('I am using Ladino more here, speaking with the rabbis to say a proverb, to express a phrase, to show or to translate Hebrew with suitable words. But at home, when I was at home and my wife was Sephardic, we spoke in Turkish'). [1st-m-70-fluent-ind]

For the third generation, however, the use of Judeo-Spanish elements, whether particular words or specific intonations, primarily serves a marked, performative role (cf. § 5.6). For Rafi[86] and his peers, Judeo-Spanish is incorporated "in between some prayers, in between some jokes". Beti[87] remembers words like *ijíka* 'little girl'*, lényo de bányo*[88] 'bath wood'*, luvia* 'rain'*, no se kera* 'they don't love each other'. Suzan[89] remembers words like *guapa* 'beautiful', *muchachíca* 'little girl', *dar* 'to give', *mirár* 'to look', *mírala* 'look at her', *íjo* 'boy', *íja* 'girl', *chíko* 'small boy', *chíka* 'small girl', *mósa* 'woman', *lényo* 'wood', *vazío*[90] 'empty', *ver* 'to see', *pishar* 'to pee' and expressions like *kaminándo i avlándo* ('walking and talking', meaning 'time will tell'), *el dío ke no me tráyga* ('God forbid')*, védre* 'muslim', *alevantár* ('wake up') and *kreatúra* ('child')*.* Interestingly, as Kaden reveals and in line with the findings of the film project *Las Ultimas palavras* (2015), among this generation, there appears to be a consensus regarding the selection of words and the contexts in which they are used.

> **5-62. Kaden**: But usually, always the same words. I mean about the food or *ya básta* ['enough'], like the words that they were always angry at us. So, immediately switching to Ladino when they are angry or trying to hide something. So, it's always around the same words. [3rd-f-33-Spanish-fam6]

The third generation often reproduces these words and intonations without a precise understanding of their meaning, yet they evoke associations, memories, or emotions within the specific moments and contexts of their expression. The use of Judeo-Spanish words in Kaden's family is part of a code-switching pattern where specific words or phrases in Judeo-Spanish are consistently used during instances of tension or when attempting to conceal information.

Suzan associates these words with the older generation, imbuing them with a sense of temporal distance. While she often uses them in family and social settings, she mainly does so with her peers, particularly during performative acts where she mimics the behaviour and speech of older Sephardic individuals (cf. Shandler 2004: 22). Rafi

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[86] [3rd-m-22-neo-fam3]
[87] [3rd-f-21-Spanish-ind]
[88] In Turkish *Hamam odunu* (bathhouse wood') is used to describe individuals who exhibit socially awkward or inappropriate behaviour. It refers to someone who lacks social finesse in their interactions.
[89] [3rd-f-22-Spanish-fam1]
[90] Used to describe individuals who engage in nonsensical or foolish behaviour, or who talk in a manner devoid of substance.

acknowledges that he often employs specific Judeo-Spanish expressions, particularly curses, not only among his Sephardic peers but also with non-Sephardic friends who have begun to adopt Judeo-Spanish as an in-group code language.

> **5-63. Rafi**. Yes, Ladino words, we use a lot. Like *vazío* ['empty'], *lényo* ['wood']', all these curses we use a lot. And even now I thought some of my Turkish friends those words. And now we are using it in between, so the others don't understand it. [3rd-m-22-H-neo-fam3]

Rafi's experience underscores the dynamic nature of postvernacular use of such expressions, in which individuals draw from multiple linguistic sources to navigate social interactions and construct shared meanings. These shared meanings are exemplified in Binyamin's narratives about the expressive power of specific Judeo-Spanish words he employs.

> **5-64. Binyamin**: You know what *mopláto* means? It's this thing, stuff in the home, has no need for that. You know, for example, a table it's really hard to carry, it takes so much space, and you say *mopláto* thing, we don't need this. You can also use this for a person. Kind of a *mopláto,* you know, like you don't need it. I don't know, some words express the type of person that I know --- I don't know. That's nice to express, you know [reflective tone]. That's why I think, I like and because I don't have any words in me before, for a person let's say, I don't have any words for that, you know. That word matches completely with this Jewish person, let's say. [3rd-m-22-heritage-fam5].

Binyamin introduces the term *mopláto* 'immobile, obstacle, superfluous', shedding light on its significance and use within the Sephardic cultural context. He emphasises that *mopláto*cannot be adequately translated into Turkish or any other language he knows, highlighting its unique cultural connotations. When using this term, Binyamin associates it with individuals he knows within the community who embody its characteristics, fostering a sense of familiarity and connection to his cultural heritage (cf. § 5.6). Throughout the interview, Binyamin expresses a deep-seated regret regarding his feeling of exclusion from conversations due to his lack of knowledge of Judeo-Spanish (cf. 5-25). The reflective tone conveyed by the phrase *"That's nice to express, you know"* suggests that Binyamin values the opportunity to use these few words and expressions, such as *mopláto*.

The "last words" used by the third generation serve as intergenerational bridges, allowing individuals to preserve a link to their Sephardic heritage despite linguistic barriers. I have identified seven domains in which these "last words" are employed, findings that align with the domains explored in the film *Las ultimas palavras* (2015).

1. **Exclamations and imperatives**: *a dyo sánto!* 'oh my god', *es pekádo!* 'it's a sin!', *deshalo!* 'leave that!', *káya!* 'shut up'

2. **Untranslatable[91] words**: *mopláto* ‘obstacle, good for nothing’, *séfte*[92] ‘unpleasant’, ‘unfriendly’
3. **Abstract concepts**: *vída* ‘life’, *muryó* ‘died’, *kayadés* (‘quiet’, with the meaning of ‘remaining silent’), *pasénsya* ‘patience’, *pezgadúra* (‘heaviness’, with the realisation *pezgádo* (‘heavy’, referring to a person), ‘*vazío’* ‘useless’
4. **Derogatory words and insults**: *lóko* ‘crazy’, *lónso* (‘bear’ with the meaning of ‘rude’, ‘impolite’, foolish)
5. **Words used as code language**: *la gránde* ‘the older sister/brother’, *la chikitíka* ‘the younger’, *la novia* ‘the bride’
6. **Words of intimacy and affection**: *mi kerída* ‘my love’, *mi álma* ‘my soul’
7. **Food-related words**: *berenjéna* ‘eggplant’, *domatíkas* ‘tomatoes’, *arós* ‘rice’, *kárne* ‘meat’

When using these words, individuals do not feel any less at home than fluent speakers do in their offline communication or interactions in the “Digital Home-Lands” (cf. § 5.7). I refer to these zones as *rhetorical legacy zones*, drawing on Descombes’ (2002 [1992]: 163) conceptualisation of home as a virtual rhetorical space. Descombes suggests that one’s feeling of being “at home” is tied less to geographical territory than to a shared rhetorical territory, where individuals are comfortable navigating the rhetoric of those around them.

> Where is the character at home? The question has less to do with geographical territory than with rhetorical territory (taking the word ‘rhetorical’ in the classic sense defined by rhetorical acts like defense, accusation, eulogy, censure, recommendation, warning, etc.). The character is at home only when comfortable with the rhetoric of those he lives among. One is at home when one manages to make oneself understood without too much trouble, and to understand the arguments of one’s interlocutors without benefit of long explanations. The boundary of a character’s rhetorical homeland comes at the point at which his interlocutors no longer understand the reasons he gives for his acts and gestures, the complaints he expresses, or the admiration he manifests. A disturbance in the rhetoric of communication marks the passage of this frontier, which we must imagine, of course, as a frontier zone or march rather than a clearly drawn line. (Descombes 2002 [1992]: 163)

Rhetorical legacy zones refers to virtual rhetorical spaces where individuals experience a sense of belonging and mutual understanding. These zones are marked by a shared ability to decode each other’s Judeo-Spanish utterances and the intentions behind them, creating a connection that transcends geographical boundaries and varying levels of

[91] These concepts were perceived by the consultants as “untranslatable”.
[92] Originating from the Turkish *şiftah*, ‘opening sale’ or 'first transaction of the day,’ this concept is used ironically in Judeo-Spanish to denote annoying situations like “*sefte ke me olvidi mi chanta en kaza”* (Ah, and my first achievement today, was to forget my bag at home).

language fluency. In rhetorical legacy zones, language and cultural understanding can cultivate a cohesive community, even among a dispersed and linguistically diverse group. The “frontier zones” in rhetoric between the third generation of heritage speakers and the first and second generations of fluent speakers and semi-speakers becomes apparent in their attitudes towards each other’s language use. Fluent speakers often hold a negative view of the third generation’s repertoire in Judeo-Spanish, as illustrated by Salamon’s observation.

> **5-65. Salamon**: Sáven lo ke ez, por ekzémpyo las palábras ke son un póko féas kómo ‘lényo, ‘lényo de bányo’ dízen, ‘lónso’, si. Éstas paláƀras si las konósen. I, i ay ótras paláƀras ke se dízen múcho. Aóra no m-está vyéndo al tíno. ‘Berendjéna’, si. Se díze ‘En bóka seráda no éntra móshkas’. Ésto sáves ke kére dezír? No tyéne la mízma [hesitation] el mízmo senifikádo ke tyéne en espanyól. Éste kére dezír ‘Si tu no áƀlas, no mámas’. Si no, no, si no yóras no te dan de komér, o séa si kyéres te áγan álγo, kómo se dízen en Espánya, si kéres ke te áγan káso, pues tyénes ke asérte notár.
>
> (‘They know what are, for example, the words that are a bit ugly, like ‘lényo’ (wood), ‘lényo de banyo’ [lazy] they say, ‘lonso’ [foolish], yes. They do know these words. And there are other words they employ a lot, I cannot remember them now. ‘Berendjéna’ [Eggplant], yes. They also say ‘En bóka seráda no éntra móshkas’ [In a closed mouth, flies do not enter]. Do you know what this means? It does not have the same meaning it has in [Judeo-]Spanish. This means ‘If you don't speak, you don't eat’. If you don’t cry, they won’t give you anything to eat, that is, if you want them to give you something, as they say in Spain, if you want them to pay attention to you, then you have to make yourself visible.’) [3rd-m-43-fluent-ind]

The use of the personal pronoun *they* in contrast to *us* signifies a distinct separation from a subgroup of consultants who exhibit limited use of Judeo-Spanish. With the phrase *“I i ay ótras paláƀras ke se dízen múcho”* (‘And there are other words they employ a lot’), Salamon acknowledges his awareness of the linguistic practices of the heritage speakers from whom he distinguishes himself. This awareness is further demonstrated by his remark *“Aóra no m-está vyéndo al tíno*” (‘I cannot remember them now.’) His inability to recall these words suggests his lack of personal use or familiarity with them. Salomon’s subsequent comments unveil a prevalent characteristic that is particularly noticeable among the third generation. This involves an acute awareness of the disparities between Spanish and Judeo-Spanish, as exemplified by Salomon’s frequent comparisons of the two languages. Additionally, there is a clear process of understanding and interpreting the meanings of Judeo-Spanish words through the lens of contemporary Spanish, as highlighted by Suzan.

> **5-66. Suzan**: ‘Kreatúra’ means *creature*, but they say ‘kreatúra’ for babies, so it’s interesting for me. [3rd-f-22-Spanish-fam1]

Heritage speakers tend to perceive Judeo-Spanish with particular awe and fascination, as if the language were adorned with an unattainable mystery, where meaning beyond a few familiar individual words possess an enigmatic, imagined quality. Albert Nahum, a

heritage speaker, explains in the film *Las ultimas palavras* (2015) how the mystery of Judeo-Spanish dissipates once the meanings of the words are learned: “As if, by learning their meaning, songs have lost their secret, and their unattainable character” (Albert Nahum; min 16:41). Viewing this stance through Anderson’s (2006 [1983]) perspective that all communities are imagined and that “what needs to be distinguished is the different ways in which they are imagined” (Şaul & Hualde 2016: 4) we may interpret the “secrecy” with which Judeo-Spanish is embellished as another vessel for creating a sense of a distinctive Sephardic identity. For this generation, the perception of Judeo-Spanish as an almost “sacred” language — one that cannot be learned but into which one must be born — and its presence in their daily lives seem to enhance their distinctiveness as Hispanic Sephardic individuals, regardless of their actual knowledge of the language, as noted by Şaul & Hualde (2016).

> The sense of being Hispanic Sephardic did not produce a political vessel, which is Anderson’s concern to explain, but an enduring feeling of distinctiveness within a larger religious entity, itself explicitly likened [sic] to a descent construct. The language, the vernacular that provided the medium of writing and printing, did not become the basis for political grouping, but was consolidated as the very backbone of Hispanic Sephardic distinctiveness, taking on the roles that geography and shared history play in other contexts. (Şaul & Hualde 2016: 5-6):

To return to Albert’s perceived loss of “secrecy”, once the words of the language were understood and seemed to depict the same contemporary reality, Albert’s perception of the language as a vessel of his imagined Hispanic Sephardic identity dissipated. From that moment on, he began to forget the lyrics of the songs he once knew by heart and sang without understanding their content. The imagined quality of the language is further evident in Beti’s and Elias’s narratives, in which they seem to regard Judeo-Spanish as a language unlike any other, one that cannot simply be learned through conventional means. Beti’s and Elias’s narrative reveals that, for them, acquiring knowledge of Judeo-Spanish would require special skills that are seemingly unattainable for a young Sephardic Jew living in Turkey today.

> **5-67. Beti**: I thought it’s a good thing [of learning the language], because it’s --- it has a different ---. I don’t, I don’t know how ---. I don’t know how to describe it, but it has more cultural --- so I need a secret to learn it, but there is no chance to learn it. One cannot learn it. [3rd-f-21-Spanish-ind]

> **5-68. Elias**: I want to learn Ladino, because I want to learn about history of the Turkish Jewish. So, I know that and there are so many documentaries which is written in Ladino in Turkey. So, I want to read them, so, if I have a chance to learn it, will be great for me. […] And then, I don’t have a chance to learn it, because we don’t have a place to learn Ladino in Turkey. [3rd-m-26-heritage-fam2]

Beti’s account reflects her conflicting emotions towards learning the language, expressing both a strong desire to understand it for its cultural richness and a sense of disappointment or resignation about the difficulty of ever achieving fluency. Despite

having a B2 qualification in Spanish and being able to understand my questions in Judeo-Spanish, Beti implies that learning Judeo-Spanish involves more than just language acquisition; it also requires access to a deeper cultural understanding, which remains inaccessible to her due to what she perceives as the lack of a cohesive Sephardic community. Despite recognising the value of learning the language, she feels discouraged by the challenge and expresses scepticism about the possibility of ever fully mastering it. Elias echoes Beti's sense of frustration at lacking proficiency in Judeo-Spanish. However, their perspectives diverge, with Elias driven by a desire to learn Judeo-Spanish in order to access the cultural and historical universe of the Judeo-Spanish community and viewing Judeo-Spanish as a tool to achieve that goal. Beti, on the other hand, sees cultural embedding and community cohesion as essential foundations for language learning.

As observed in this section, different generations demonstrate "hybrid language practices" (cf. Seloni & Sarfati 2013: 10) in which code-mixing and code-switching constitute the norm to varying degrees. Specifically, findings among heritage speakers who know only a few words in Judeo-Spanish suggest that the mere presence of Judeo-Spanish in the community instills a sense of unity in the outward manifestation of identity. Drawing on Ehala's (2018: 7) insights on authenticity as a mechanism for structuring social space, it can be inferred that, at the level of the third generation, fluency no longer guarantees authenticity. Instead, authenticity is perceived through the shared ability to successfully imitate code-mixing and code-switching behaviour and incorporate sentences, expressions, or concepts in a performative manner. In this sense, the third generation's "fluency" in the "last words" distinguishes "true members" from "non-members", making individuals mastering these "last words" authentic members of the Turkish Sephardic group. Moreover, it represents a bridge of transmission in the authenticity continuum between the different generations, thus ensuring an enduring sense of distinctiveness and pointing to the different innovative negociation strategies of ethnic markers through language.

These results converge with Fishman's (1989 [1977]: 36-37) and Harris's (1985: 209) suggestion that in the face of evolving ethnicity and identity, authenticity can persist or even strengthen "'The more it changes the more it remains the same' is certainly a phenomenological truism as far as ethnicity content and language corpus are concerned" (Fishman 1989 [1977]: 36-37). In essence, identity evolves more slowly and less consistently than behaviour and ideology, reflecting its deep-rooted nature and resistance to change (Fishman 1989 [1977]: 36). Harris (1985: 209) found that the loss of the heritage language does not diminish Jewish groups' sense of Jewishness or their

cultural identity, indicating the adaptability and resilience of Sephardic cultural identity. According to Harris (1985: 209), however, the cultural identity of Sephardim in New York and Israel differs from that of their counterparts in the Ottoman Empire or pre-expulsion Spain. It evolves through a blend of Levantine heritage and influences from their new environments, demonstrating an evolving yet persistent identity despite the decline of their language.

5.5 Worship

Globally, there are numerous instances of heritage languages that are preserved in the context of worship, even after language shift (Pauwels 2016; Spolsky 2003). Certain religions maintain a close association with a specific language or linguistic variety, considering it the preferred mode of direct communication with deities (Pauwels 2016: 139). In the case of the Sephardim, when Hebrew became incomprehensible for the vast majority of people, *Ladino*, the Hebrew-influenced Spanish translations of Hebrew texts (cf. § 2.3.1) gradually became the language of religious rites. Hebrew elements and theological views were also adopted in the spoken vernacular (e.g. *El Dyo* vs. *Dios*) as a way of marking belonging to the Jewish confession, which sees Divinity as One. *Ladino* gradually fell out of use in the religious domain in the second half of the 19th century (Sephiha 1975: 121), and was replaced by the spoken vernacular, Judeo-Spanish. In the second half of the 20th century, however, proficiency in Judeo-Spanish decreased dramatically. Furthermore, during this period, the Sephardim largely embraced an increasingly secular lifestyle, which diminished the significance of the knowledge of Hebrew in Jewish life. The growing lack of proficiency in both Hebrew and Judeo-Spanish made Turkish translations of Hebrew religious content indispensable. By the 1960s, within a short period of time, Turkish Jews adopted Turkish for sermons and announcements in their synagogues, as reported by Jak, who is a Rabbi involved in the process of deciding which language should be employed in the synagogue.

> **5-69. Jak**: Te diré, ésto es, fué en un tyémpo no muy lárgo. En kúrto tyémpo. […] Mil i muevishénto sesentisínko por akí ampesó el abízmo. I en kúrto tyémpo, porké? De tóda las pártes úvo la voluntád, kon amór ázer ésto. Mozótros no, áma kon la mansevés kómo lo ízen, úno ke kére úna kósa áze tódos los esfórsos pará ke se ága mas présto! Kon muestrás mános izímos úna peryóda de trénta ányos. En trénta, kuarénta ányos, en trénta kuarénta ányos úvo […] El lívro de Nisim Bahar, ke azía ensenyár el Ebréo, éra en karaktér Ráshi, Espanyól. Dospués lo izímos en karaktéres látinos en Espanyól i dospués agóra karaktéres látinos en Túrko. Fué ésto póko de kuarénta ányos. En ésta epóka ke muryó [Judeo-Spanish]. Agóra y'ay esfórsos, kuálo ke te díga, kerída mía? Kuálo ke te díga?
>
> ('I will tell you, this happened in a not very long time. In a short time. [...] In 1965, somewhere around there, the abyss started. And why in a short time? From all sides, there was a will to do this with love. Not us, but with the youth they did it, someone

> who wants something makes all efforts to make it happen sooner. With our hands, we have made this in a period of thirty years. In thirty or forty years, in thirty or forty years there was [...] Nisim Bahar's book, with which Hebrew was taught, was in Rashi characters, [Judeo-]Spanish. Then we made it in Latin characters in [Judeo-]Spanish and then now in Latin characters in Turkish. All this happened in less than forty years. During this period [Judeo-Spanish] died. Now there are efforts, what can I tell you, my dear? What can I tell you?') [1st-m-75-fluent-fam8]

Jak's narrative elucidates the beginning of what he calls the "abyss" of Judeo-Spanish in the religious domain around the year 1965. In his account, three pivotal dimensions emerge. These dimensions are the main ones reflected in the consultants' narratives throughout the data sets: the short timeframe of the transition, the agents that brought about this change, and the attitudes regarding language shift.

a. The temporal aspect: The repeated use of temporal expressions such as "*en un tyémpo no muy lárgo" (*'in a not very long time'*), "en kúrto tyémpo"* ('in a short time'), *"en trénta, kuarénta ános"* ('in thirty, forty years') *"póko de kuarénta ános"* ('less than 40 years') emphasises Jak's observation of a seemingly paradoxical and significant linguistic transformation unfolding within a relatively brief timeframe. Jak alludes to a three-to-four-decade period during which the language used for religious teaching and events gradually underwent major shifts. Before the 1960s, prayers during religious events were recited in Judeo-Spanish and Hebrew. Judeo-Spanish shifted from being written in *Solitreo* and *Rashi* characters to Latin characters before ultimately being replaced by Turkish, a process which is also reflected in Edna's narrative.

> **5-70. Edna**: E mis paryéntes meldávan un póko en ebréo, ma lo mas en djudéo-espanyól i pára terminár se meldáva yéne en ebréo. I, kuándo yo m-empesé angrandesér, loz lívros se trokáron. Empesó en ebréo, despuéz en djudéo-espanyól, despuéz en túrko. Ahóra, yo en káza téngo sólo en ebréo i en túrko.
>
> ('My parents used to pray a little in Hebrew, but mostly in Judeo-Spanish, and to finish they prayed again in Hebrew. And, when I started to grow up, the books changed. It started in Hebrew, then in Judeo-Spanish, then in Turkish. Now, at home, I have only in Hebrew and in Turkish.') [2nd-f-60-fluent-fam9]

b. Agents of change involved: Jak's sarcastic tone underscores a sense of bitterness and irony that the shift was initiated by forces internal to the community, driven by the collective *voluntád* 'will' and *amór* 'love' for change among Sephardic youth. The phrase *"kon muestrás mános"* ('with our hands') highlights the community's intentional decision and active participation in driving this linguistic transformation. In hindsight, Jak's perspective on these changes appears to be influenced by the perceived discrepancy between the community's original intentions and the observed implications of this change today.

c. Prevailing attitudes shaping and responding to language shifts: Jak's repeated query, *"Kuálo ke te díga?"* ('What can I tell you?') signifies a nuanced attitude, blending elements of acknowledgment of ongoing maintenance efforts with contemplation on their

usefulness and feelings of resignation and regret regarding the contemporary status of Judeo-Spanish. Moreover, this rhetorical question captures Jak's ongoing quest to find a balance between acknowledging the transformations that have occurred and grappling with the reality of language shift.

For the first generation, the predominant languages of ritualised prayer are Hebrew and Judeo-Spanish, while Judeo-Spanish played and still plays a prominent role in the personal prayers[93], as Jüdit, Lüsi and Tal note.

> **5-71. Jüdit**: En ladíno mas mijór: 'patrón del múndo', dyo ya entiyénde [laughing], porké avlámos mijór [Judeo-Spanish]. Lo djústo [laughing]. El túrko es meskládo [laughing].
>
> ('In Ladino, better [for praying]: creator of the world, God understands already [laughing] because we speak better [Judeo-Spanish]. Just right [laughing]. Turkish is mixed [laughing]'). [1st-f-83-fluent-fam6]
>
> **5-72. Tal**: Por roγár i por --- syémpre mozós savímos ke ispanyol es mos --- mi língua. I el dyo sáve en ispanyół [laughing]. Kuándo se ávłar ispanyol, va' entendér mas mihór.
>
> ('For prayer and for --- we always knew that [Judeo-]Spanish is our --- my language. And God knows in [Judeo-]Spanish [laughing]. When [Judeo-]Spanish is spoken, he will understand better.') [2nd-m-68-H-semi-fam11]
>
> **5-73. Sara**: Pensó, en priméro, en djudéo espanyól, segúro, […] mánya ke --- mízmo de amanyána, apénas me leványo, es en espanyól ke ágo la orasyón, i kuándo me écho tambyén ágo la orasyón en espanyól i en túrko tambyén.
>
> ('I first think in Judeo-Spanish for sure, [...] even in the mornings, as soon as I wake up, it's in [Judeo-]Spanish that I do the prayer, and when I lie down I also do the prayer in [Judeo-]Spanish, and in Turkish as well.') [1st-f-75-fluent-ind]

The narratives of the three consultants reveal a distinct preference for Judeo-Spanish in their personal prayers. In their view, Judeo-Spanish is considered *"lo djústo"* ('the right language'), implying that it is the most appropriate or suitable language for communicating with God. They express the belief that God understands their prayers *"mas mihor"* ('better') when they are spoken in Judeo-Spanish, suggesting a deep-rooted connection between Judeo-Spanish and spiritual expression, in which the content of prayer is considered untranslatable (García, Peltz & Schiffman 2006: 31). Furthermore, these accounts reflect a habitual practice inherited from their parents, with Judeo-Spanish serving as the most authentic, direct and readily understood language of communication with the divine.

For the second generation, Hebrew has become the predominant liturgical language, while Judeo-Spanish appears in form of phrases or lexical insertions at the

[93] Informal, individual conversations with the divine, often expressing personal thoughts and feelings.

beginning or at the end of prayers, according to Ezra and Jak. For this generation, Turkish has become the language of personal prayer.

> **5-74. Erzra**: Türkçe ediyorum. Ama mesela ben duaya başladığım zaman ilk söylediğim şey İspanyolca olur her zaman. 'Kon nómbre el Dio', derim. Ve birçok insanın da böyle dediğini biliyorum. yáni duaya başlangıcım İspanyolca.
>
> ('I pray in Turkish. But for example, the first thing I say when I start a prayer is always in [Judeo-]Spanish. 'In the name of God', I say. And I know many people saying that. So the beginning of my prayer is in [Judeo-]Spanish.') [2nd-f-53-passive-fam2]
>
> **5-75. Jak**: Birkát [H]aMazón[94] es úna orasyón dospués de komída, estámos azyéndo en Ebréo. En mi káza, dospés ésto en Ebréo el benitasyón, y'ay un paragráf en ladíno: 'Ya komímos i bivímos i al dyo sánto Baruch-u Baruch Schemo bendichímos. Ke mos dímos pan pára komér, pányos pára vistír, i ányos pára bivír [...].' Los dós ya sáven ésto. El chíko tambyén, áma los dos dospués de ésta benitasyón en Ebréo, ya sáven dizír ésto en Ladíno.
>
> ('Birkat HaMazon is a prayer after the meal that we recite in Hebrew. In my house, this blessing in Hebrew, there is a paragraph in Ladino: 'We have eaten and we live, and we bless our holy God. For giving us bread to eat, clothes to wear, and years to live […]. The two already know this. The two also know this. The little boy as well, and the two, after this blessing in Hebrew, they already know how to say this in Ladino.') [1st-m-75-fluent-fam8]

Today, within the family, when prayers and stories are recited during the most significant religious events such as Pesah, Rosh Hashana, and Yom Kippur, both Hebrew and Turkish are used in the majority of cases. Judeo-Spanish is only added in a few isolated cases. Some songs (e.g. *Bilbilikos*) are still sung in Judeo-Spanish. Different editions of religious texts provide the explanation of the ritual in either Judeo-Spanish or Turkish (for the newer editions). Judeo-Spanish is also present in the names of some of the most important rites, such as *meldado,* ('the commemoration of the dead'), which is especially observed among Turkish Jews (Morvan 2015: 228).

The third generation is the first to experience a diminished connection to the meanings inherent in the holy texts. Elias sheds light on the perspectives of the younger generation regarding evolving language competence and its application in worship, stating.

> **5-76. Elias**: This year, I persuaded my family to read the Pesah tales in Turkish or [Judeo-]Spanish so that we could understand. We were reading the tales since I don't know how many years and we don't even understand, it does not make sense to us at all. But my father used to tell these tales in Hebrew as my grandfather was a Rabbi. Back then, they were reading the Aggadah first in [Judeo-]Spanish and then in Hebrew, before they could eat, so it was taking two hours to read the whole tale in the two languages, they felt obligated to use the sacred language. All the religious acts should take place in Hebrew, not in Turkish. Most of the Turkish Jews complain about not knowing Hebrew at all, but the European Jews they speak perfectly and

[94] Hebrew: בִּרְכַּת הַמָּזוֹן (romanized: *birkat hammazon* 'Blessing of the Food'), commonly referred to in English as *Grace After Meals*.

> they find it a very important part of the Jewish identity to speak Hebrew, because you can communicate with all the Jews around the world. But the thing is, actually, nobody knows Hebrew. In my generation people go to the Jewish school for 15 years and they don't even learn it. Only the ones that go to Israel later learn Hebrew, but those that grow up only in Turkey don't know. There is somehow in the air for people to learn Hebrew, but nobody does. [3rd-m-26-heritage-fam2]

Elias's narrative reveals a generational shift regarding proficiency in Hebrew and its use and role in rituals. His generation collectively expresses a desire to understand the religious readings during rituals, prompting them to advocate for readings in Turkish or Judeo-Spanish. Although Elias recognises the historical and traditional role of Hebrew as a sacred language in religious practices, he acknowledges a widespread lack of proficiency in Hebrew among Turkish Jews, compared to European Jews. Moreover, the fact that many Turkish Jews lament their lack of proficiency in Hebrew suggests a sense of inadequacy or disconnect from this aspect of their heritage, in the context of prevailing ideologies according to which speaking Hebrew represents a crucial aspect of Jewish identity and the possibility of connecting with Jewish communities worldwide. Within the Jewish community, Elias observes an underlying sentiment of disappointment and disatisfaction concerning the inadequate Hebrew education provided by Turkish Jewish institutions. He perceives a prevalent expectation for individuals to learn Hebrew within the community, yet he notes a general lack of initiative or success in achieving this: *"But the thing is, actually, nobody knows Hebrew*", a stance reflected by Rafi and Naftali:

> **5-77. Rafi**: Yes, they pray in Hebrew. They don't understand the prayers but they pray. [3rd-m-22-neo-fam3]
>
> **5.78. Naftali**: Kuándo azímos los, las orasyónes, pues es en ebréo. Sin entendér náda. Malorosaménte, sin entendér náda.
>
> ('When we do the, the prayers are in Hebrew. Without understanding anything. Unfortunately, without understanding anything'). [2nd-m-45-fluent-fam12]

The contrast between the previous practice of reading in Judeo-Spanish and Hebrew and the current preference for comprehension suggests a tension between tradition and modernity, between accessibility in an increasingly secular community and traditional interpretation of sacredness in religious rituals. The phrase used by Elias (5-76), *"in the air",* suggests an unspoken anticipation surrounding the learning of Hebrew, although the reality often falls short, with many individuals only gaining proficiency through travel to Israel.

With the third generation, the Jewish community in Istanbul seems to be becoming increasingly secular and modernised. There seems to be a historic shift regarding the enduring nature of multilingualism within the religious shere of Jewish societies, as outlined in Section 3.3.4., with a significant decline in the role of Hebrew in ritualised prayer within people's homes.

5.6 Performance acts and events

Despite the declining use of Judeo-Spanish since the 1950s, the language endures in the realms of music, theatre, and humour performance (Romero 2012: 97-98). These performances serve as connectors between different generations and profiles of speakers. In the following, I will explore the ways in which the use of Judeo-Spanish in performance plays a role in highlighting and conveying ideology, as proposed by Bucholtz & Hall (2004: 381). I will further explore how language use in performative acts reflects and shapes various facets of the Sephardic identity.

In the anthropological perspective presented by Bucholtz & Hall (2004), four elements of the semiotic model intersect in the formation of identity: *practice, performance, indexicality,* and *ideology* (cf. § 3.2.5; 6.2). Practice, involves habitual and not always intentional actions. *Performance*, on the other hand, is a deliberate and conscious form of social expression with an aesthetic component that undergoes evaluation by an audience (Bucholtz & Hall 2004: 380). The resonance elicited in the audience during performances transcends the ordinary reception of language use in everyday life (Nechiti 2015: 184). It amplifies the awareness of language as a marked and intentional act of expression (Bauman 2009: 330) aimed at what Goffman (1956) called "impression management" and Allan Bell (1984: 197) "audience design" pointing to a relationship between the structure of the self and the structure of linguistic interactions (cf. § 3.3.1). This principle applies everywhere, whether in the context of staged performances like humour, theatre, or music, or in any other form of marked speech within daily communication (Bauman 1986). In this study, I adopt this perspective, treating various performance types in the data as interconnected rather than isolated.

Like all modes of communication, performances serve the dual role of reflecting social realities while actively contributing to their construction. Habib's narratives regarding the use of Judeo-Spanish in humour performances exemplifies this dual function of performance: depicting the social world and actively participating in its formation (cf. Bucholtz & Hall 2004: 381).

> **5-79. Habib**: Por reír, o por no olvidár. No mos vyéne, no mos vyéne ni al tíno, no vyéne a la bóka!
>
> ('For laughing or for not forgetting. It doesn't come to us, it doesn't even cross our brain, it doesn't come to the mouth!') [1st-m-73-H-fluent-ind]

Habib's accounts reveal that he employs humour in Judeo-Spanish as both a response to dominant ideologies *"por reir"* ('to laugh'), where Judeo-Spanish is perceived as a mixed language of the uneducated classes (cf. § 6.2.1), and as a reaction to social

constraints of diminished language use *“por no olvidar”* (‘not to forget’). Habib suggest that performing humour in Judeo-Spanish represents a deliberate effort (cf. Bucholtz & Hall 2004: 380) in which Judeo-Spanish, like Yiddish, “must be willed into existence, constructed and monitored with unprecedented deliberateness” (cf. Shandler 2004: 21) with the purpose of not letting the language completely fade from his linguistic repertoire. The recurring phrase *“no mos viene”* (‘it does not come to us’) underscores that Judeo-Spanish has not only receded from daily discourse but has also waned from the unconscious habitus of code-switching. Furthermore, the phrase highliths that individual native speakers are losing the ability to recall and actively employ a vast store of vocabulary. In line with Butler’s (1990) findings, this deliberate effort or “agency”, as he calls it, has the role of reinforcing *“por reir”* (‘to laugh’) and challenging *“por no olvidar”* (‘not to forget’) the prevailing norms.

As noted by Bucholtz & Hall (2004: 381), trends in performances prompt a reflection on the extent to which performance involves emphasising ideology by bringing practice to the fore. For the first and second generations, humour performances of the code-mixing practices of the Sephardim as a cohesive ethnic group are done by a process of *impersonation* and *self-identification*. For the third generation, however, code-mixing practices are carried out by processes of *impersonation* and *dissociation*. In the following, Mendi gives us insights into the first perspective:

> **5-80. Mendi**: Tambyén, por búrlar kuándo ay túrkos ke entyénden en partída, entyénden el ladíno i por burlármos disímos: <Estás anładyéndo lo ke estámos konushyéndo?
>
> (‘Also [we use Judeo-Spanish], to mock when there are Turks who partly understand, who understand and, to make fun, we say: <Do you understand what we are speaking?>.’) [1st-m-70-H-fluent-ind]

Mendi intends here to imitate a code-mixing pattern commonly found in the speech of Turkish Sephardim, where he adds the Judeo-Spanish conjugation suffix to Turkish verbs like ***anlıyorsun*** ‘you understand’ and ***konuşuruz*** ‘we speak’. It should be noted that code-mixing in these verbs is not part of the common code-mixing morphology encountered among the Turkish Sephardim (Bornes Varol 2006: 101). A common morphological process observed in code-mixing involves borowing Turkish verb roots such as *anla-* and *konush-* and the suffix *-ear* (=> *anla-d-ear*, *konush-ear*), thus leading to gerund formation, e.g. *konusheando* and *anladeando*. Mendi’s use of this particular morphology in code-mixing *“anładyéndo”, “konushyéndo”* indicates a form of linguistic variation caused by limited language use which brings about insecurities on the morphological level even in fluent speakers (cf. § 6.4.1).

In the perspective of the first and second generations, performers like Mendi include themselves as part of the emulated group, as is evident from his use of the first-

person plural: *"por burlármos disímos"* ('to make fun, we say'). The emulation of Turkish-Jewish code-mixing practices is not a new phenomenon that emerged in the postvernacular stage. Del Carmen Valentín (2010: 92) showed that in the Turkish shadow theatre of the 19th century, in puppet shows like *Karagöz*[95], one of the main characters "was a Jew speaking an imperfect Turkish that included numerous Judeo-Spanish words and expressions". Then as now, the comedic elements, or "what is laughed at", serve as indicators of the conflict between traditional language use, lifestyle, and beliefs and the evolving historical context after the foundation of the Turkish Republic and the introduction of western/international customs and thought (Del Carmen Valentín 2010: 96).

Amateur theatre directors like Roza acknowledge the potential of emulating code-mixing patterns in Judeo-Spanish as a source of humour that also appeals to and includes a younger audience that neither speaks nor understands Judeo-Spanish. Roza has devoted her life to creating theatre within the Sephardic community. She has developed themes that deal with the realities of Sephardic life in Turkey in the past and present (cf. Romero 1979: 32). Her texts reveal the language use of the Sephardim in their daily life in different periods and the shifts that have taken place over the decades in order to accommodate new speakers' language proficiency. At the beginning of her theatre activity around the year 1965, she wrote and performed pieces exclusively in Judeo-Spanish. However, over the years, starting from the 1970s, she progressively introduced Turkish to accommodate the changing proficiency levels of her audience. This adjustment initially included incorporating a few Turkish words and later offering contextualisation in Turkish. For almost two decades now, her theatrical performances have primarily unfolded in Turkish, with occasional Judeo-Spanish insertions.

> **5-81. Roza:** Ésta língua l'avlarémos porké es komík, la djénte se riyén. […] Si, múncho mas komík, múncho mas komík, i ésto kon Ester,[96] ke stávamos en un djúguo djugándo de marído i mujér, i yo marído i éya mujér. I ansína salíya a la eshéna éya la priméra i gritáva: <Simantó ven!>, tódos se reíyan, <De ke se stan riyéndo?> dezía Ester, <Kuálo ay akí de, de reír?> [laughing] Puéde ser ke el nómbre u no se, tódos empesávan a reír. Dospués ke úna nóche íva a venír el konsoláto u úno de Turkía, mos dishéron: <Un pokitíko azénlo en túrko pára ke entyénda maz mijór.> I éya dísho, i no úvo vos en el salón, vinó aryénto i dísho: <Maz no lo vo a dezír en túrko!> [laughing] Éste úna língua kómika, kuándo ávlas, se puénden reír la djénte. […] Si lo dízes en túrko 'gel buraya' ['come here'], no se rién, si lo dízes en espanyól 'ven akí' se ríyen la djénte, es úna língua komík. Unas pyésas muy, muy

[95] According to del Carmen Valentín (2010: 92), Jews were in charge of these shows.
[96] The Name Ester, is here a pseudonym and not the real name of the person Roza is talking about.

ermózas tuvímos komíkas kon Eytan[97], ma s'eskapó, pekádo.

('We'll speak this language because it's funny, people laugh. [...] Yes, much funnier, much funnier, and this with Ester, when we were playing husband and wife, and I was the husband and she was the wife. And then she would come onto the stage first and shout: <'Simanto, ven!' [Simanto, come here!]>, everyone would laugh. <What are they laughing at?> Ester would say: <What's so funny here?> [laughing]. Maybe it was the name or not, but everyone started laughing. Then, one night the consulate or someone from Turkey was going to come, they told us: <Speak a little in Turkish so one can understand better.> And she did, and there was silence in the hall, she came in and said: <I won't say more in Turkish!" [laughing] This is a funny language, when you speak it, people burst into laughter. [...] If you say 'gel buraya' [come here] in Turkish, people don't laugh, if you say 'ven akí' [come here] in [Judeo-]Spanish, people laugh, it's a funny language. We had some very very beautiful and funny moments with Eytan, but all this has finished, it's a shame.') [1st-f-68-fluent-ind]

Roza's narrative reveals the attitudes towards changes in linguistic practice and the expressive power and symbolic value that Judeo-Spanish has in reflecting the realities of Sephardic life across generations. She expresses regret *"pekado"* 'pity' at not being able to perform theatre exclusively in Judeo-Spanish today. She and her colleagues faced a real dilemma regarding the choice of language for performances. Continuing to hold theatre performances in Judeo-Spanish when the majority in the audience has only reduced knowledge of it at best, "may [have] exclude[d] the very people whom they wish[ed] to attract as members", as highlighted by Pauwels (2016: 141). In Roza's opinion, Judeo-Spanish theatre productions[98] which are mostly comedies, had their essence in portraying the Jewish past and present, Jewish customs and language behaviour, and the specific intonation in Judeo-Spanish. A simple imperative like *"ven aki"* 'come here' invoked not only the image of elder generations in the Jewish neighbourhoods who used to communicate in Judeo-Spanish among themselves but also a process of self-recognition (= that's who I am, even though no one knows about it[99]). For her audience of all ages, this imperative would invoke suggestive memories which, if transposed into Turkish, would lose their expressive power. Therefore, when expressed in Turkish, their theatre no longer had the same intended effect, as she reveals: "*Si lo dízes en túrko 'gel buraya', no se riyén"* ('If you say *gel buraya* 'come here' in Turkish, they don't laugh'). The same content expressed in Turkish failed to capture the essence of Sephardic society and to establish a process of self-reflection of the

[97] The name, Eytan, is here a pseudonym and not the real name of the person Roza is talking about.

[98] According to del Carmen Valentín (2010: 92), the term *Judeo-Spanish theatre* refers to performances which include three criteria: they are performed in Judeo-Spanish, created by members of the Judeo-Spanish community or performed for a Judeo-Spanish audience.

[99] This idea of interpreting this particular phenomenon as a process of self-recognition emerged in a discussion with Prof. Mahir Șaul, who has observed a similar phenomenon.

spectator in the Sephardic reality portrayed. Meyir's[100] stance confirms Roza's, expressing that only the performance of humour in Judeo-Spanish has the ability to connect him with his ancestors.

In the perspective of the third generation, humour performances take place by employing processes of *impersonation* and *dissociation* as highlighted by Binyamin and Treysi.

> **5-82. Binyamin**: I don't understand [Ladino humour] very well. Because you know, you have to know the language very well. But for me, I can make humour with Ladino as a joke. When I'm imitating my grandparents' speech for example. When I talk with my friends like 'Eh, neredesin' [sung and prolongued prononciation, meaning, 'Hey, where are you?']. We do that, you know, like, even if we speak some Turkish, we put some Ladino words in between. [3rd-m-22-heritage-fam5]

> **5-83. Treysi**: I have friends who can speak much better than me, but they don't speak fluently. We just know some phrases in Ladino, 'el kapák däl tändjeré'[101]' it's a joke that we make, I don't know if you heard that before. It's a mix between Ladino and Turkish and it's a big joke, because even the ladino spoken between our grandparents is very mixed with Turkish. And when they don't know a word in Ladino, they just mix it up and it becomes a joke between us. So, when we use [Judeo-]Spanish or Ladino, we always pick the funny phrases. [3rd-f-40-passive-fam11]

Both consultants impersonate a specific subgroup of their parents and grandparents. In this context, *dissociation* unfolds as attributing code-mixing practices to their parents and grandparents whom they impersonate. The third generation's performance is grounded in the exaggeration of phonological nuances of Judeo-Spanish pronunciation *"Eh, nerdesin?"* ('Hey, where are you?') and cultural references. As highlighted by Binyamin and Rafi, these acts of *impersonation* and *dissociation* may involve deliberately attributing emotive qualities to Judeo-Spanish "as an import from a different 'world'" (Harshav 1990: 36-37), carrying all the connotations it held in that Sephardic world they observed being used. These satirical and parodical performances may, in fact, at a deeper level, signify not a dissociation but rather an intentional effort to establish a connection with a specific type of social speech and manifestation of Turkish Sephardim (cf. Shandler: 2004: 22), as discussed by Rafi.

> **5-84. Rafi:** What we are laughing about is actually not our "grandparents" themselves, but rather the stereotypical Jew of that older generation, who lives in his/her small world with no contact to anyone outside of his/her community. I think this is one of the main generational conflicts that we have and this is the reason behind the mockery. The younger generations accused them of not being integrated enough into Turkish society, being uneducated, ignorant, of living isolated from the outer world, not having many Muslim-Christian friends or not even being interested in their culture. I think the

[100] [2nd-m-45-H-semi-fam8]
[101] Older fluent speaker use: "*el kapak* (masculine) *de la tenjeré* (feminine)", with the meaning of two elements or individuals who perfectly complement each other's negative traits or shortcomings cf. 'a match made in hell'.

> humour always derives from a conflict, and this might be it. Imagine, it just like how Turks imagine a stereotypical Jew or Greek and mock them in plays, series etc. And this is like an internal mock, just like how Woody Allen mocked the Jews that he knows well in his films. [3rd-m-22-neo-fam3]

Here, Rafi discusses what from his generation's perspective represents the stereotype of the older, insular Jew who remains disconnected from the broader society. It reflects a generational conflict stemming from perceptions of the older generation as inadequately integrated into Turkish society, uneducated, and isolated. While the third generation perceives the older generation as insular and disconnected from wider society, the first generation offers a different perspective in their narratives. They emphasise the cosmopolitanism of the pre-republican generation, noting their multilingualism in languages like French, Italian, Greek, or Armenian, reflecting a more interconnected social life than even that of today. This divergence in perspectives underscores, in fact, the effectiveness and effect of the dominating ideologies of homogenisation. Rafi's comments (cf. 5-84) thus shed further light on two overlapping processes: one of distancing themselves from the older generations and another of seeking connection with them and their linguistic heritage, all while trying to find their place within the community. Humour, in this dynamic interplay of impersonation and dissociation, thus emerges as a bridge between generations.

While theatre requires a more organised setting for interaction between performers, performed and audience and a higher level of fluency in the language, music performances are more broadly accessible, creating opportunities and access to Judeo-Spanish among the younger generation. The majority of consultants expressed enjoying Sephardic music produced by both Sephardim and non-Sephardim around the world. However, only a few individuals reported singing and playing any Sephardic songs. In Turkey, several bands and interpreters have created music in Judeo-Spanish: *Los Pasharos Sefaradis*, active since 1978, and the jazz-infused duo *Jak & Janet Esim* are notable interpreters of Sephardic music. Additionally, the Sephardic ensemble *Sefarad* (1996-2007) achieved commercial success with their bilingual albums *Sefarad I* (2003) and *Sefarad II* (2005) (Nechiti 2015: 191). The surge in popularity of Sephardic music on the world stage has contributed to the growing prestige of Judeo-Spanish music, language and culture (Nechiti 2015). Consultants of all generations displayed a sense of pride in Sephardic music, which has been increasingly performed around the world in the past 20 to 30 years. Music performances in Judeo-Spanish are among the most popular type of performance among the third generation, serving as a further environment for community-based language learning. Isak found his way to Sephardic music starting with plays in Judeo-Spanish between the 1970s and 1990s, becoming

one of the most active community members in the use of music as a tool for language learning:

> **5-85. Isak**: I ésto hué ke empesímos ésos amígos vinímos kára kon kára i empesímos a azér un grúpo […]. Kaminímos el múndo entéro pára puedér kantár éstas kantíkas. I fuémos famósos porké éstas kantíkas, el úniko grúpo ke las kantó mas otántikas. No sin níngun un akél, kómo se díze, sin trokár algúna stíl, stílo. Kómo kantávan mis papús i mis granmamás. […] Pensí de azér éstas kantíkas azér kantár a los mas chíkos, ke puéden entendér i kantár en djúntos. Kómo ke puéden eleneársen. [> Tk. *eğlenmek* 'to have fun'] Divertírsen. I ésto parviní dyéz ányos ke ésto azyéndo ésto écho.
>
> ('And this is how we started, those friends, we came face to face and started to form a group […]. We traveled around the world to be able to sing these songs. And we became famous because these songs were the only group that sang them more authentically. Not without any, how to say it, without changing any style. The way my grandparents used to sing. I thought of singing these songs to the younger ones, who can understand and sing together. So that they can have fun. And this has been going on for ten years, since we started this, this group. [2nd-m-65-fluent-ind]

The group[102] mentioned in Isak's narrative travelled around the world to be able to perform these songs, gaining fame for being the only group to sing their repertoire in a more authentic manner, preserving the style of Judeo-Spanish speakers' grandparents. The group's motivation behind singing these songs was likely to reach younger audiences who can understand and sing them together, enjoying themselves and "having fun". Isak's emphasis on authenticity and connecting with diverse audiences highlights the ideologies regarding authenticity that were prevalent at the time. Over the past two decades, the focus on the authenticity of performances, considering factors such as singing style, native pronunciation and the musicians' Sephardic descent (Cohen 1999: 530) has shifted towards *recognition of agency*. In its postvernacular stage, any performance in Judeo-Spanish is recognised as an act of agency and deliberate intervention aimed at bringing forward the "historical access to [people's] daily life" (Marini 2003, 152), establishing a connection with the forefathers, bringing forward Sephardic cultural depth (Nechiti 2015: 196-197) and preventing the language from falling into oblivion (cf. 5-79.) by acting as a community-based learning platform. Today, the third generation of Sephardim do not encounter their native language through direct familial acquisition but rather through music, theatre, and other type of performances. Performance as a language-learning practice finds its reflection in the account of Binyamin, who acquired his knowledge of Judeo-Spanish by listening to Sephardic music.

> **5-86. Binyamin**: I love the Sephardic music. One of my best friends' parents are one of the best musicians […] So, yes last five years, the more I involve with music the

[102] The group's name has been omitted to comply with anonymisation procedures.

> more I involve with the Sephardic music also. So, I love to be part of it, you know. [3rd-m-22-heritage-fam5]

If any transmission of Judeo-Spanish is conceivable beyond the third generation, consultants like Rafi recognise that it might only be viable through the medium of music.

> **5-87. Rafi**: Yes for sure [I plan to transmit]. Like with, the least thing that I can do is exposing them to the music, I think. Because like the languages that I learned, I learned with music a lot. And I think it gives you somehow an understanding of the language when you are listening to the music and to the product of it actually. [3rd-m-22-neo-fam3]

Rafi expresses his intention to transmit Judeo-Spanish through music, highlighting the importance of exposing future generations to this cultural and linguistic heritage. He emphasises the role of music in language acquisition, drawing from his own experience of learning Judeo-Spanish through this medium, to which Evans (2010: 183) refers as the "ultimate distillation of the culture's achievements". As Beki revealed (cf. 5-7.), her ears *"were filled with Judeo-Spanish"*. However, she felt there was no context in which she could confidently use the language. It was only during her involvement in theatre that the improvisational nature of her fellow actor's lines compelled her to speak freely in the language and improve it.

Performances in Judeo-Spanish in its postvernacular stage, whether in the form of music, film festivals, folklore evenings or humour, underscore that "rather than the language serving as the instrument of performance, [their] utterance is the performance's objective itself" to be understood as "innovative cultural negotiations, responsive to the profound ruptures in the Jewish life" (Shandler 2004: 24). These performances facilitate intergenerational transmission bridging the gap between different age groups within the community (cf. Harris 2011: 59), while simultaneously reinforcing the symbolic importance of Judeo-Spanish as an ethnic language of the Sephardim (cf. Şarhon 2011: 70). Furthermore, they serve as a poignant reminder of the endangered status of Judeo-Spanish, prompting renewed attention and awareness within Jewish communities worldwide. As shown in the accounts of the third generation over the past section, this heightened awareness has brought a change in discourse regarding Judeo-Spanish in the past decades. As Balbuena (2012: 163) highlights, postvernacular performances have empowered Jewish communities to reclaim their linguistic heritage and embrace their distinctiveness in an increasingly multilingual, multicultural, and digital world. The next section will focus on the role of Judeo-Spanish as a an online vernacular.

5.7 Online vernacular[103]

For many decades, it has been commonly held that globalisation and the increased use of English as a lingua franca will impact the mother tongues of a variety of peoples. More recent studies (Joseph 2004: 190) have shown, however, that this is not necessarily the case. Social media, developments in online scripts, sophisticated machine translation engines, and, more recently, artificial intelligence, have counteracted the predicted homogenisation effects. With the appearance of social media and the internet, the way we socialise and interact has changed radically. Particularly for minority communities, including "diasporic, immigrant, transnational and other communities 'on the move'", there has been a notable shift towards using online platforms as a means of exchanging information in their heritage languages (Pauwels 2016: 172). While not all languages are equally represented online, with some languages receiving only marginal attention, for many minority groups this trend has nonetheless played a significant role in preserving their heritage languages and broadening the domains in which they are used (Pauwels 2016: 172).

Technological development have emerged as a great opportunity for the formation of Judeo-Spanish "Digital Home-Lands" (Held 2010) and presented an unprecedented locus for interaction and transmission beyond the confines of universities or formal teaching (Brink-Danan 2011c; Bunin Benor 2011; Held 2010; Romero 2017). Internationally, Turkish Sephardim participate in online speech communities[104] such as the discussion platform *Ladinokomunita*[105], established in 1999 and often described as a virtual "Ladinoland" (cf. Brink-Danan 2011), which today has members from more than 50 countries. *Ladinokomunita* represents today the largest online discussion group and educational network exclusively in Judeo-Spanish. It exists as a list-serve and a semi-public website. In the twenty years of its existence, *Ladinokomunita* has evolved into an emblem of the collective "home" of the Sephardim worldwide, in the absence of a tangible geographical land for the increasingly nomadic Sephardi community.

> *Ladinokomunita* has granted fellow members the possibility of thinking of each other as part of the same imagined community as mediated by the use of Judeo-Spanish as a cyber-vernacular. Yebra López (2021: 102)

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[103] In the context of Judeo-Spanish, Romero uses the term "cyber vernacular" (2017).
[104] For a detailed exploration of the major Judeo-Spanish communities online, see Romero (2017).
[105] *Ladinokomunita* <http://ladinokomunita.tripod.com/muestralingua was founded in December 1999 as an e-mail list by Rachel Bortnick, born in Izmir, Turkey and residing in the US, accessed March 20, 2024.

Additionally, platforms like *Boletín eSefarad*[106] disseminate news, events, and articles of interest to the Sephardim. Various Facebook groups such as *Lovers of Ladino Language, Music, and Culture*[107] and *Ladino Forever*[108] - *לאדינו לנצח - Michael Halphie* (henceforth *Ladino Forever*) cater to cultural events, performances, culinary traditions, and proverbs in Judeo-Spanish. *Ladino Forever,* founded in 2017 and managed by Turkish Jewish actor, singer, and TV presenter Michael Halphie, who is from Istanbul, exemplifies the emergence of contemporary online communities managed by individuals outside formal institutional frameworks. The group's introduction on Facebook highlights its purpose.

> Keridos Amigas i Amigos, Aki todos los ke avlan Ladino vamos a pueder kontar lo ke savemos i lo ke mos akodramos de esta lingua De Mos Padres... Kantikas, Proverbios i Konsejas.[109]
>
> ('Dear friends, here, all those who speak Ladino will be able to share what we know and what we remember of this language From Our Parents... Songs, Proverbs, and Sayings.')

This introductory message underscores its role as a distinctive platform for engagement with Judeo-Spanish, pointing to a lack of such opportunities in offline contexts. Furthermore, it advocates for collaborative efforts aimed at accessing linguistic content in the form passed down by the community's ancestors, with the goal of making that content accessible to future generations. Michael Halphie's welcome message resembles the message distributed in the *Ladinokomunita*'s discussion group two decades earlier, in 2000: "If you know Ladino, want to remember it, improve it… subscribe to the list" (Brink-Danan 2011: 108).

In a private conversation on 8 April, 2024, via WhatsApp, Michael Halphie revealed that his decision to found the group was driven by the desire to revive printed and "invisible and forgotten" materials in Judeo-Spanish, establishing a "modest online archive" for future generations. Over the last five years, the group, which currently has approximately 5,000 followers, has disseminated over 500 proverbs in Judeo-Spanish, along with translations in English, Hebrew, and Turkish.

The examples discussed above underscore a notable distinction between two types of online communities, as categorised by Yebra López (2021: 94). Firstly, there are what he terms "basic Sephardi online communities" typified by platforms like *Ladino*

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[106] https://esefarad.com/boletines/boletin358.html, accessed on March 20th, 2024
[107] https://www.facebook.com/groups/2213793287, established in 2006, this group boasts a membership of 2,300 individuals as of April 9, 2024, accessed on March 20th, 2024.
[108] https://www.facebook.com/ladinoforever, accessed on April 4th, 2024.
[109] https://www.facebook.com/ladinoforever, accessed on March 20th, 2024.

Forever. Secondly, there are advanced *Sephardi Digital Home-Lands*, exemplified by initiatives such as *Ladinokomunita*. Expanding upon this classification, I further differentiate between online communities managed by individuals with primarily descriptive objectives, such as *Ladino Forever*, and those operating within the framework of more centralised institutions like the *Sephardic Center of Istanbul* (hereafter referred to as SKAD) or *Ladinokomunita*, which demonstrate a more prescriptive approach towards standardisation. Regarding the latter categorisation, one of the foremost advocates for the promotion of Judeo-Spanish globally through online platforms is Karen Gerson Şarhon, who has led the SKAD since 2003. Section 5.8 discussed the plethora of digital communities organised under the aegis of this centre.

Internationally, one notable initiative is *Ladino Linguist*[110], an online platform offering Ladino instruction to hundreds of students worldwide, led by Bryan Kirschen, Associate Professor of Romance Languages and Linguistics at Binghamton University. Another digital repository hosted on YouTube is *Ladino 21*[111], launched in 2017 and co-founded by Carlos Yebra López, Alejandro Acero, and Benni Aguado. This archive provides a platform for the global Sephardi diaspora to preserve and explore their collective heritage through a diverse array of content (cf. Yebra López 2021: 105).

Although several apps for learning Judeo-Spanish have been developed worldwide in the past 5 years (e.g. *uTalk*, *Wordle*), and regular Zoom meetings like the *Sephardic Digital Academy*[112] (2020) or *Enkontros de Alhad: Musafires i Balabayes*, hosted by *Centro Cultural Sefarad*[113], have been developed, based on my recent inquiries, it appears that these apps are not widely used in Turkey, except by a small number of language activists associated with the SKAD.Since the emergence of digital groups, online communities of practice have broadened their scope beyond traditional topics like music and folklore to encompass discussions on politics, science, religion, and even literary creativity, domains that are no longer prevalent in offline interactions in Judeo-Spanish in countries such as Turkey (cf. Romero 2017: 278-279)[114]. Film, as another channel alongside online groups and digital resources, has significantly contributed to the increased online presence of Judeo-Spanish internationally. For

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[110] https://ladinolinguist.com/, accessed on April 10th, 2024.
[111] https://www.ladino21.org/, accessed on April 10th, 2024.
[112] https://www.sephardicbrotherhood.com/sephardicdigitalacademy, accessed on April 10th, 2024.
[113] https://esefarad.com/?tag=centro-cultural-sefarad, accessed on June 5th, 2024.
[114] Regarding the boost in vitality in the digital spaces, Romero suggests reclassifying the position of Judeo-Spanish on the GIDS to levels 1 and 2, indicating stronger vitality. However, based on the findings of this study, such an optimistic re-evaluation seems overly ambitious,

example, the documentary *Las ultimas palavras* (2015)[115] ('The Last Words') by Rita Ender and Yorgo Demir sheds light on the attitudes of young Turkish Sephardim (aged 25-35) towards Judeo-Spanish. The aim of this documentary is to raise awareness about the impact of language shift on the younger generation, who at best remember a few words in their heritage language. Additionally, the internationally acclaimed Netflix Turkish-language series *The Club*, released in 2021, has played a significant role in increasing awareness, particularly among Jewish and Turkish youth, about Sephardic heritage, which has often been overlooked in the past.

The primary objective of these online platforms is to reconstruct language communities beyond geographical limitations, forming communities of individuals connected in one way or another to Judeo-Spanish as a heritage language (cf. 5.4.5). As observed by Brink-Danan (2011: 109) in her study of the online community *Ladinokomunita*, these platforms "simulate a reversal of the dispersal of Sephardic Jewry over compounded diaspora locales" and are founded on language, meta-language, and language ideologies. Drawing on Deleuze and Guattari's (1980) concept of territory, Yebra López (2021: 102) explores how "Digital Home-Lands" enable the Sephardim to undergo a digital (de)territorialisation in the form of a linguistic reassembly of scattered Sephardi communities worldwide.

These platforms provide a 'safer' environment where individuals with shared interests and attitudes towards Judeo-Spanish can engage in their heritage language, regardless of their social or educational background or their proficiency in the language. However, as highlighted by Brink-Danan (2011), these *Digital Home-Lands* are not exempt from metalinguistic ideologies about language purity and authenticity, script and criteria of belonging to a Judeo-Spanish online community.

Similar to offline communication, language ideologies and attitudes persist in the online sphere, shaping how Judeo-Spanish speakers navigate their sense of belonging within online communities of practice and interpret the significance of the language. For instance, membership in *Ladinokomunita* dictates the use of the *Aki Yerushalayim* script, with a stringent standardisation process for all content published on the platform. However, as Yebra López (2021: 102-103) points out, this approach does not consider the "multimodal and multiliterate digital spaces" which could make it possible to "facilitate the learning and preservation of Ladino worldwide, particularly across generations".

[115] https://lasultimaspalavras.wordpress.com/, accessed on April 24th, 2024.

Digital platforms and “Home-Lands”, Ladino music, documentary films, and series revolving around Judeo-Spanish in Istanbul undoubtedly mark significant milestones in bringing Judeo-Spanish into the spotlight (cf. § 5.6) and fostering a process of self-reflection within the Judeo-Spanish community. This ongoing process resembles a collective introspection, akin to gazing into a mirror that has been repeatedly shattered and subsequently reassembled within the Sephardic community. The use of Judeo-Spanish in the digital space underscores its role as the adhesive gluing the disparate parts of the Sephardic community together. In the absence of traditional offline language transmission, these platforms emerge as possible strongholds for language preservation and transmission (Brink-Danan 2011; Bunis 2018; Romero 2017; Yebra López 2021). Nevertheless, the semiotics of language in its postvernacular state necessitate ongoing re-evaluation and renegotiation in the online dimension, like in the offline one.

5.8 Hubs for language learning and maintenance

As emphasised in Section 2.3.7, the 1990s marked a significant period for the Sephardic community, with the birth of various efforts to revitalise Judeo-Spanish. Prominent among these initiatives was the establishment of the SKAD in 2003. According to its website, SKAD was established with the aim of:

> […] collecting, archiving, and documenting Sephardic cultural productions to promote the preservation, appreciation, and scholarly examination of religious and secular traditions, cuisine, music, and the Judeo-Spanish language.[116]

SKAD employs digital platforms to engage with a wide variety of audiences both in Turkey and internationally. SKAD’s *Ladino Data Hub*[117], one of the most comprehensive repositories for Sephardic culture and language resources in Judeo-Spanish, caters to a diverse range of user needs, from individuals learning Judeo-Spanish with resources like *Un Biervo al Dia*[118], úna *Fraza al Dia*[119][120], a multi-source selection of multimedia documentation that featured 57 videos as of April 2024[121], and the *Ladino Speech Corpus*[122] to researchers using large multilingual and parallel speech corpora[123]. Additionally, the SKAD organises events like *Ladino Day*, concerts, and music and

[116] https://sefarad.com.tr/en/, accessed on May 3rd, 2024.
[117] https://data.sefarad.com.tr/dataset/, accessed on May 3rd, 2024.
[118] https://sefarad.com.tr/es/un-biervo-al-dia/, accessed on May 3rd, 2024.
[119] https://sefarad.com.tr/es/una-fraza-al-dia/, accessed on May 3rd, 2024.
[120] Un *Biervo al Dia* and una *Fraza al Dia* are no longer active resources.
[121] https://sefarad.com.tr/es/vidyos/, 17 of these videos are part of the documentation project “Judeo-Spanish in Istanbul” carried by the author, accessed on May 3rd, 2024.
[122] https://data.sefarad.com.tr/dataset/ladino-speech, accessed on April 20th, 2024.
[123] https://data.sefarad.com.tr/, accessed on May 20th, 2024.

theatre performances to promote the Judeo-Spanish language and culture. The primary languages used on the SKAD's websites and to translate content from Judeo-Spanish are English, Turkish, and Spanish.

SKAD's activities also focus on the publication of Judeo-Spanish media outlets, book collections, dictionaries, etc. It is worth noting that of the approximately 300 Judeo-Spanish publications existing in the Ottoman Empire, Europe, and the USA before the Second World War, none have survived to the present day (Harris 2011: 55). The only Jewish newspaper in circulation which dedicates one page to Judeo-Spanish is *Şalom*. Founded in 1947, *Şalom* currently has around 5,000 subscribers. Each issue is roughly 16 to 20 pages, covering topics ranging from political and social issues to culture. Since 2003, *Şalom* has also featured *El Amaneser*, a monthly cultural supplement written entirely in Judeo-Spanish, which has subscribers around the world and is now available online.

Given the extensive productivity and diverse range of materials available in and related to Judeo-Spanish, as well as the abundance of opportunities for learning or gaining proficiency in the language over the past two decades, I was led to investigate the role of SKAD as a language maintenance and learning site. Additionally, I explored the visibility of SKAD's activities among community members and their level of engagement in creating and/or consuming materials and platforms disseminated by SKAD. 22 study consultants, six from the fist generation, 12 from the second generation, and four from the third generation, reported regularly participating in SKAD's activities, primarily reading *El Amaneser*. 38 consultants mentioned being aware of the efforts of the SKAD but admitted that they do not read the monthly supplement *El Amaneser* nor participate in Judeo-Spanish preservation activities.

A key challenge expressed by the majority of consultants who create content in Judeo-Spanish and those who read this content pertained to the perceived high disparity between the limited spoken registers and the impositions of the written language requiring a richer and diverse vocabulary. The strategies employed to bridge these differences lead to a high-level variation in written Judeo-Spanish, creating insecurities among readers. Similar to Díaz-Mas's (1986: 121) findings among the Salonican Sephardim almost four decades ago, the absence of a standardised language generates a sense of uncertainty among readers when it comes to printed media in Judeo-Spanish. Jojo exemplifies the diverse borrowing strategies employed by various writers in the *Şalom* and *El Amaneser* newspaper.

> **5-88. Jojo**: Alóra, éso depénde de las persónas ke skríven. Avía un Salamón Bédjeráno, un amígo, muryó éste. Éste eskríva artíkoloz, ma loz ke savían ladíno no entendían. Porke eskrivía loz artíkoloz en tomándo el diksionáryo, vokabuláryo

> espanyól-túrko, alóra, en ésta fórma e eskrivía úna fórma ke múchos no entendían. […] Klára Peráhia eskrivió artíkoloz. Éya ez, kómo konóse un póko, preparó el vokabulároyo. Eskríve un póko mas múchos, múcho byérvos fransés. El ke no konóze, méte byérvos túrkos, el ke no konóze del tódo ávla el túrko kómo espanyól. Entedítes?
>
> ('So, that depends on the people who write. There was a Salamón Bédjeráno, a friend, he passed away. He used to write articles, but those who knew Ladino didn't understand. Because he wrote the articles by taking the dictionary, Spanish-Turkish vocabulary, and then he wrote in a way that many didn't understand. [...] Klára Peráhia wrote articles. She, as she knows a bit, prepared the vocabulary. She writes a bit more, many more French words. The one who doesn't know adds Turkish words, the one who doesn't know at all, speaks Turkish like [Judeo-]Spanish. Do you understand?') [1st-m-92-fluent-ind]

Jojo emphasises here the intricate interplay between language variation, language proficiency, and audience comprehension. He points to the different borrowing patterns employed by individuals from Spanish, French, or Turkish, based on their personal preferences. The degree of borrowing observed here is largely contingent on the writers' proficiency levels, with less fluent speakers often opting to borrow from Turkish. Jojo transitions his discussion from various levels of written proficiency to oral proficiency. Individuals who lack any proficiency in Judeo-Spanish typically resort to speaking Turkish, even though they retain a strong Judeo-Spanish phonology "*el ke no konóze del tódo ávla el túrko kómo espanyól"* ('The one who doesn't know at all, speaks Turkish like [Judeo-]Spanish'). Jojo's concluding statement subtly highlights the distinctive 'infamous' (cf. § 6.3) Judeo-Spanish pronunciation when speaking Turkish, serving as a notable marker distinguishing the Sephardim from the Turkish-speaking majority. The difference between spoken and written Judeo-Spanish is further highlighted by Sara, who regularly reads both *Ṣalom* and *El Amaneser*:

> **5-89. Sara**: Sómos aboné al jurnál *Shalóm*, méldo i *El Amanesér*, si. Ay syértas kózas ke no lo puédo entendér, únos byérvos ke no lo empleámos, ke devémos de tenér el --- el diksyonário en la máno pára puéder entendérlo, ma lo méldo. […] Ay syértos ke eskríven un djudéo espanyól más fasíl pára entendér, únos mas, kómo dezír, mas de kréma, la k-- la krem de la krem ke se eskríve, ke ez un póko maz difisíl pára puéder entendér.
>
> ('We are subscribers to the journal *Ṣalom* and I also read the *El Amaneser* issue. There are certain things that I can't understand, some words that we don't use, that we need to have the dictionary in hand to understand, but I read it. [...] There are some who write in a more easy-to-understand Judeo-Spanish, some more like saying more of the cream, the crème de la crème, which is a little more difficult to understand.') [1st-f-75-fluent-ind]

With the exception of consultants whose professions and activities are dedicated to Judeo-Spanish preservation, none reported currently writing in Judeo-Spanish for official or non-official purposes. Roza shares her experience of initially writing her plays in Judeo-Spanish using Turkish orthography. It was only when she began publishing for *El Amaneser* that she familiarised herself with the writing conventions for Judeo-Spanish

> **5-90. Roza**: E, lo skrivía kon, kómo túrko, syémpre eskriví. Reytan[124] me ambezó ke dévo d'eskrivír 'c' kon 'h' pára ke se ága 'ch', 'dg' pára ke ága 'djudío' --- alóra en *l'Amanesér* estó eskrivyéndo éste módo. [laughing]
>
> ('Eh, I used to write it, like Turkish, always. Reytan made me understand that I should write 'c' with 'h' so that it becomes 'ch', 'dg' so that it becomes 'djudío' [Judeo] so in the *El Amaneser*, I'm writing it this way [laughing].') [1st-f-68-fluent-ind]

Towards the second half of the 20th century, when literacy and female access to education increased, the absence of Judeo-Spanish from any curricula, whether state- or community-organised, as well as the unawareness of availability of written literature, resulted in speakers' inability to write in Judeo-Spanish. Only two of the consultants in the study could read the *Rashi* script used by the Turkish Sephardim before the introduction of the Latin alphabet in 1928. The majority of study consultants claimed to be able to read but not write the Turkish version of the Judeo-Spanish script, just like Roza, and Beki (cf. 5-7)) before they became involved in language maintenance efforts.

Both Roza (cf. 5-90) and subsequently Robert discuss the challenges that contributors to Judeo-Spanish journals in Turkey face today. Robert learned Judeo-Spanish in adulthood. He is now a regular contributor to the *El Amaneser* supplement. His insights offer a glimpse into the experiences of the people currently producing content in Judeo-Spanish, discussing the challenges and insecurities encountered during the writing process.

> **5-91. Robert**: Káda ves no es muy fasíl de eskrivír por --- porké estó lavorándo pára puedér eskrivír i estó empleándo de vez en kuándo el diksyonáryo --- de túrko al djudéo-espanyól o del frãnsés al djudéo-espanyól. Porké ay syértos byérvos al avládo puéde ser mas fasíl. Porké ay un voka—vokuboléryo muy limitádo. Ma kuándo eskríves --- artíkolos mízmo istórikos ez maz difisíl de eskrivír, porké éstos byérvos no se empléan múncho en avlándo --- en famíya o kon loz amígos i tódos.
>
> ('Every time it's not very easy to write, because I am working [hard] to be able to write and sometimes using the dictionary --- from Turkish to Judeo-Spanish or from French to Judeo-Spanish. Because there are some words that are easier when speaking. Because there is a very limited vocabulary. But when you write articles, even historical articles it's more difficult to write because these words are not used much when speaking --- with family or with friends and everyone.') [2nd-m-61-fluent-ind]

Robert emphasises that writing in Judeo-Spanish demands considerable effort on his part, often necessitating frequent consultation of dictionaries to articulate his thoughts accurately. He highlights the contrast between the restricted vocabulary used in everyday conversation and the need for a more extensive lexicon when composing written pieces, particularly when writing about diverse subjects that demand precision and nuanced terminology.

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[124] Reytan is here a pseudonym.

As explored in preceding chapters, Spanish has gained increasing importance within the Sephardic community since the 1990s. The paths to learning Spanish are various and so are the motivations of different generations of Sephardic individuals and the meaning that Spanish holds for them. For the second generation, Judeo-Spanish serves as a stepping stone to learning Spanish. They perceive Spanish as a globally relevant language that facilitates communication with other Spanish speakers worldwide. Alternatively, they see it as a means of maintaining or enhancing their Judeo-Spanish heritage, viewing the differences between the two languages as minor. Conversely, the third generation regards Spanish not only as a tool for international communication but as the closest linguistic connection to their heritage language. The evolving dynamics of Spanish within the Sephardic community may have played a role in shaping the foreign language curriculum at the *Ulus Private Jewish High School* (hereafter referred to as Ulus High School).

Established in 1914 in Galata and relocated to Ulus in 1994, Ulus High School[125] provides primary, secondary, and high school education to around 500-600 students[126]. Instruction at the school is conducted primarily in English[127]. At the Ulus High School, Hebrew is compulsory and is taught for about three to five hours per week depending on the level. Starting from 2015, Spanish was introduced as a second foreign language at the high school level, with classes held for two hours per week. During a conversation with the former director of Ulus High School, Robert Filiba, on August 13, 2015, he revealed that the introduction of Spanish was influenced by growing interest among the younger generation. This generation sees Spanish as a means to reconnect with their heritage, particularly given increased collaboration with Spanish institutions and the potential opportunity to acquire Spanish citizenship, in addition to its value for international communication.

In her discussion in the film *Las Ultimas Palavras* (2015), Rivka Bihar, the Spanish teacher at Ulus High School, discusses the inclusion of Spanish in the curriculum from the perspective of its utility, contrasting it to Judeo-Spanish.

> At school, Castilian is taught because Ladino is a very ancient and limited language. It's inherited from Cervantés's era, from 17th century. I think that now Ladino is a very

---

[125] Throughout its history, the school has undergone several name changes. Initially known as *Midrasha Yavne* or *Bene Berit High School*, it was later renamed *Beyoğlu Private Jewish High School*, then *Private Jewish High School* (1994), and finally *Ulus Private Jewish High School* (1998).

[126] In Izmir, there is a Jewish primary school that serves 140 children.

[127] This contrasts sharply with similar Armenian and Greek institutions, which teach natural sciences in their respective heritage languages and which are also separate subjects in the curriculum (Giesel, 2015: 69).

> limited language, like Latin that is not taught anymore. I appreciate continuation efforts. Like all efforts for archiving songs, stories, the usage and the character of the langauge. […] But I think it's a dream to make it survive. (min. 26:46)

While acknowledging preservation efforts, Bihar views Judeo-Spanish as an ancient and constrained language inherited from the 17th century, akin to Latin in its historical context. This perception influences her assessment of Judeo-Spanish's prospects for survival, leading her to express scepticism about its ability to persist as a living language *"it's a dream to make it survive".* By comparing Judeo-Spanish to Latin, the speaker underscores its perceived inadequacy for contemporary communication due to its limited use and relevance in modern society. As Rivka puts it, Spanish emerges as the next logical alternative: *"At school, Castilian is taught because Ladino is a very ancient and limited language"*. The consequences of these community decisions will be the subject of future research.

5.9 Concluding discussion

Consistent with Bradley's (2019: 515) framework, the analysis of narratives in this chapter concerning the dynamics and distribution of language use in various domains was guided by three primary dimensions: 'conscious cognition', 'unconscious feelings', and 'actual language use'. Acknowledging that attitudes towards languages often lack overt manifestation, I have sought to explore them indirectly through the interpretation of attitudes towards language transmission and non-transmission. This approach has allowed me to analyse the extent to which different generations have been affected by non-transmission practices. In the postvernacular stage, characterised by the diminished instrumental role of Judeo-Spanish, the overarching inquiry that unifies all the subsections of this chapter pertains to the contemporary role of postvernacular Judeo-Spanish in specific contexts for the three generations.

Remarkably, 43 consultants report that Judeo-Spanish is their mother tongue, demonstrating its enduring presence despite its predominantly symbolic role. Surveys conducted in the 1970s and 1990s highlighted diminishing proficiency in and transmission of Judeo-Spanish among younger generations. However, recent observations challenge these earlier assumptions, revealing new speakers of Judeo-Spanish in younger age groups. These concealed consultants' language profiles, which were often overlooked in previous research, point to the resilience of Judeo-Spanish and its speakers, a resilience attributed primarily to multilingual and code-mixing practices, and the use of Judeo-Spanish as a code language among the Sephardim.

Exposure to Judeo-Spanish as a background language used among or in communication with the first generation or with relatives in Israel, but also as a code

language, armed the second generation with enough input to draw upon both to communicate within the community and while traveling, coming into contact with other Spanish speakers. For many consultants in the second generation, this exposure sparked an increased interest in Judeo-Spanish, and led to language learning endeavours in adulthood. However, despite a shift in language attitudes and the increased use of the language in adulthood, this exposure alone was insufficient to ensure the transmission of Judeo-Spanish to the third generation.

The habitus of using a code-language, observed across generations irrespective of variations in fluency levels, reflects a broader tradition among Jewish groups of using code languages to maintain privacy and reinforce group boundaries. Interestingly, this unintentional use of Judeo-Spanish as a code language has become the most effective means of unintentional language transmission within the community. The use of code languages serves to enhance group boundaries, especially in public settings or in situations where individuals feel compelled to conceal their identity.

The desire to conceal one's ethnic affiliation is also visible in the naming practices. Some individuals opt for Turkish names or Muslim versions of Jewish names to blend into the broader Turkish culture and avoid discrimination. This reflects the historical trend of assimilation efforts and the pressure to conform to majority norms. However, among the third generation, there is a growing trend of reintroducing Sephardic names, indicating a resurgence of pride in their heritage language.

The Turkish Sephardim engage with Judeo-Spanish differently across generations. The first generation uses it as a spoken vernacular in specifc context of use, while the third generation primarily engages with it in a symbolic, performative manner, often using individual words to evoke cultural connections. The third generation sees Judeo-Spanish as a link to their heritage and a marker of authenticity. In worship, there has been a shift away from Hebrew and Judeo-Spanish towards Turkish, reflecting broader secularization and modernisation trends. The decline of Hebrew in rituals underscores tensions between tradition and modernity within the community.

Performances in Judeo-Spanish, especially theatre and music, play a crucial role in cultural preservation, serving as both a medium for artistic expression and a means of language transmission. These performances allow different generations to connect with their heritage, challenging prevailing language norms and increasing global awareness of Judeo-Spanish. Online platforms further support this shift, acting as digital spaces for language maintenance and cultural exchange. These platforms have become vital for sustaining the Sephardic identity, although they also face challenges related to language standardisation and authenticity.

The majority of online platforms in which the Sephardim participate have a global reach. Films and series, such as *The last Words* (2015) and *The Club* (2021) contribute to increasing awareness of Sephardic heritage among younger generations, complementing the efforts of online communities. Online platforms also face challenges related to language ideologies, authenticity, and standardisation. Balancing preservation with inclusivity and innovation is an ongoing process. Beyond their practical purposes, they represent a "safe" space of language use and highlight the resilience of Judeo-Spanish on the web.

The last section explored the efforts of the *Sephardic Center of Istanbul* (SKAD) to maintain Judeo-Spanish, as well as the challenges it faces. One of these challenges relates to the perceived gap between spoken and written Judeo-Spanish and the considerable linguistic variation in publication outputs like *El Amaneser*. Since Spanish has gained importance as a second language within the community, and is viewed as a means of reconnecting with heritage and facilitating international communication, Ulus High School has introduced Spanish as a second foreign language. This highlights the prevailing attitudes towards Judeo-Spanish as a language that cannot be transposed into a contemporary, utility-focused educational system.

Finally, from today's perspective, speakers do not consider the linguistic changes that took place in the second half of the 20th century as a form of natural language change or as a result of internal community processes. Instead, they attribute these changes to broader societal dynamics, particularly to the changing demographics and ideological pressure that forced them to accept linguistic and cultural assimilation. The following chapter will explore the role of these dynamics and the coping strategies of the different generations.

Chapter 6: The interplay between ideologies, attitudes and practices

6.1 Overview

In contexts where languages are endangered, examining ideologies and attitudes toward minority languages becomes crucial (Gibbons & Ramirez 2004; Kuncha & Bathula 2004; Sallabank 2013). Attitudes toward ethnic values and features significantly shape the boundaries between different ethnic groups (Haarmann 1986; Sallabank 2013). Negative perceptions of "contacting groups" serve to reinforce these ethnic boundaries, further distinguishing the reference group from those they interact with (Haarmann 1986: 39). On one hand, these boundaries reinforce ethnic identification, while on the other, they are shaped by the attitudes of ethnic groups toward others (Fishman 1999b: 161; Haarmann 1986: 39). Language attitudes operate at deeper interpretive levels, often reflecting views about the people who speak those languages or the experiences individuals and groups have had in connection with that language (Busch 2016; Busch & McNamara 2020; Busch & Reddemann 2013; Hill 2015; Wodak 1989). Since language is often linked to personal and social attributes, language-based discrimination frequently acts as a proxy for discrimination based on perceived ethnicity, religion, or other core values tied to group identity (Kircher & Zipp 2022: 7).

In this dissertation, I adopt the perspective that attitudes are manifestations of ideologies, encompassing both *overt*[128] and *covert*[129] elements, as articulated by Sallabank (2013: 64). Additionally, I argue that attitudes are dynamic rather than static, prone to changing in response to various influences, including shifts in language status (Garrett: 2010), traumatic experiences (Busch & McNamara 2020; Busch & Reddemann 2013), and demographic changes (Morvan 2011; Morvan 2017). This chapter will therefore draw on the theoretical reflections in Section 3.3.6, which suggest that the perceived status of a language, overt language attitudes, or even language practices within a community may not always align with an individual's linguistic identity. Instead, individual linguistic identity may be shaped by social mechanisms governing group boundaries, protection, and survival.

Negative attitudes towards minority languages, which are identified as both an outcome and a cause of language shift (Sallabank 2013: 66), arise from dominant language ideologies that are 'successfully naturalised' within minority groups (Bourdieu 1977: 164). A comparison with the status of the majority language, which is bolstered by

[128] *Overt* refers to explicit, codified, *de jure* language ideologies.
[129] *Covert* refers to implicit, unwritten, *de facto* language ideologies.

its political and economic power as well as its perceived modernity, can lead to a sense of 'linguistic insecurity' in minority language speakers (Fishman 1991: 340). Moreover, low self-esteem among minority groups can foster what Labov (1966: 489) calls "linguistic self-hatred". Use of the minority language is gradually stigmatised and abandoned by its speakers in favour of a symbolically more positively charged majority language. Most notably, attitudes towards language appear to be profoundly shaped by its association with traumatic experiences of group suppression and marginalisation (Busch 2016; Busch & McNamara 2020; Busch & Reddemann 2013).

Building upon the theoretical discussion in Section 3.2.6, this study views ideologies, attitudes, and practices as interconnected elements along a continuum (cf. Seloni & Sarfati 2013). However, the pathways linking these interrelated elements on both the micro and macro levels are not always transparent. In this chapter, I aim to elucidate these pathways by exploring the dynamics between ideologies, attitudes, and connecting these results with the insights gained in Chapter 5. Similarly to Shandler's (2000: 98-99) question regarding the role of postvernacular Yiddish, I have sought to investigate the extent to which Judeo-Spanish continues to be part of the Sephardic community following its abandonment as a vernacular and how its value has evolved in the community since the beginning of the 20th century. Specifically, my aim is to understand how individuals across different generations have adapted their language behaviour in response to changing language policies and how these policies have shaped the relationship between language and identity.

In particular, I focus on examining the influence of ideologies propagated by the educational system of the *Alliance Israélite Universelle* alongside the national Turkification and homogenisation policies implemented since the creation of the Turkish Republic, and their impact on the linguistic attitudes, practices and hierarchy of the system of values within the Judeo-Spanish community. The analysis of contemporary discourse of the three different generations is juxtaposed with historic events that have shaped the existence of the Judeo-Spanish community.

Drawing on Bornes Varol study among the Sephardim in Istanbul (2013a) and on Rácová's (2018: 192) exploration of the language ideologies that shape the Roma community in Slovakia, my research has unveiled the influence of two interconnected categories of language ideologies on the attitudes and practices of the Sephardic community (cf. Figure 1. Ch. 6): (1) *the ideology connected with social attitudes and developments and* (2) *the ideology reflected in national language policies and their effects.*

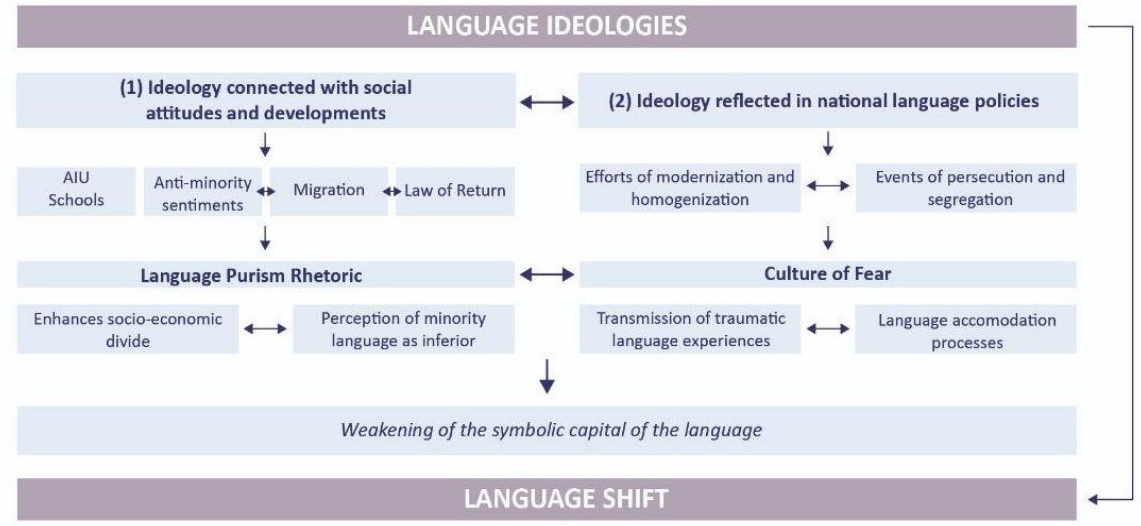

Figure 1. Ch. 6: *ideology types and their effects among Turkish Sephardim*

(1) The first category *of ideology connected with social attitudes and developments* reflects broader trends of language purism, portraying minority languages as inferior and associated with the uneducated classes (Altabev 1996; 1998; Bornes Varol 1991; 2005; 2008; 2013b; Gerson 1983; 1986; Gerson Şarhon 2011; Harris 1982a; 1985; 1994; 2006). This perspective enhanced by the ideologies propagated by the *Alliance Israélite Universelle* educational system, which promoted French as both the language of education in these schools and one to be adopted within AIU-educated families. In Section 6.2.1, I will examine how this ideology has weakened the symbolic capital and the social and cultural prestige of Judeo-Spanish (Altabev 1996; 1998; Harris 1982a; 1994; Rodrigue & Carnaud 1989; Romero 2012) relegating it to the lowest tier of language hierarchies. Several interrelated historical developments have further contributed to the decline in the symbolic capital of Judeo-Spanish.

In Section 6.2.2, I will examine how the internal migration of the Sephardim, alongside the ideologies propagated by the AIU, contributed to the decline in the prestige of Judeo-Spanish. Moving on to Section 6.2.3, the focus shifts to the interplay between transmitted attitudes and connections to ancestral homelands, exploring the role of the Sephardim within Turkish and Spanish socio-political contexts, their emigration patterns, and the subsequent impact on the symbolic capital of Judeo-Spanish across generations. Section 6.2.4 then delves into the effects of anti-minority and antisemitic events and campaigns between the 1920s and 1950s, particularly how these traumatic experiences were internalised and transmitted, leading to changes in language attitudes and practices. Finally, Section 6.2.5 investigates the controversies sparked by the *Law*

of Return, exploring its influence on reviving ideologies of language purism and the evolving symbolic role that Judeo-Spanish now holds.

(2) Within the second category, *the ideology reflected in national language policies* can be divided into two interrelated sets. The first set focuses on *efforts towards modernisation, homogenisation, and Turkification*, in line with the prevailing political landscape of the time (cf. § 2.3.6; 6.2.4). The second set concerns *events and campaigns aimed at persecution and segregation* (cf. § 6.2.4). Together, these policies contributed to the emergence of traumatic language experiences, which have been transmitted across generations, fostering a culture of fear surrounding the use of Judeo-Spanish in public spaces and accelerating language shift.

Section 6.3 investigates the interplay between specific traumatic events and campaigns, as highlighted in consultants' narratives, and their perceptions of how these events have significantly shaped social and linguistic practices across generations up to the present day. In Section 6.3.1, I examine the mechanisms through which fear is internalised and transmitted, highlighting its role as a central element in intergenerational trauma transmission and its function as a connecting feature between past and present ideologies, attitudes, and practices. Section 6.3.2 then analyses the discursive strategies related to social and linguistic unmarking, as well as the dissimulation strategies shaped by prevailing ideologies and antisemitic discourse. This section explores the motivations and consequences of these processes across generations, providing a nuanced understanding of linguistic and social accommodation, the dynamics of language shift among the Sephardim, and the perceived effects on different generations.

Building on the analyses of ideology internalisation and its effects on linguistic practices across generations, Section 6.4 investigates the critical role of attitudes in the continuum between ideology and practice. This section aims to uncover the processes shaping language attitudes over time, highlighting the interplay between external societal pressures and internal motivations. Section 6.4.1 examines how broader societal views on linguistic purity and authenticity shape individual perceptions, focusing on the ideological lenses through which linguistic contact and variation are viewed. Section 6.4.2 explores the significant shifts in attitudes towards Judeo-Spanish from the 1970s to the present day, analysing the factors contributing to a renewed interest in the language, particularly in the context of globalisation and the increased international recognition of minority languages. The evolving perceptions among younger generations, who increasingly view Judeo-Spanish as a valuable cultural and linguistic asset, are given particular attention. Finally, in Section 6.4.3, the discussion turns to the

diverse perspectives on language shift and its perceived impact on Sephardic identity and cultural distinctiveness across generations.

6.2 Ideologies influencing the symbolic capital of Judeo-Spanish

The latter half of the 19th century marked the onset of the decline in the symbolic capital of Judeo-Spanish, prompted by the internal dynamics within the community and/or responses to Turkey's evolving socio-political landscape during the first half of the 20th century (cf. § 2.3.6; 2.3.7; 2.3.8). The establishment of the AIU educational system from the late 19th to the mid-20th century, alongside the Turkish state's initiatives aimed at homogenisation and Turkification which began prior to and intensified after the creation of the Turkish Republic in 1923, emerged as pivotal factors in shaping linguistic ideologies. These developments, compounded by global events such as the Second World War, internal and external migration, Turkish anti-minority sentiment, antisemitic ideologies, diplomatic relations with Israel, and the Spanish *Law of Return* further influenced the status of Judeo-Spanish within Sephardi communities (cf. § 2.3.5; 2.3.6).

In the following sections, I will explore how these ideology-shaping dynamics are manifested in the narratives of different generations regarding language. Additionally, I will examine the types of attitudes engendered by these ideologies and the coping mechanisms developed by various generations in response to them.

6.2.1 Alliance Israélite Universelle (AIU)[130] Schools

In this section, I discuss how the AIU school system was perceived by different generations. Specifically, I illustrate how the AIU schools promoted French language and culture, leading to the emergence of Judéo-Fragnol and creating a new linguistic hierarchy that placed French at the top and relegated Judeo-Spanish to the lowest tier. I also explore how these changes impacted the community's social structure and individual identities and inspired enduring positive attitudes toward French, which persist today.

AIU schools actively promoted French language and culture through French-medium instruction, the establishment of French-Jewish publications, and literary works (cf. § 2.3.5) Consequently, Judeo-Spanish increasingly adopted French influences, a process called *rerromanización* (Lleal 1992: 45), giving rise to a new variety known as

[130] In this section, I will use the acronym AIU to refer to the *Alliance Israélite Universelle* for simplification purposes.

Judéo-Fragnol, which became the language of journalism and rational discourse among the Turkish Sephardim (Sephiha 1976). This linguistic variant diverged structurally from the language spoken by those not enrolled in AIU schools, with the most significant impact on vocabulary (Bornes Varol 2006). Proficiency in French marked an opportunity to ascend the social ladder (Benbassa & Rodrigue 2000: 85). With the establishment of French schools by the AIU, the Jewish elite educated in these institutions gradually adopted French in various spheres of Jewish life. (Gerson Şarhon 2011: 63).

The ideologies propagated by the AIU education system have demonstrated enduring consistency across generations, fostering universally positive attitudes towards French language and culture, which persist today. Particularly among the first generation, and notably among women, a sense of pride in their fluency in French was prominent. This pride is rooted in the fact that AIU pioneered mass education for both boys and girls, marking a transformative shift towards educational inclusivity and opportunities for girls.

> **6-1. Meri**: Mi mádre túvo un pasáj un póko amáryo, amáryo en dizyéndo, paría, ántes, ya sáves ke parían múncho. Áma éra úna mujér estudiáda, no "köy", no del village. Mi mádre éra de Edírne. De Edirne, ke éra un luyár muy ãnstruído i avía *L'Alliance Juive*, ya sáves ke avía? Wałá, üniversel, i tódos loz Edirnelís salíeron muy, muy estudyádos. La edá de la mamá. Kuándo vinyéron dospués a Stanból, avía djénte ke no savían ni eskrivír ni méldar. Ma, mi mádre avláva un fransé, ya kería yo sáver kómo lo savía éya, lüsíde, i éya, kuálo no dizía, entendítes? Donk, te kéro dizír, no éra úna mujér inyorénte.
>
> ('My mother had a difficult episode [she implies a difficult life], very difficult, what I want to say, she gave birth, before, you know that they used to give birth a lot. But she was an educated woman, not 'köy' [> Tk. 'village'], not from the village. My mother was from Edirne. From Edirne, which was a very developed place and had the *Alliance Juive*, you know about that, right? Well, universal, and all the people from Edirne came out very, very well-educated. The age of my mother. When they later came to Istanbul, there were people who didn't know how to write or read. But my mother spoke such good French, I wish I knew it, the way she knew it, lucid, and what did she not know, do you understand? So, what I want to say is, she wasn't an ignorant woman.') [1st-f-88-fluent-fam4]

Meri's reflection on her mother's life underscores the transformative impact of education in the AIU schools. Despite the challenges her mother faced, Meri emphasises the unparalleled educational opportunities her mother received at the AIU schools. This juxtaposition between her mother's education and the lack thereof among some Sephardim in Istanbul highlights the stark divide between those who were enrolled in AIU schools and those who were not, categorising the latter as *"inyoránte"* 'ignorant', a group from which she distances herself.

This narrative about Meri's mother's education is intricately woven into a broader narrative about her family's integration into the Turkish community, particularly their good relationships with their Turkish neighbours on the Burgaz island *"Morávan únas famíyas*

muy límpyas túrkas, ke izímoz úna amígable i vizindádo muy, muy ermózo" ('There lived some very clean Turkish families, with whom we had a very friendly and very beautiful neighbourhood.')[131]. This depiction seems to portray a contrast to the usually segregated existence of other Sephardic individuals, who spoke no Turkish, between her family's cultural and linguistic integration and the segregation experienced by others in the Sephardic community. The dissolution of ethnic boundaries within her family is attributed to their high level of education and their proficiency in both French and Turkish. Meri takes particular pride in her mother's commitment to ensuring excellent proficiency in Turkish, a language that holds special significance for her and her family, and to striving towards inclusion in the majority society, as exemplified in the following excerpt (cf. § 6.3.1):

> **6-2. Meri**: Un día, un köylű, un vilajuá, le dísho, éra úna luzíka ijíka, le dísho: <Madám!>, a las djudías yamávan 'madám', ke me inyérvo múncho si me yáman a mi. [...] I ésto avriré el parantéz i lo seraré, les díγo <Yo no so madám, yo so 'hanúmefendi'! [> Tk. *hanımefendi* 'madame']>. Bitti!
>
> ('One day, a villager, a villager, told her, she was a smart girl, he said: <Madam!> Jewish women were called 'madam', which bothered me a lot if they called me. [...] And I opened and will close the parenthesis, I said to them, <I am not 'madam', I am 'hanúmefendi' [> Tk. *hanımefendi* 'madame']!> That's it!') [1st-f-88-fluent-fam4]

Here, Meri recounts an interaction in which her mother was referred to as 'madam' by a villager, a term typically associated with Jewish women, which her mother found uncomfortable. Interestingly, this memory overlaps with a similar experience that Meri had, indicating a continuity of attitudes between generations. Meri's discomfort with being addressed as 'madam' reflects a sense of indignation and frustration with the way Jewish women were labelled as 'outsiders'. By asserting her preferred neutral Turkish title *hanúmefendi* 'madam', the speaker takes agency in asserting her identity marked by inclusiveness.

Thus, understanding the larger framework of Meri's narrative about AIU education sheds light on her parents' and her motivations for acquiring education and knowledge in Turkish not only as a means of accessing better opportunities and higher social status, but also as an instrument in the negotiation of group boundaries to ensure inclusivity. Given the broader socio-cultural and historical context of the early Turkish Republic (cf. § 2.2.2; 2.3.6), this strategy may have emerged in response to prevailing ideologies of cultural and linguistic unity. This generation's narratives about the past centre around themes of *inclusivity*, *dissolution of boundaries* through increased proficiency in Turkish, and the *reinforcement of boundaries* within the Jewish community through the acquisition

[131] [1st-f-88-fluent-fam4]

of better education and enhancement of multilingualism and multiculturalism. However, in their narratives, there is no particular focus, awareness or concern regarding the changing status of Judeo-Spanish as a result of AIU education or Turkish acquisition. Among this generation, the prevailing ideologies seem to have not yet affected their attitudes towards Judeo-Spanish, as becomes clear in Naftali's accounts.

> **6-3. Naftali**: I el, la língua mas prestijlí éra, es, éra el fransés än mi káza. Än el, än la káza de nené. Porké éra la língua de los, de los enstruídos. De ótra párte, mi mis abuélos no fuéron akéyos, de kómo akéyos djáńtes ke kómo se díze --- ke míren de ójo málo a muéstra língua. Kómo ke le konsidéran kóm' bas klas. No. Núnka s'averuensáron de avlár än djudyó. Kuándo teníyan de avlár djudyó, kuánd' puedían avlár gáńte djudyó lo avláron.
>
> ('And, the most prestigious language was French in my house. In the house of my grandmother. Because it was the language of the educated ones. On the other hand, my grandparents were not like those people who, as they say --- who look down on our language. Like they consider it as low class. No. They were never ashamed to speak Djudyó, when they could speak with Jewish people, they spoke it.') [2nd-m-45-fluent-fam12]

In Naftali's grandmother's household, French was the language associated with prestige and education. However, Naftali clarifies that this did not entail a disdain for Judeo-Spanish as a language of lower social status. Instead, they would use Judeo-Spanish whenever necessary to communicate with other Jewish individuals. The perspective of "shame" from which Naftali constructs his narrative of prestige juxtaposition, points to a transition in perspectives regarding prestige hierarchy among the second and third generations.

Transitioning to the narratives about the past of the second generation of consultants, one can observe a shift in awareness regarding the role of AIU education in the changing status of Judeo-Spanish and attitudes towards Judeo-Spanish, as exemplified by Robert. Robert's extensive and longstanding involvement with Judeo-Spanish, spanning nearly four decades, has afforded him a nuanced understanding of the various ideologies influencing language shift among the Sephardim. From Robert's perspective, the decline of Judeo-Spanish predates the implementation of top-down Turkification policies following the creation of the Turkish Republic. He suggests that the establishment of the AIU Schools in the late 19th and early 20th centuries played the most significant role in altering the status of Judeo-Spanish (cf. § 2.3.7).

> **6-4. Robert**: En el ampesijó, ya sáves kuálo fue laz eskólas en el Empéryo Otománo. En loz ányos milochosyéntos i seténta la *Alyánsa* vinó en el Emperyó Otománo. I dospués ke vinó avryó syén i trénta eskólas en el Empéryo Otománo. Ántes loz djudíos no se ívan a la skóla, avían los talmudóras ánde se ambezávan la relijyón i, i los ke éran mas saƀídos se izían, se azían hahámes, e loz ótros náda, i la komünidá djudía éra muy en difikultád. Dospués de laz eskólas de la *Alyánsa*, tódo trokó en dyéz ányos. En dyéz ányos tódo trokó porké los ke eskapáron la Alyánsa empesáron a tenér échos, ántes no tenían échos, éran la tresér kualitát de persónas en los

lavóros. Ma lo ke, el dányo ke dyo la Alyánsa es ke, dospués ke se avryó laz eskólas, los ke se ívan a la skóla avlávan el fransés, los ke no se ívan a la skóla, avlávan el djudézmo. I un syérto tyémpo, dospués el djudézmo fue la língua de los inyorántes. I las persónaz no kijérón ke loz íjo i las íjas ávłan en djudézmo, ke se ambezén el fransés. Porké los ke se ambezávan el fransés i se ívan a la skóla, dospués tenían un buen écho, loz ótros no tenían un buen écho. Ésto fue el maz gránde probléma.

('In the beginning, you know which were the schools in the Ottoman Empire. In the year 1870, the *Alliance* came to the Ottoman Empire. And after it came, it opened 130 schools in the Ottoman Empire. Before, the Jews didn't go to school, they had the Talmud Torahs where they learned religion, and those who were more knowledgeable became rabbis, and the others, nothing, and the Jewish community was in great difficulty. After the *Alliance* schools, everything changed in ten years. In ten years, everything changed because those who graduated from the *Alliance* began to have work, before they didn't have work, they were the third quality of people in the jobs. But, the damage that the *Alliance* did, was that after the schools opened, those who went to school spoke French, those who didn't go to school spoke Judezmo [Judeo-Spanish]. And, some time later, Judezmo was the language of the ignorant. And people didn't want their sons and daughters to speak in Judezmo, they wanted them to learn French. Because those who learned French and went to school, later had a good job, the others didn't have a good job. This was the biggest problem.') [2nd-m-61-fluent-ind]

Robert highlights a significant shift in language use and attitudes toward Judeo-Spanish within the Jewish community. The introduction of French as the primary language of instruction in AIU schools brought about a preference for French over Judeo-Spanish, primarily driven by socioeconomic considerations. Proficiency in French became synonymous with social advancement, granting access to influential networks and opportunities that were unavailable to Judeo-Spanish speakers. Robert describes how this phenomenon led to the stigmatisation of Judeo-Spanish as *"la língua de los inyorántes"* ('the language of the ignorant'). While AIU schools facilitated educational progress and gender equality, they also gave rise to a set of ideologies that exacerbated socioeconomic disparities. These disparities further entrenched the preference for French language acquisition within families, contributing to the marginalisation of Judeo-Spanish within the community, a point also supported by third generation consultants like Salamon.

6-5. Salamon: Si, el fransés múchaz vézez tomó al luguár del espanyól, pórke el fransés erá la língua de la de la buryezía i el espanyól úna língua --- vyéja ke no --- ke kreían --- ke no valía pára náda. Dizían las famílyaz maz ríkaz ke tenían akséso a la instruksyón a buénaz ezkólas se ambezávan en fransés i el fransés ke se ambezávan éra akadémiko i tenían un nivél maz álto en fransés. Dizían <Ke vámoz avlár espanyól, ez la língua de los próves, ke no pudíeron estudyár. Vámoz a avlár en fransés, la língua del paíz, de un paíz muy, muy sivilizádo> No? I por eso. Yo téngo un egzémpyo en mi famílya. Mi abuéla venía de muy buéna --- mi nóna venía de muy buéna famílya. Su pádre, mi [?], aƀía sído farmaseútiko, i mi nóna aƀía tenído úna muy buéna edukasyón en la skóla fransésa, en la eskuéla *Izraelíta Fransésa*. Mi nóna syémpre meldáva en fransés, áma kon mozótros syémpre aƀláva espanyól, pórke éra su língua. No, no despresyáva ésta língua, ke me paresyó, ke me parése oy en día muy importánte.

> ('Yes, French many times replaced [Judeo-]Spanish, because French was the language of the bourgeoisie and [Judeo-]Spanish a language --- old that --- they believed --- that was worthless. They said that richer families who had access to education and good schools were taught in French, and the French they learned was academic and they had a higher level in French. They said <Why are we going to speak [Judeo-]Spanish, it's the language of the poor, who couldn't study. Let's speak French, the language of the country, of a very, very civilised country.> Right? Because of that. I have an example in my family. My grandmother came from a very good --- my maternal grandmother came from a very good family. Her father, my [?], had been a pharmacist and my grandmother had received a very good education at the French school, at the French Israelite school. My grandmother always read in French, but with us, she always spoke [Judeo-]Spanish, because it was her language. No, she didn't despise this language, which today seems to me very important.') [3rd-m-43-fluent-ind]

Salamon suggests that French replaced Judeo-Spanish in specific social settings due to its association with the bourgeoisie and its perceived higher status, while Judeo-Spanish was considered inferior or "worthless" in comparison. These status disparities are enhanced by the prevailing ideologies surrounding Judeo-Spanish. Both Salamon and Robert's perception of a language hierarchy based on social class must be therefore interpreted against these ideologies. Consequently, French was adopted as the family language in many AIU-educated families (cf. § 5.3.1). Out of a total of 60 study consultants, 3 first-generation consultants and 4 second-generation consultants adopted French as the primary language transmitted in the family (cf. Appendix 1). Despite being educated in French and primarily reading in French, Salamon's grandmother consistently spoke Judeo-Spanish at home, reflecting a bilingual dynamic where each language served a specific role — French for reading and Judeo-Spanish for intimate, family interactions. The phrases *"no, no despresyáva ésta língua"* ('no, she didn't despise this language') and *"ke me parése oy en día muy importánte"* ('which today seems to me very important') reveal a retrospective recognition and appreciation of his grandmother's commitment to Judeo-Spanish. Salamon suggests that her dedication to the language defied the common trend of switching to French within the family, indicating that she resisted external pressures to abandon Judeo-Spanish.

6.2.2 Migration to and within Istanbul

This section explores the complex relationship between internal migration and the evolving dynamics that shaped a homogenous Judeo-Spanish community in Turkey during a period of significant demographic and ideological change between the 1930s and 1960s. It examines how different social classes and conflicting attitudes towards Judeo-Spanish and Jewish values interacted within this context.

The geographical proximity of community members within an ethnic group facilitates the development of shared social norms, cultural practices (Fishman 1991:

58), and collective attitudes towards language (Labov 1972: 293). However, the dislocation of a community can significantly weaken a language's vitality and symbolic capital (cf. Morvan 2011). Two forms of migration have notably impacted the vitality and symbolic capital of Judeo-Spanish since the 1930s. Firstly, the internal migration of Sephardim to Istanbul from various regions of Turkey, spurred by rising nationalism between the 1930s and 1960s, and the continued dispersal of Jews within Istanbul, disrupted the cohesion of Istanbul's Sephardic community. This internal dislocation has had a profound influence on language attitudes and language practices. Secondly, external migration from Turkey to Israel, America, and Europe led to a dramatic decline in the community's population over just 50 years. The 1945 census recorded 49,952 Jewish individuals in Turkey, a number that had decreased to 30,381 by 1965 (Özgen 2010: 232). As of 1 March 2024, the Turkish Sephardic community has dwindled to just 14,200 members (cf. § 2.2). According officials from the *Jewish Community of Turkey* in Istanbul, the community is losing nearly one member per day.

While external migration has strongly affected the vitality of Judeo-Spanish, the symbolic capital of Judeo-Spanish has been most affected by internal migration from different parts of Turkey to Istanbul. Internal migration dynamics brought together Sephardim of different social classes and with different levels of education and multilingual practices. In the following sections, I will analyse representative perspectives from different generations of speakers on how the internal migration of Jews to Istanbul influenced language ideology trends among the Turkish Sephardim.

As demonstrated in Chapter 5, up until the 1960s, families within the Jewish community resided in close proximity, frequently sharing the same house or residing on the same street. Among the Sephardic community, particularly women (cf. § 5.2.1), there was no need to speak Turkish, as Judeo-Spanish was the prevailing language spoken by the entire community. During this period, the Sephardim lived in what Roza describes as a "multilingual ghetto" where French held the highest status while Turkish occupied the opposite end of the attitudinal spectrum, as observed in Section 5.2.2 and 6.2.1 and as Roza recollects.

> **6-6. Roza:** E l'inglés no aƀía del tódo por empesár, kéda el frãnsé i ken no savía frãnsé, <A no sábe frãnsé?!> ke verguénsa éra, ke no meldó. No erámoz muy aƀyértos, a la kóntra, mas serádos, tódo géto. Ke moráva en sus luguáres, éra syémpre, yo syémpre estáva kon djudíos syémpre, en klűbes de djudíos, de mansevíkos porké no aƀía asimilasyón. [**…**] Puedías tenér amígas en la skóla túrka, puedías tenér amígas kristiyánas, ma mi mádre me dezía <Tyénes aniversáryo de Karolína? No, moz vámos a ir oy al sínema>, no me mandáva. Avía mas múncho djudaízmo, ma la savér las línguas, no se, de ke savían língua, porké éran vizínos kon levanténes, ambezávan en italyáno. Puéde ser, kómo teníamos úna vezína gréga, mi mádre kon éya i grégo avlava.

> ('And there was no English at all to begin with, just French, and for those who didn't know French, <Ah, you don't know French?!> what a shame it was, that they didn't study. We weren't very open, to the opposite, rather closed, all like a ghetto. People lived in their own places, it was always, I was always with Jews, always in Jewish clubs, youth clubs, because there was no assimilation. [...] You could have friends at the Turkish school, you could have Christian friends, but my mother would say to me <Is it Karolina's birthday? No, we're going to the cinema today!>, she wouldn't let me go. There was more Judaism, but knowing languages, I don't know why they knew languages, [maybe] because they were neighbours with Levantines and learned Italian. Maybe because we had a Greek neighbour, my mother was speaking Greek to them.') [1st-f-68-fluent-ind]

Roza's narrative provides a perspective shared by the majority of Sephardim regarding the role of language at the intersection of social cohesion and cultural identity. On the one hand, the community exhibited strong internal cohesion with impermeable group boundaries, implying a separation from broader society and a preference for in-group social interactions, as evidenced by the use of the term "ghetto". Roza's generation was encouraged to participate in Jewish youth clubs but discouraged from socialising outside the Jewish community, pointing to the community's commitment to preserving its cultural and religious practices. Roza emphasises the significance of Jewish youth clubs as crucial social spaces where young Sephardim socialised. On the other hand, however, despite the insular nature of their community, Roza also highlights an openness to learning the languages of their neighbours, such as Italian[132] and Greek (cf. § 5.2.2). This proficiency in neighbouring languages demonstrates a genuine interest and prolonged practice in engaging with neighbouring communities, leading to what Moshe described as an "almost genetical predisposition" to learning neighbours' languages. This apparent contradiction between the community's separation and its openness to language learning is further explored by Edna, who reflects on how living in a "ghetto" served as a protective barrier for the community.

> **6-7. Edna**: Géto no éra úna idéa muy buéna, ma protejáva a la djénte, pórke bivían endjúntos i éra un un kamíno de protejár a la kominitát. Ésto es djústo. Esto es la verdád, ma si me demándas ke géto es úna idéa muy buéna; no es segúro, ma esto ez el fácto.
>
> ('Ghetto wasn't a very good idea, but it protected the people, because they lived together and it was a way to protect the community. This is right. This is the truth, but if you ask me if ghetto is a very good idea; it's not certain, but this is the fact.') [2nd-f-60-fluent-fam9]

[132] Roza refers to the period between the 16th and 19th centuries when Italian city-states like Venice and Genoa had extensive trade networks throughout the eastern Mediterranean. During this time, Ottoman Jewish merchants, known as *Levantini*, were key players in commerce with Italian traders, making proficiency in Italian essential for business and trade (Benbassa & Rodrigue 2000: 43-44).

Edna's reflection suggests that living together enabled the community to provide support and protection against external threats. By "protection", Edna implies a safeguarding that extended beyond cultural and social preservation to include physical safety. She expresses ambivalence about whether the concept of a "ghetto" was beneficial, considering the potential social and psychological implications of segregation. However, she acknowledges the greater need for protection. The general nostalgia among the first and second generations for life in the segregated Jewish ghetto implies a retrospective acceptance of the historical and social necessity of the time. Ghettos provided the community with a sense of protection against discrimination and mutual support and facilitated intergenerational transmission of Judeo-Spanish and Jewish values, as also noted by Berta (cf. 5-34) in Section 5.4.

By the early 1970s, Istanbul's Sephardic community had shifted from being a geographically cohesive group to one dispersed across the city. Over less than four decades, this transformation significantly altered the social fabric and linguistic hierarchy among the Sephardim, with Turkish emerging as the predominant language for the younger generation.

> **6-8. Treysi**: I didn't have any Jewish friends when I lived there. All my friends were Turkish Muslims. It's like we were the only Jewish family, me and my father's family. [3rd-f-40-passive-fam11]

Internal migration of Turkey's population to Istanbul from other parts of Turkey, as Mordo implies, significantly influenced the social and linguistic dynamics of the Sephardic community, impacting not only his generation but also that of his children.

> **6-9. Mordo**: That means that, within one generation, almost 90-95 percent of the citizens of Istanbul immigrated from little cities, villages and so on. They didn't know anything about, not only Jews, Judaism but also other religions, other types of living, you know. They are villagers. And so, the environment changed dramatically within one generation. And we could feel the *yadırgama* [> Tk. 'feeling out of place'], we can touch the feeling now. But you know, even in my childhood, now I can realise that, nobody was fond of us very much. To tell the truth, because we were different. We were more European, we were also among ourselves, we had different ways of living. [2nd-m-59-passive-fam1]

Mordo underscores that the newcomers, who largely originated from rural areas and small towns, arrived in Istanbul with limited exposure to diverse cultures, religions, and ways of life, including familiarity with Judaism and European lifestyles. This led to a significant socio-cultural disparity between Jewish migrants and the established Jewish residents of Istanbul. Both groups experienced a palpable sense of *yadırgama* 'feeling out of place', as they grappled with the rapid demographic shifts occurring in the city. Mordo suggests that this feeling of displacement persists today, highlighting the enduring impact of these demographic changes on the city's social fabric. Mordo's view is corroborated in the narratives of all three generations.

Mordo's discursive line takes an intriguing turn as he transitions from examining the consequences of demographic changes to addressing the internalised sense of otherness felt by the Jewish community. He reflects on how their perceived othering (*"because we were different")* and "*more European*" lifestyle contributed to a sense of alienation from the majority population, which displayed hostility *("nobody was fond of us very much"*) towards them. One aspect of this "Europeanness" was their education in AIU schools and the widespread adoption of French among many members of the Jewish community. Mordo's insights offer valuable perspective on the challenges faced by the Jewish community in delineating a cohesive Jewish identity in a historical context that promoted assimilation and against the backdrop of a rapidly expanding urban landscape[133]. In the following account, Mordo discusses how these convergences and the process of group boundary negotiations took place among his generation in their youth.

> **6-10. Mordo**: The Jewish people from the small cities immigrated to Istanbul in 1950s, 1960s. Till that time, Jews that were living in Istanbul, they almost especially the ones that were living in the downtown like Galata and other places; they changed their language to French. And to Turkish. Ladino was the language of the lower class. It seemed like that to a certain part of the community. But in 1950s, when people immigrated from Çanakkale, Edirne, from other places, they didn't have the same principles. They spoke Ladino and they behaved like oriental Jews. And there were class differences between the ones that were, that used to live in Istanbul and were educated in the French schools and other foreigner schools and living in the certain neighbourhoods and the others. And we were the children of them. So, we met the other part of the community in youth organisations. Not in synagogues, we were not a religious generation. In youth organisations and even those youth organisations were divided among themselves. There was one which was established by the families who spoke French; like *Amikal* we use to call. And also another more nationalistic one, *Yıldırım*. And the third one, which I belonged to by chance, because of my wife maybe; because we were flirting, is *Dostluk*, the one which was more conservative, where I heard Ladino first. They were more conservative families. They didn't speak openly Ladino among themselves but, you know, my generation was attending to *Dostluk*, I knew that in their houses they spoke Ladino with their parents. I was flirting with a girl, who became my wife afterwards, and her father insisted her to go only to *Dostluk*. So, I had to go to *Dostluk*. And I was among them. And I was the only, we were 3 among let me say 100 young people, that were studying in the university. [2nd-m-59-passive-fam1]

In this account, Mordo sheds light on the interconnected effects of internal migration and the *Alliance Israélite Universelle* on the emergence of social disparities within the Jewish community. Previously, residents of downtown areas like Galata had predominantly embraced the French and Turkish languages, while Ladino was associated with the lower socioeconomic class. However, the influx of immigrants from locations such as

[133] Istanbul's population has increased from less than 1 million in the 1950s to over 15 million today.

Çanakkale and Edirne, who maintained Ladino and displayed more traditional Ottoman Jewish behaviours, led to the emergence of new dynamics of class distinctions within the community.

Mordo reflects on his personal experience and that of his generation growing up amidst these changes, highlighting the role of youth organisations as spaces for interaction and identity formation. These organisations, such as *Amikal* and *Yıldırım* (> Tk. 'lightning'), catered to different segments of the community based on language preference and ideological orientation. The speaker's involvement in *Dostluk* (> Tk. 'friendship'), a more conservative organisation whose members spoke Judeo-Spanish at home, sheds light on the persistence of Ladino within the family contexts of some new migrants despite its decline in public use. However, the phrase *"they didn't speak it openly"* points to the fact that, in the 1970s, when he was a young man, speaking Judeo-Spanish in these clubs was uncommon and was looked down on. At that point in time, Judeo-Spanish had already been relegated to the confines of the home and intimate circles (cf. § 5.4).

Mordo's accounts provide a clear glimpse into the factors influencing Jewish youths' affiliation with specific clubs. They also underscore the segregation between Istanbuli Sephardim and those who immigrated from other parts of Turkey and the impact of this segregation on the language attitudes and practices of different youth groups.

> **6-11. Mordo**: I studied in a British School, lived in Nişantaşı, my best friends were from foreign schools; they didn't know anything about Ladino, religion or traditions. Nothing. But I was also in certain times of the week among other people who were very fond of tradition, Ladino and so I had a conflict. But I learned. I learned to live with it. And the third generation, like my family, these parts of the community came together. They had marriages, friendships and so on; now it's almost one community, let me say. A homogene one. [2nd-m-59-passive-fam1]

Mordo recounts here his experience attending a British school and residing in the diverse neighbourhood of Nişantaşı, where his friends from foreign schools were unacquainted with Judeo-Spanish, Jewish customs, and religious practices. This exposure to varying cultural backgrounds and different social classes created a conflict for him, given his simultaneous immersion in circles that valued Jewish tradition and the Judeo-Spanish language. Over time, however, these disparities began to dissipate within his generation through interactions such as marriage and friendship, leading to the development of what he describes as an "almost" homogeneous community today. Mordo observes that a truly cohesive Sephardic community only fully emerged with the subsequent generation, represented by his children.

6.2.3 Emigration

This section explores the interplay between inherited attitudes and connections to ancestral homelands, the socio-political roles of the Sephardim in Turkey and Spain, and their migration patterns, examining how these factors have impacted the social capital of Judeo-Spanish across generations.

Emigration to Israel has been constant since the foundation of the state of Israel and has intensified in the past three decades. As Ezra points out, Sephardic community members' reasons for emigration have changed over time. Earlier migrants emigrated to Israel for nationalist and idealist reasons, while contemporary migrants are driven mostly by economic and political challenges in contemporary Turkey.

> **6-12. Ezra**: Şimdi bir kere daha önceden gidenler, şeydiler, şey çocuklardı milliyetçi ve idealist çocuklardı; daha önce gidenler. Çünkü gitmeye çok fazla ihtiyaçları yoktu; o yüzden gidenlerin sayısı azdı. Fakat şu anda gidenlerin çoğu burada hayat zor olduğu için; pek fazla buradaki İspanyol Yahudileri'ni olanak sunulmadığı için ve burada maddi olarak pek birşey bulamadıkları için gidiyorlar. Nedenler ve niçinler farklı.
>
> ('Now, well, the ones who went before were nationalist and idealist children. Because they didn't really need to go that much, that's why there were a few of them going. However, the ones going there nowadays, they go because the life here is very hard and there aren't many opportunities for the Spanish Jews here and they can't find anything good financially. The cause and the reason are different.') [2nd-f-53-passive-fam2]

The socio-political developments of the past three decades, including the AKP (Tk. *Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi* 'Justice and Development Party') government's oppressive policies, increased Islamification, and ideologies of discrimination, have affected the different minority groups of Turkey, particularly the Jewish community. Over the duration of my research (2015-2024), spanning from the initial interviews to the final stages, I observed a significant number of consultants' families, or parts of their families, relocating to countries such as Israel, Spain, Austria, and France among other destinations. This movement underscores a tangible shift within the community: migration has become a viable option for individuals and families seeking economic opportunities or perceived safety and political stability outside of Turkey. This trend was particularly pronounced in the third generation, where the desire to emigrate appeared to be most prominent, as in the case of Treysi.

> **6-13. Treysi**: It depends on the situation, and if it gets worse, I definitely would like to move. I really don't have any ties to this country. [3rd-f-40-passive-fam11]

Treysi expresses a readiness to contemplate emigration should the situation worsen, emphasising a limited emotional connection or attachment to Turkey. Meanwhile, Albert cites the unstable political landscape over the past three decades in Turkey and the

perceived rise in antisemitism as compelling reasons driving his consideration of emigration:

> **6-14. Albert**: My own kids I don't want to, I don't know, I don't want them to be growing in this society. Because antisemitism is getting higher in numbers. We don't face any actual crime against us as a Turkish Jew but people are hating us more, we know, we feel, we feel it! They don't really show us but we feel the anger in themselves. The anger is against Israel. [3rd-m-35-passive-ind]

Here, Albert expresses deep concerns about rising antisemitism every time hostility towards Israel surges. His sense of a lack of safety and stability are the factors underlying his migration plans. A major concern for Albert's generation is the conflation in Turkish citizens' perceptions between Israeli politics and Jewish ethnic identity, which often leads to feelings of ostracisation. This sense of alertness and the feeling of not being 'welcome' and 'safe' are sentiments shared by all generations, as Tal acknowledges:

> **6-15. Tal**: Yáni, estáva muy buéno, áma de ke pasó éste govérno, y'ay kínze ányos ke'stan éstos en la kavésa, akí no ésta buéno. No mos kéren byen! No mos kéren byen! Bitti! No mos kéren byen! Y'ay i ke mos kéren byen. Y'ay, áma, son pókos. Lo mas, no mos kéren. [...] Bitti! Lo mas, no mos kéren. I por módo de ésto la mansevéz de akí, los ke están vắnte ányos, trắnta ányos, ke se kazáron muévo, ke tyéne kreatúra chíka, se'stan yíndo de éste país. Se'stan yíndo. Ánde? A l'Amérika, a Kanáda, a Izraél a tódo módo de luγár están yíndo.
>
> ('I mean, it was very good, but since this government came, it has been fifteen years that they are in power, and is not good here. They don't like us! They don't like us! That's it! They don't like us. There are people that like us. There are, but they are very few. The majority don't like us. That's it! And because of this, the youth here, those who are twenty or thirty years, who married recently, who have small children, are leaving this country. They are leaving. Where? To America, to Canada, to Israel, to all kinds of places they are going.') [2nd-m-68-semi-fam11]

Tal attributes the deterioration in living conditions to perceived social exclusion, particularly directed towards Jews. The hostility, discrimination, and marginalisation he perceives are underscored by the repeated phrase *"No mos kéren byen!"* ('They don't like us!'), highlighting a pervasive sense of unwelcomeness or undesirability within broader society. His tone of indignation suggests deep disappointment and alienation, reflecting a sense of betrayed trust in the country and its leaders. The emphatic repetitions of *that's it!* serve as a conclusive statement, emphasising both his emotional state and his unwavering convictions.

Regarding migration attitudes, the first and second generations exhibit a notable reluctance to emigrate. A primary factor they cite is the anticipated financial and logistical difficulties associated with starting afresh in a foreign country. Additionally, these generations express significant concerns about their limited proficiency in English and Hebrew, which they perceive as major obstacles to successfully settling in new environments, as highlighted in Gözcü's narrative.

> **6-16. Gözcü**: Nozótros tánto ke no los van a despursár de éste país, vámoz a kedár

> en éste país. Porké imahínate, en un paíz dónde no puédes leér ni un diáryo; o no puédes avlár úna língua. Kon kualkár pärsóna de la káye, no es tu país. Te vaz a sintír muy estrányo. Por ésto ke, tánto ke nos pärmítän, u tánto ke la vída nos pärmíte, intäntámos de bivír en Turkíya. I tam-- si puedémos vámos a viyahár a vär los chíkos, nóstros, muéstras famíyas, dónde van a bivír.
>
> ('We, as long as they do not deport us from this country, will stay in this country. Because, imagine, in a country where you cannot read a newspaper or speak a language. With every person on the street, it is not your country. You will feel very strange. For this reason, as long as they allow us and life permits us, we try to live in Turkey. And if we can, we will travel to see our children, our families, wherever they will live') [2nd-m-65-fluent-fam6]

Gözcü indirectly emphasises the crucial importance of language proficiency for Sephardim considering emigration. The lack of such knowledge can result in a profound sense of alienation, making it difficult to navigate new social environments. His use of the demonstrative pronoun *this* when referring to Turkey suggests a degree of detachment. However, his contemplation of moving to a place where he doesn't speak the language, coupled with the statement *"it is not your country"*, again suggests a contrast with Turkey, which, despite its flaws, remains his home: *"tánto ke nos pärmítän, u tánto ke la vída nos pärmíte, intäntámos de bivír en Turkíya"* ('as long as they allow us and life permits us, we try to live in Turkey'). By using the phrase *"nos pärmítän"* ('they allow'), Gözcü draws attention to the distinct and separate status of Sephardic individuals within the larger society. Notably, his tone and pronoun choices shift when discussing Israel as the preferred destination for emigration, reflecting a more personal and positive association with that country.

> **6-17. Gözcü**: Yo véo ke la mayoríya van a ir a Israél. Porké, es el país de muéstra ---, el muéstro país. Aún ke es un país muy difísil, kómo son hóvenes, pára el futúro del sus chíkos, se van a ir a Izraél.
>
> ('I see that the majority will go to Israel. Because it is the country of our ---, our own country. Even though it is a very difficult country, as they are young, for the future of their children, they will go to Israel') [2nd-m-65-fluent-fam6]

The use of the phrase *"el muéstro país"* ('our country') in contrast with *"éste país"* ('this country') above indicates a deep emotional attachment to and identification with Israel compared to Turkey. In line with Gözcü's observation, 27 out of 45 consultants from the first and second generations expressed Israel as their preferred destination for emigration should the situation in Turkey worsen for the Sephardim. Israel holds a special place in Gözcü's future aspirations and, as observed, among the broader Sephardic community, despite the acknowledged challenges associated with Israel. The statement *"se van a ir a Izraél"* ('they will go to Israel') conveys a sense of certainty or inevitability about migration to Israel among the majority of the community, suggesting a perceived consensus or strong inclination towards Israel as 'home territory'.

Gözcü's reflections, however, are not present in the data collected on the third generation. Out of the 15 consultants in this group, only 3 individuals expressed interest in migrating to Israel. Six consultants indicated a preference for Spain, two for Vienna, one for America, and one for Canada. Yıldız, like many of her peers, favoured Spain over Israel.

> **6-18. Yıldız**: Estóy enamoráda de Estambúl, pářo avéses pyénso írme de akí. Pářo avéses. Pářo no téngo ningún oportunidád o no búsko álgo. [...] Porké ğo viví en Espánya por sínko méses i enkantádo, por éso --- enkantáda --- pářo aóra kéro praktikár mas mi espanyól i no kéro olvidár i por éso si ay úna oportunidád yo penseré.
>
> ('I'm in love with Istanbul, but sometimes I think about leaving here. But sometimes. […] But I don't have any opportunities or I'm not looking for anything. [...] Because I lived in Spain for five months and loved it, that's why --- loved it --- but now I want to practice my [Peninsular] Spanish more and I don't want to forget it, and for that reason, if there is an opportunity, I will consider it.') [3rd-f-30-Spanish-fam13]

Yıldız's preference for Spain is rooted in her exchange experiences and the familiarity she developed with its language and culture, alongside her long-held ambition to learn Spanish. Despite expressing a deep affection for Istanbul and a strong sense of belonging to the city — *"estóy enamoráda de Estambúl"* ('I'm in love with Istanbul') — she also contemplates emigration. This consideration is not driven by immediate necessity but rather by a cautious anticipation of potential future changes in the safety situation. Spain's appeal for Yıldız is particularly strong due to her positive experiences there, which have deepened her desire to maintain and improve her Spanish, and by extension, her Judeo-Spanish skills. Yıldız's narrative underscores the significant role that language attitudes and proficiency play in shaping migration considerations among third-generation Sephardim, a perspective further nuanced by Kaden.

> **6-19. Kaden:** I don't speak Hebrew. I don't, I don't even know a letter. So, whenever I go there I feel lost, because I look everywhere and I don't understand nothing, so I feel lost there. So, I don't know how to, and now we came to an age so, it's even harder a language. So, I will go there, I will start to learn with the letters even, not with some words even with the letters, so, it's very hard and, if I go to Spain it's easier, because I already have something so --- [3rd-f-33-Spanish-fam6]

Kaden's sense of familiarity in Spain stems from factors beyond just language. She felt at home in Spain, not in a physical sense, but in a kind of imagined Sepharad, an imagined homeland of her ancestors as discussed in Şaul & Hualde (2016):

> **6-20. Kaden**: Whenever I go there always we talk to one subject: the grandmothers and the grandfathers are the same as ours. But not Turkish grandmothers or grandfathers, ours, Jewish grandmothers, and I mean the attitudes, this way of speaking it's the same. […] So, I feel this and I feel very comfortable let's say. So, probably you know, during these days we always, I mean our community, always speaks about going abroad for living. Because of the situations in here, so always we go, we are talking about to go where. Because, I mean, I'm Turkish, I was born in here, so I prefer to live here but the circumstances are not allowing us, I mean

> probably will not allow us to live here for more years. I mean I can live here but I can not leave my child living here without knowing a proper education, let's say. So, after some point, we prefer, we will probably prefer to leave here. So, whenever we speak to go somewhere, Spain is always a choice, because it's more close to us; I will say. I mean, Israel, in some point is a choice because we are Jewish and it's always there. But Spain is even more close choice, I will say. [3rd-f-33-Spanish-fam6]

This feeling of familiarity and comfort is given by a perceived parallel between the Jewish grandmothers and grandfathers in Spain and their own, emphasising a shared cultural and generational connection, enhanced by people's looks, behaviour, and way of speaking. For Kaden, Spain always comes first over Israel due to a closer linguistic and cultural identification.

Interestingly, despite the potential for family separation and the further dislocation of the Sephardic community that emigration would entail, the second generation encourages the third generation to emigrate, as Michael acknowledges.

> **6-21. Michael:** Por aora, mozós, éstamos en éste país. Mozós. Marído i mujér, áma yo kéro ke [X, her grandson] bíva en Viyána o en la Evrópa. Lo ke yo kéro, ez porké va'star repozádo yo. Akí no'sto repozádo, ésta kreatúra en las dódje la óra, úna la óra en las káyes. Kual' afitó, kuálo no afitó? Es problém. Problém. Budúr.
>
> ('For now, we are in this country. We are. Husband and wife, but I want [X, her grandson] to live in Vienna or in Europe. I want this because I will be at peace then. Here, I am not at peace at twelve o'clock, one o'clock in the streets. What happened, what did not happen? It's a problem. Problem. That's it.') [2nd-m-67-fluent-fam5]

This generation prioritises the long-term well-being and safety of their children over the immediate gratification of familial togetherness. Mendi attributes this 'innate readiness to emigrate' to the repeated episodes of Jewish migration throughout history, which have instilled a sense of flexibility and adaptability in the community's members.

> **6-22. Mendi**: Ay ótra kóza, ésto kuálo sáves muy byen. El hudío tyéne en su sángre, en sus vénas la posibilidád de adaptárse mas présto porké túvo múnchas vézes, en múnchas situasyónes de úna diaspóra, úna diaspóra de Bavél, úna diaspóra de la Peninsúla Arába, úna diaspóra de Península Ispanyól o en ótros lugáres estámos vyéndo.
>
> ('Ah, another thing, this you know very well. The Jew has in their blood, in their veins the possibility of adapting more quickly because they have many times, in many situations of a diaspora, a diaspora from Babylon, a diaspora from the Arabian Peninsula, a diaspora from the Iberian Peninsula or in other places we are seeing.') [1st-m-70-fluent-ind]

The history of Sephardic migration is not a well-represented chapter in the transgenerational transmission of the community's history across generations. Notably, none of the consultants reported learning about the Spanish expulsion episode at home. Instead, this knowledge was acquired through community organisations or as part of the curriculum in Jewish schools. The dominant rhetoric among community members emphasises Turkey's embrace of the Jewish community when no other nation was willing to accept them.

> **6-23. Rita:** [answer to the question. Were you ever talking about expulsion at home?] No, tánto no. Tánto no. Áma ya savémos la'stórya de los djudyós ke átras kinyéntos i tántos ányos ke vinyéron a a la Turkíya. Los aresivyó muy byen akí.
>
> ('No, not that much. Not that much. But we already know the story of the Jews who, five hundred and some years ago, came to Turkey. They were very well received here.') [1st-f-79-fluent-fam]

As Brink-Danan (2011: xii) observed a decade earlier, the representations generated by *The Quincentennial Foundation* (cf. § 2.2.2) became part of individual's discourse when talking about their life in Turkey. However, this performance of a public face of a well-received and tolerated minority was contradicted by people's sense of threat at disclosing their Jewish identity. The limited representation of the community's migration history raises important questions about its interconnectedness with attitudes towards the transmission and preservation of Sephardic linguistic and cultural heritage in general, and with the practice of *kayadés* 'keeping quiet' (cf. § 5.3.2; 6.3) in particular. The practice of *kayadés* regarding the Sephardic expulsion from Spain may be a fundamental reason for the remarkably positive attitudes towards Spain among the third generation. These findings align with research on the attachment to territories from which communities were once exiled (Papo 2006; Russel 2021; Smith 1999), identifying them as "targets for longing and future aspirations of return" (Smith 1999: 367).

In an article about his Sephardic grandparents from Greece, Morocco, and Brooklyn, James Russel (2021) highlights the transmission of the connection to Spain even centuries after the expulsion. This connection is symbolically expressed through the preservation of the family's house keys, which serve as a reminder of their heritage and their forced displacement. Isaac Papo's autobiographical novel, *Viaje en el ocaso de úna cultura ibérica. Recuerdos y reflexiones de un médico sefardí* (2006), offers a further perspective on the overlap between ethnic identity and territory of origin. Papo describes how his family, with origins in Edirne, perceived contemporary Spain and the Spanish people upon migration. He illustrates how mythologised projections of linguistic and cultural similarity with Spain shaped cultural identity even in the absence of a direct cultural, economic, or emotional tie (Papo 2006: 159).

According to (Smith 1992: 449) long exiles evoke "a fervent nostalgia, an ardent desire to recover an original home exclusive to the chosen community". In the case described by Papo (2006), the nostalgia that the Sephardim had for Spain during their long exile was confronted with the 'new' Spanish reality, a juxtaposition which he explores in a chapter dedicated to this topic *Espanya, entre mito i realidad*.

The nostalgia of the Sephardim, as found in this study, is not directed at an ancestral homeland intrinsically connected with the destiny of the Sephardic people as described by Smith (1999: 151), but rather as an imagined territory of longing, in

opposition to the new territory with which they seem to increasingly lose identification and in which they are subjected to renewed negotiations and arguments of merit. Sephardic nostalgia is directed towards an imagined territory of provenance from which they wish they had not been expelled.

Thus, as the above accounts and discussions suggest, the desire of consultants, particularly among the third generation, to learn Hebrew or Spanish, should be interpreted in the context of a nuanced interplay between transmitted attitudes and ties to ancestral homelands, contemporary socio-political conditions, current migration patterns, and future migration prospects. The emphasis placed on one or the other of these factors seems to depend on the evolving discourses regarding the role of the Sephardim within both the Turkish and Spanish contexts. Language choices must therefore be contextualised against the backdrop of these ongoing negotiations of Sephardic social identity within the majority community. As the subsequent section will show, antisemitism and anti-minority rhetoric have played a major role in the way the Sephardim navigate these negotiations.

6.2.4 Anti-minority sentiment and antisemitism

In this section, I investigate consultants' narratives about the most impactful memories of anti-minority and antisemitic events and campaigns between the 1920s and 1950s. I explore the differences in the perception of these occasional episodes of violence against the Sephardim and the recurrent antisemitic discourses among different generations. This analysis will lay the foundation for understanding the relationship between these ideologies and the encoding and transmission of traumatic, burdening experiences and painful memories across generations.

Following the First World War and during the Great Depression, antisemitism and anti-minority sentiment began to intensify in Turkey, mirroring the surge of antisemitism in Europe. In the 1920s, discriminatory practices and animosity towards all religious minorities in Turkey laid the groundwork for the systematic antisemitism that emerged in the early 1930s, enhanced by rising Turkish nationalism. While some discriminatory campaigns like the *Istanbul Pogroms*[134] targeted all of Turkey's non-Muslim minorities,

[134] The *Istanbul Pogrom*, or *Istanbul Riots*, involved widespread violence targeting Greek, Armenian, and Jewish-owned businesses. Triggered by escalating tensions between Turkey and Greece over Cyprus, the events of 6-7 September 1965 saw organised attacks on minority neighbourhoods in Istanbul. The violence, fuelled by nationalist sentiments and anti-minority

others, like the *Thrace Pogroms*[135] in 1934 and the *Wealth Tax*[136] in 1942 exclusively targeted the Jewish community (Bali 2008a)[137].

These historical events were closely intertwined with the proliferation of antisemitic publications like *Millî İnkılâp* ('National Revolution', henceforth referred to as *İnkılâp*) and the widespread adoption of antisemitic attitudes (Lamprou 2022). Nourished by the Nazi propaganda of Jewish racial otherness (cf. § 3.2.1), *Millî İnkılâp* advanced a rhetoric of Jewish exclusion under the guise of nationalism. Articles in *Millî İnkılâp* highlighted Jews' lack of Turkish language knowledge and identification with Turkey:

> [the Jews] neither tolerate calling themselves Turks nor condescend to speak Turkish, although Turkey had accepted them when everywhere else they had been oppressed. (İnkılâp 1933, Apr.: 12)

At the same time, they were portrayed as the unchanging universal Jew, racially different, lacking loyalty and authenticity (Mallet 1996; Türköz 2018). Caricatures of the time depicted a stereotypical, money-loving businessmen in control of Turkey's economy to the detriment of Muslim workers and artisans (Lamprou 2022: 41). Analysing the antisemitic rhetoric of *İnkılâp,* Lamprou (2022) identified several discoursive antisemitic tropes which have been internalised and are discoursively reproduced by different generation of consultants throughout the this chapter.

1. **Essential otherness:** Portraying Jews as timid, cowardly, and deceitful. Derogatory terms such as "korkak Yahudi" ('timid/coward Jew'), "pis Yahudi" ('dirty Jew'), and "cıfıt" ('stingy Jew') emerged. While these terms were not novel, their reception takes on a distinct meaning when considered against the backdrop of interwar European antisemitic rhetoric (Lamprou 2022: 35).

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propaganda, included vandalism, looting, arson, and physical assaults. The attacks led to extensive damage and economic loss for Greek, Armenian, and Jewish communities. Many families were forced to flee their homes and businesses, seeking safety elsewhere. These events deepened feelings of insecurity, fear, and mistrust among minorities in Turkey.

[135] "*Thrace Pogroms*" (Tk. *Trakya Olayları*; JS. *La Furtuna* 'The Storm') were a series of violent attacks against Jews in the Thrace region, lasting 33 days in June and July 1934, which were triggered by Pan-Turkist ideologies and the *Resettlement Law* (June, 1934).

[136] The "*Tax on Fortune and Income*" (Tk. *Varlık Vergisi*) aimed to generate revenue for the state during a time of economic hardship. It targeted high-net-worth individuals, imposing levies on their assets and income. The tax disproportionately affected Jewish individuals and businesses, who were often perceived as wealthier than other segments of the population. Consequently, Jewish-owned businesses faced significant financial burdens and economic challenges.

[137] For detailed surveys and discussions of these events, see (Ağır & Artunç 2019; Aslan 2007; Bali 1999a; 2008b; Bali & Mallet 2015; Benbassa & Rodrigue 2000; Brink-Danan 2011b; Bulut 2018; Çolak 2004; Doğançay-Aktuna 2004; Giesel 2014; 2015; Guttstadt 2008; Harris 2006; Karimova & Deverell 2001; Lamprou 2022; Landau 1999; Toktaş 2006; Türköz 2018).

2. **Jewish betrayal:** Directly influenced by the interwar European antisemitic discourse of “Jewish treachery”. These ideas were introduced by social actors with links to Germany (Lamprou 2022: 43).

3. **Deceitful nature**: This trope depicts Jews as money-loving individuals, providing Muslim merchants, artisans, and professionals with a means to eliminate their Jewish competitors and thus contributing to the establishment of a Muslim commercial class (Lamprou 2022: 41).

According to Lamprou (2022: 39), these publications significantly contributed to ideologies of systematic radicalisation among Turkish youth and students and their involvement in the anti-minority campaigns of the 1920s and 1930s.

As the present study shows, this antisemitic rhetoric survives today in the consciousness of consultants belonging to all three generations, as revealed by Jak.

> **6-24. Jak**: Mozótros, kómo veraménte el Espanyól mos stáva dándo a mostrár ke éramos --- no sómos túrkos, no-muslúmanes. Yo so túrko. No-muslumános azía kreár a ke mos vígan a un ójo mas --- sémpre tuvímos myédo. Myédo de ke? No es médyo ke djudyó es ‘korkak aahudi’ [‘coward Jew’] kómo dízen! Porké ásen la máno de ken va kayér. De sórte ke mos evitímos de no azér provokasyón, i kómo godreríkos akseptímos tódos. Ma los grégos, i me paresí los ermenís, kontinuáron la eskuéla mas fuérte de mozótros, mas [?] izyéron. No se, mozótros, según mi idéa, ke mas sekadúra de kavésa! Porké estámos bivyéndo en un lugár, mos adaptámos a las kondisyónes del país pára puedér bivír reposádo. Kon ésto, malorosaménte, estámos dándo únas konsesyónes, ma estámos durmyéndo reposádos. Tódo tyémpo ke no me tókan a mi ley, porké el djudyó la fuérsa súya es, fué syémpre la ley, su relijyón. Tódo el tyémpo ke no me tókan a mi relijyón, me desháron a mi reposádo, yo kontinuó. Kuálo ke kéren, ke avle en Turkía el túrko, ke se ága!
>
> (‘We felt that [Judeo-]Spanish was truly showing that we were --- not Turks, non-Muslims. I am Turkish. Not being Muslim made them look at us with an eye more --- we have always had fear. Fear of what? Not the fear because the Jew is a ‘korkak yahudi’ [‘coward Jew’] as they say. Because they decide who falls. So, we avoided causing provocation and like goats we all accepted. But the Greeks, and it seems to me the Armenians, kept their position more strongly than us, did more [?]. I don’t know, in my oppinion, what a stupidity! Because we are living in a place, we adapt to the conditions of the country to be able to live in peace. With this, unfortunately, we are making some concessions, but we are sleeping peacefully. As long as they don’t touch my law, because the strength of the Jew is, always has been, the law, their religion. As long as they don’t touch my religion, leave me in peace, I continue. Whatever they want me to speak in Turkey, Turkish, that will be done!’) [1st-m-75-fluent-fam8]

Jak’s reflections expose the discursive channels through which Turkish nationalistic propaganda is intertwined with antisemitism and the mechanisms of their reception. He begins by highlighting that the exclusionist rhetoric and actions against Jews were based on religious and linguistic criteria. The latter represented a central element in nationalistic discourse following the establishment of the Turkish Republic, where knowledge of Turkish implied “loyalty” to the Turkish nation. Conversely, lacking knowledge of Turkish and speaking Judeo-Spanish were presented as betrayal. He transitions to his reception

of the antisemitic discourse of “essential otherness” (cf. Lamprou 2022: 35). Jak acknowledges that the Sephardim have been living in continous fear *“sémpre tuvímos myédo”* (‘we were always afraid’), pointing to the cumulative character of trauma (cf. Wutti 2013a). However, he distinguishes this legitimate fear from cowardice by explaining that Jewish fear is rooted in the fear of provocation and potential conflict. According to him, Jews needed to adapt to the country’s conditions for peaceful coexistence, acknowledging the challenges and concessions made by the community. Interestingly, Jak himself employs discursive mechanisms reminiscent of the “essential otherness” rhetoric of a century ago, which indicates an unconscious internalisation and reproduction of this rhetoric. Thus, he differentiates Jewish behaviour from that of other Turkish minorities, noting that, unlike Armenians and Greeks, Jews tend to avoid provocations and accept everything for the sake of peace: *“mos adaptámos a las kondisyónes del país pára puedér bivír reposádo*” (‘we adapt to the conditions of the country to be able to live in peace’).

Jak’s attitudes to Jewish conflict avoidance are ambivalent; this is evident in his change of tone, which reveals bitterness and frustration, as seen in expressions like *“kómo godreríkos akseptímos tódo”* (‘we accepted everything like goats’) and *“ke mas sekadúra de kavésa!”* (‘what stupidity!’). Jak seems to be torn between regret and the logical acknowledgement of the need for the Jewish community to behave as it did in that particular historical context. For him, these concessions have been made to preserve the Jews’ core value—their religion: *“Tódo el tyémpo ke no me tókan a mi relijyón, me desháron a mi reposádo, yo kontinuó”* (‘All the time they don’t touch my religion, they leave me in peace, I continue’). Jak suggests that if preserving peace requires giving up Judeo-Spanish, then, in his view, that is the necessary price Jews must pay. Jak’s discourse reveals a further mechanism of “othering” that prevailed in the antisemitic press of the 1920s and 1930s, namely, the shift in the exonym given to the Jews from *Musevi* (Mosaic) to *Yahudi* (descendants of Jacob), from a religious to a non-religious, racial identity. As Lamprou (2022: 41) found, antisemitic slurs, as discussed above, “were common only with the latter identity marker, as in the case of ‘pis Yahudi’ (dirty Jew), ‘korkak Yahudi’ (coward Jew)”.

Over the past two to three decades, the resurgence of Islamic and nationalist tendencies in Turkish society and politics has heightened insecurity and fear among both liberal Turks and ethnic minorities. Regarding the Jewish community in particular, antisemitic sentiments have been on the rise due to the foreign policy crisis between Turkey and Israel over the conflict in the Middle East. Moreover, the three terrorist attacks on the *Neve Shalom Synagogue* in 1986, 1992 and 2003 have left a lasting

impact on the Jewish community of Turkey. The interviews in the present study suggest that there is a pervasive fear of a resurgence of nationalist tendencies and antisemitic attitudes.

Three main effects of perceived anti-minority sentiments and antisemitism have been identified in the interviews: (1) a *fear of revealing one's Jewish identity* and maintaining a reserved attitude towards politics (cf. Giesel 2014: 28), (2) a *motivation for learning Hebrew*, and (3) *strengthening community cohesion*.

(1) Fear of revealing one's Jewish identity

The fear of revealing one's Jewish identity referred to here exists strictly as a response to perceived antisemitism and is distinct from the shibboleth phenomena discussed in Section 6.3.2, which involve a multifaceted fear of being recognised as the "different other", primarily based on linguistic markers. Fear of antisemitism leads parents to opt for Turkish primary schools instead of Jewish community schools. According to Solita, this trend increased after the second attack on the *Neve Shalom Synagogue*, carried out on Saturday, 15 November 2003 during a Shabbat prayer.

> **6-25. Solita**: Porké akél ányo el sinagóg Néve Shalóm avía úna atáke terörísto i por mo' de ésto mozós mos espantímos, lo kitímos de la skóla djudía i lo metímos a úna eskóla túrka. Oy tambyén ay múnchas mádres i pádres ke se'spántan de dárlos a la eskóla djudía. [...] El Dyo es gránde. No se, no puedémos bivír syémpre kon ke v'a ser, ke v'a ser, ke v'a ser. Estámos dizyéndo el dyo es gránde i mos'stámos yíndo a ésta eskuéla. Porké tenémos suolaménte úna eskuóla. I akí, por éste moménto, ay múncha djénte ke se'stan yíndo a Izraél. Estámos kedándo muy pókos. Por módo de ésto.
>
> ('Because that year, the *Neve Shalom Synagogue* had a terrorist attack, and because of this, we were frightened, so we took him out of the Jewish school and put him in a Turkish school. Today, there are also many mothers and fathers who are afraid to send their children to the Jewish school. [...] God is great. I don't know, we can't always live with 'what will be, what will be, what will be.' We say God is great and we are going to this school. Because we only have one school. And here, at this moment, there are many people going to Israel. We are very few left. Because of this.') [2nd-f-63-semi-fam6]

Solita highlights here the pervasive impact of fear and insecurity on the decisions made by Jewish families in Turkey regarding their children's education and their broader social choices. The terrorist attack on the *Neve Shalom Synagogue* influenced her family's decision to transfer their child from a Jewish school to a Turkish one, a decision echoed by many other Jewish families. Her statement: *"no se, no puedémos bivír syémpre kon ke v'a ser, ke v'a ser, ke v'a ser*" ('I don't know, we can't always live with 'what will be, what will be, what will be'), coupled with the tone of concern and repetition of this concern, reflects a sense of resignation and acceptance of the continuous threats to and

vulnerability of the Jewish community in the face of the rapidly decreasing numbers of community members: *"estámos kedándo muy pókos"* ('we are very few left').

(2) Motivator for considering emigration and learning Hebrew

The perception of antisemitism is one of the main driving forces behind individuals' decisions to learn Hebrew, as Isak suggests.

> **6-26. Isak**: Agóra ésto, no, yo no va puedér avlár enríva de ésto. Porké es úna kóza politíka, ma éso ya se sáve, ya se eskríve en la sitüasyón muéstra de Turkía. El djudyó antés kómo bivía, agóra kómo bíve, no bivímos, Baruch hashem estámos muy trankuílos, no ay algúno ke mos aróndje, ke mos díga algúna palávra négra. Ma y'ay algúnos imájes y'ay ke avlár ésto. El ánti-simitísmo y'ay únas kozás ke se ve, ke se óye. Ésto áze mas múnco ke un ijíko ke se empesé a ambezár el Ebréo. Porké le va vinír buéno pára ke lo úse.
>
> ('Now this, no, I will not be able to talk about this. Because it is a political matter, but it is already known and written about our situation in Turkey. How Jews lived before, how we live now, have not lived. Thank God, we are very calm, there is no one who bothers us, who says a bad word to us. But there are some images and one has to talk about this. There is antisemitism, there are some things that are seen, that are heard. This makes it more likely for a child to start learning Hebrew. Because it will be good for them to use it.') [2nd-m-65-fluent-ind]

Isak's initial hesitation to discuss the issue of antisemitism in Turkey and the dissonance between the content of his statement and the emotional expression of that content points to his fear of confrontation, the preference for avoiding provocation and potential conflict discussed by Jak (cf. 6-24) (Loch 2008). It suggests a cautious approach to publicly addressing political issues that could potentially provoke backlash or further discrimination. Isak is torn between the desire to express his concerns, by contrasting the safe past with the present: *"Baruch HaShem estámos muy trankuílos, no ay algúno ke mos aróndje"* ('Thank God, we are very calm, there is no one who bothers us'). He then transitions to expressing his and his community's concerns about the persistence of antisemitism as a motivating factor for learning Hebrew. Learning Hebrew appears as a strategic response on the part of community members — a precautionary measure for the potential worst-case scenario of having to emigrate to Israel. It also implies, on a deeper level, a mechanism of strategic adaptative measures that can ensure the community's resilience and continuity in the face of adversity. Similarly, for Albert, a third-generation consultant, rising antisemitism is the main reason for considering migration.

> **6-27. Albert:** We don't face any actual crime against us as a Turkish Jew but people are hating us more, we know, we feel, we feel it! They don't really show us but we feel the anger in themselves. The anger is against Israel. [...] But the Turkish people, most of them are very low in education, so they cannot have the knowledge of separating Turkish Jews and Israel's politics. Because, most of the time I am also against Israeli politics, but people think Israeli politics is equal to the Jewish all around the world, so they don't really like us. They feel that we are killing the Palestine people. Maybe Israel does, maybe is what Israel is doing is not correct, but that not my fault! I cannot be blamed for that! So this country is getting a bit harder to live in. [3rd-m-

35-passive-ind]

Albert believes that the danger of antisemitism lies in its latent and invisible manifestation (cf. Wirth 2022: 161) which can be triggered at any moment, making it a constant threat to the safety and well-being of Jewish and Sephardic individuals. The inability of many Turkish people to distinguish between Turkish Jews and Israeli politics leads to feelings of alienation and unjust blame among all generations. Albert's frustration at this conflation indicates a need to constantly defend personal and community identity and separate it from broader political actions, which appears as repeated burden for him. For Albert, emigration appears to be a way to resolve this conflict and the burden of unjustly attributed identity.

(3) Enhancing community cohesion

In line with Wutti (2013a) and Wirth (2022) regarding the effects of trauma transmission, Mordo suggests that, despite its negative effects, antisemitism seems to paradoxically enhance community cohesion.

> **6-28. Mordo**: I don't think that it's against my position here, but I don't think we have a very strong community ties among ourselves. You know we are different types of people. There are some educated people, there are people who are more interested in artistic values, some more interested with business values, and so on. We have different lives, many types of people. But because of the political situation and the threat towards the Jewish tradition and Jewish culture and being Jewish, we begin to come together more often, we feel Jewish. But if we were in comfort, in happy to live in Turkey, more happy to be in Turkey; we didn't feel the threat of being Jewish, I believe, we would lose lots of Jewish values very quickly. [2nd-m-59-passive-fam1]

Mordo acknowledges the Jewish community's internal dynamics, marked by a diversity in social status, education levels, and interests, and highlights the impact of external pressures on their cohesion and identity. In Mordo's view, if community members felt more comfortable and did not face the threat of antisemitism, they might lose their Jewish values more quickly. This stance aligns with David & Bar-Tal's (2009: 361) findings on group and individual identification at both the micro and macro levels, demonstrating how perceived threats can lead to social mobilisation and collective action. Mordo suggests that, in response to external pressures and threats, individuals show readiness to engage in coordinated activities that benefit the collective, such as learning Hebrew. This perspective corresponds to the fifth generic feature shared by all macro-level collectives proposed by David & Bar-Tal (2009): *concern for the welfare of the collective and mobilisation and sacrifice for its sake*. Readiness for this synchronised social and linguistic behaviour and the possibility of updating the core values point to the sixth generic feature of identity proposed by David & Bar-Tal (2009: 366) *continuity and consecutiveness in the dimension of time.*

In these circumstances, which affect the well-being of the Sephardim as a group, the maintenance of Judeo-Spanish becomes secondary, leading to diminished symbolic capital. Consequently, languages such as Hebrew and Spanish gain prominence depending on the Sephardim's strategies for group continuity. In the following section, I will discuss the impact of the *Law of Return* and the role that language ideologies play in the controversies that have emerged as a consequence of this law.

6.2.5 The Law of Return – or the return of trauma

In this section, I investigate consultants' reactions to the citizenship law or the *Law of Return* (cf. § 2.2.3) and the controversies it sparked within the community. Particular attention is given to the resurgence of past ideologies about language purism, which triggered language insecurities among speakers. Additionally, I discuss the new pragmatic and symbolic capital that Judeo-Spanish has acquired for the third generation in the context of this law.

As previously discussed in Section 2.2.3, the enactment of the *Law of Return* has sparked mixed reactions regarding the conditions the Sephardim were required to meet in order to acquire Spanish citizenship. Among the criteria to qualify for Spanish citizenship was the option for applicants to demonstrate proficiency in Ladino/Haketia (Art.1, § 2:d)[138]. Additional requirements included demonstrating minimum proficiency in the Castilian language (DELE at level A2 or higher), understanding of the Spanish constitution, and familiarity with the social and cultural reality of Spain (Art.1, § 5). According to the study consultants, many individuals opt to pursue Portuguese citizenship instead due to the simpler application procedures[139] and in response to what they perceive as Spain's "unreasonable" and "unfair" demands (Papo 2023: 16-17). The figure below, based on data kindly shared by the statistics office of the *Turkish Jewish Community*[140], shows the citizenship applications submitted by Turkish Sephardim and recorded by this office between 2006 and 2023. It is important to note that these statistics do not distinguish between applications for Spain and Portugal, nor do they track the outcomes of these applications.

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[138] Ley 12/2015, de 24 de junio, en materia de concesión de la nacionalidad española a los sefardíes originarios de España," *Boletín Oficial del Estado* (BOE), 51, 25.06.2015, p. 52560, https://www.boe.es/eli/es/l/2015/06/24/12/dof/spa/pdf.

[139] To acquire Sephardic citizenship, the Sephardim had to provide proof of Sephardic ancestry through certification from the institutions of Portuguese Jewish Communities.

[140] I received the latest updates on 14 March 2024.

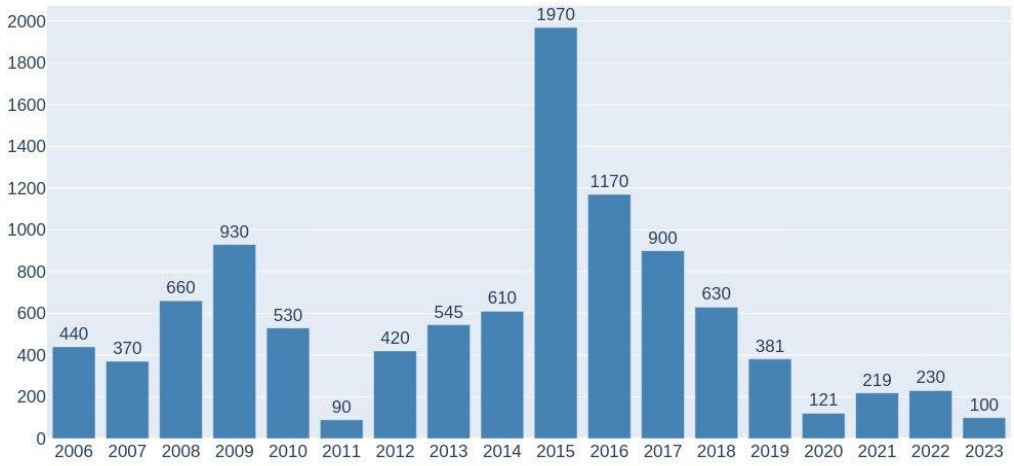

Figure 2. Ch. 6: *Citizenship applications – Spain and Portugal – 2006-2023*

The data presented indicates a notable increase in citizenship applications submitted at the *Jewish Community of Turkey's* central office in 2015 (1,970) and 2016 (1,170), with the highest numbers recorded in those years. While one might initially attribute this surge to the timing of the law's passage in 2015, a deeper analysis reveals a more nuanced interpretation. When considering these figures alongside the number of individuals emigrating from Turkey, a clearer picture emerges.

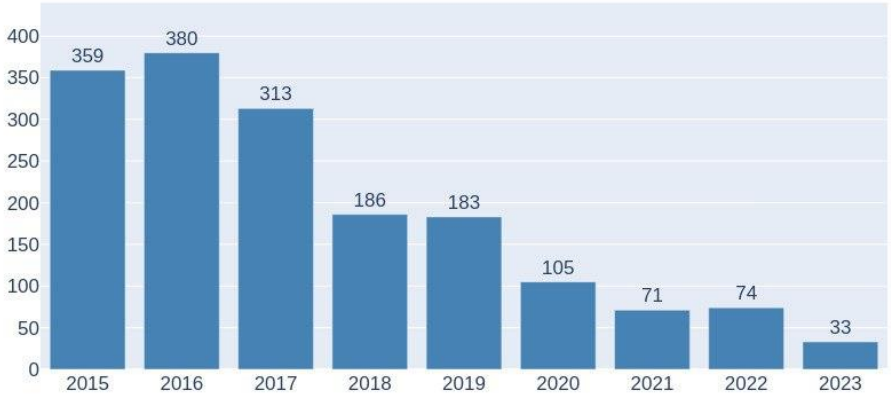

Figure 3. Ch. 6: *Emigration from Turkey – 2015-2023*

The significant rise in citizenship applications, coupled with the highest emigration numbers for countries other than Spain for the years 2015 and 2016, appears to be a response to the surge in terrorist attacks following the AKP's loss of its parliamentary

majority in 2015 for the first time since coming to power in 2002. This loss marked a pivotal moment in Turkey's political landscape, leading to heightened political tensions and security concerns throughout the country. One can therefore assume that the increase in citizenship applications reflected community members' reactions to a changing socio-political environment characterised by instability and insecurity. The data suggests that individuals sought Spanish or Portuguese citizenship as a means of securing their rights and ensuring protection amidst the shifting dynamics in Turkey — a further reminder of the Turkish Jewish community's political awareness and vigilance (cf. § 6.2.3; 6.2.4).

The Law of Return has sparked intense controversy among the Turkish Sephardim. Many perceive it as a "double betrayal" by the Spanish state. Centuries after expelling the Jews and forcing them to live in the diaspora where they had to assimilate, Spain now asks them to demonstrate knowledge of a language and culture they had been compelled to abandon.

> **6-29. Salamon**: Éra álγo ke me pertenesía i yo syémpre pensí k'éra nuéstro derécho i kería. Pórke yo m'identífiko kon Espánya i kon la kultúra espanyóla. […] Māz, maz ay alγúnos ke dízen: <No kéro la nasyoná espanyól, pórke loz espanyóles echáron loz djudíos de Espánya. No kéro ke me dan la nasyonalidá!>
>
> ('It was something that belonged to me, and I always thought it was our right and I wanted. Because I identify with Spain and Spanish culture.[…] There are also some who say: <I don't want Spanish citizenship because the Spaniards expelled the Jews from Spain. I don't want them to give me citizenship!>') [3rd-m-43-fluent-ind]

Salamon's narrative about his own standpoint and the reported viewpoints of other community members illustrate the interplay between personal identification and collective historical memory (Assmann & Czaplicka 1995; Funkenstein 1989; Harold & Fong 2018). On the one hand, Salamon expresses a deep connection to Spain and Spanish culture, viewing Spanish citizenship as his rightful inheritance. He embraces the opportunity to reconnect with what he claims as his linguistic and cultural heritage. On the other hand, the differing perspectives within the community point to the enduring impact of the historical trauma of expulsion, which has latently shaped collective memory and identity and still shapes current attitudes. This trauma resurfaces today in the form of intense emotional responses such as indignation, disappointment, and a refusal to reconcile with a past marked by persecution and displacement. This resistance to accepting Spanish citizenship, as expressed by some community members: "*No kéro ke me dan la nasyonalidá"* ('I don't want them to give me citizenship!'), symbolically represents a refusal to accept reparative gestures that do not fully address historical wrongs.

Bensyon's reaction of indignation and frustration further exemplifies the perceived mismatch between his sense of belonging to Spanish culture and the demand from the Spanish government to provide proof of this identification.

> **6-30. Bensyon**: Si me dan, lo va tomárlo. Áma ał Servántes no me va ir. Porke? Mozós dayínda estámos meldándo akí l'Ágada en ladíno. Ésto es emportánte. Akél lívro de Ágada se lo kéro mostrár yo akél konsól --- konsoláto ke dísho ke se váyan ke se ambézen la istórya de la Espánya. No ay menestér! [...] Ma díngunos no'sta entendyéndo en ladíno. E, kíjo dizír, mozós y'ay kinyéntos sukuéntas ányos ke'stámos akí, dayínda estámos avlándo en ladíno. I tenémos lívro de ladíno ke eskrivyéron los hahamím grándes. I ésta dizyéndo kále ke te ambézes la istórya míyo. Tu dishítez váte, tu kéres ke dárme el pasapórto a mi, m'estás kitándo a mi difikultádes. No ay menestér! No ay menestér. Si kéres dáme, si kéres no me des. Va tomár agóra portekíz. [2nd-m-61-fluent-ind]
>
> ('If they give it to me, I'll take it. But I won't go to Cervantes. Why? Because we are still reading the Haggadah here in Ladino. This is important. I want to show that Haggadah book to that consul ---- consulate who said we should go and learn the history of Spain. It's not necessary. […] But nobody understands Ladino. It means that we have been here for five hundred and fifty years, and we are still speaking Ladino. And we have Ladino books written by great rabbis. And they are saying that I have to go and learn my [own] history. You told me to go, you want to give me the passport, you are creating difficulties for me. It's not necessary. It's not necessary. If you want, give it to me, if you don't want, don't give it to me. Now I'll take Portuguese.')

According to Bensyon, the preservation of Judeo-Spanish for more than five centuries is self-evident proof of the historical and cultural connection to Spain. He resents the requirement for the Sephardim to prove their connection to Spain, viewing it as unnecessary validation. The consul's suggestion: *"ke se váyan ke se ambézen la istórya de la Espánya"* ('should go and learn the history of Spain') particularly outrages Bensyon, as it implies a lack of recognition or respect for the Sephardic community's existing cultural practices. This additional burden of proof placed on the community is met with resentment, evident in the repetition and emotional tone of his statement: *"No ay menestér"* ('It's not necessary'). His indignation is rooted in the historical injustices of expulsion and diaspora.

Bensyon concludes with a sense of defiance and overt detachment, highlighting how, for him, these requirements exacerbate historical traumas. While he is willing to accept Spanish citizenship if offered, as a form of justified reparation for historical wrongs, he rejects the notion of needing to prove his worthiness for it. Consequently, he considers opting for an alternative path to recognition from Portugal: *"Si kéres dáme, si kéres no me des. Va tomár agóra portekíz"* ('If you want, give it to me, if you don't want, don't give it to me. Now I'll take Portuguese.')

This law also triggers ambivalent reactions from a linguistic standpoint. For some individuals who were proficient in conversational Judeo-Spanish, it served as a significant incentive to pursue Spanish citizenship. Starting around 2012, when plans for

the law were announced, the Cervantes Institute recorded an increase in attendance at Castilian Spanish courses by members of the Sephardic community.[141] Others saw it as a motivation to enrol in Spanish courses at the Cervantes Institute and learn the language, leveraging their passive knowledge of Judeo-Spanish. However, the majority of opinions gathered in my interviews indicate that the lack of proficiency in Judeo-Spanish or Spanish was perceived as a significant barrier, as highlighted by Salamon.

> **6-31. Salamon**: Múchoz djudíos dishéron: <Moz echáron de Espánya por módo d'ésto mozótroz no avlámoz buéno en espányol, no savémoz kózaz de la kultúra espanyóla. La kúlpa no ez muéstra!> Porké pyénsas ke s'están espantándo de éstos eksámenes, kuándo éyos lo áƀlan perfektaménte? Se stan espantándo, pórke pensan ke su espanyól no va ser sufisyénte pára podér pasár esto ekzaménes. Tyénen. Pórke loz djudíos de Istanbúl tyénen un pokíto de --- o de Turkía, tyénen un pokíto de espánto ke no van a intendér laz preɣúntaz, ke no ƀan a saƀér.
>
> ('Many Jews said: <They expelled us from Spain, and because of this, we don't speak [Peninsular] Spanish well, we don't know things about Spanish culture. It's not our fault!> So why do you think they are afraid of these exams, even though they speak it perfectly? They are scared because they think their Spanish won't be enough to pass these exams. They are scared because the Jews of Istanbul, or Turkey in general, have a bit of fear that they won't understand the questions, that they won't know [the answers].') [3rd-m-43-fluent-ind]

Salamon's perspective points to a strong emotional and psychological impact of the language proficiency requirements on the Sephardic community. The perceived test of "authenticity" and "worthiness" creates a sense of profound frustration and discontent among individuals, as they feel judged based on their language skills. This judgment brings out deep-seated insecurities about their linguistic abilities, particularly in the context of Judeo-Spanish and its relation to Spanish. At the same time, it also brings forward ideologies of language purism which view Judeo-Spanish as a 'broken' and mixed language compared to 'pure' Spanish.

> **6-32. Salamon**: Si. Aɣóra se kére ambezár el espanyól. El espanyól púro en Servántes. Aɣóra tódos se kéren ambezár el espanyól.
>
> ('Yes, now they all want to learn [Peninsular] Spanish. The pure Spanish of Cervantes. Now they all want to learn [Peninsular] Spanish.') [2nd-f-64-fluent-fam4]

The renewed discussion of the positionality of Judeo-Spanish, juxtaposed against Spanish, exacerbates these insecurities. Moreover, the pressure to demonstrate proficiency in Spanish, a language that has evolved separately, can make them feel inadequate. According to Salamon, the need to prove their Sephardic identity through language proficiency tests imposed by external authorities is perceived by community memers as an affront to their historical experiences and contributions. Other consultants

[141] Accounts based on an expert interview with Dr. Pablo Martín Asuero, the director of the Cervantes Institute of Istanbul, on 17 February 2016.

like Lola welcome the Spanish nationality law as a positive development which has the potential to prolong the life of Judeo-Spanish.

> **6-33. Lola**: Aɣóra devémos esforsámos pára azér bivír ésta língua, no ez mas naturál kómo el muéstro tyémpo. Aɣóra se va a esfórsar, ma akéya aɣóra, kon éstos kúrses ke los jönes déven de írse pára puéder tomár la nasyonalitád espanyóla, i m-- i múnchos jönes e-- ambézan espanyół. Es buéno i sus mádres lez dízen únos kuantoz --- kelimes kómo se dízen, en espanyól. Un póko va a bivír, ma no múncho!
>
> ('Now we must make an effort to keep this language alive; it's no longer as natural as in our time. Now they will make an effort, but with these courses that the young people have to attend to be able to obtain Spanish nationality, and many young people are learning [Peninsular] Spanish. This is good, and their mothers tell them a few words in [Judeo-]Spanish. It will live on a little, but not much!') [2nd-f-61-fluent-ind]

Lola highlights that the current revival efforts, although they are driven by practical reasons such as obtaining Spanish nationality, serve as a motivating factor for the younger generation to learn Spanish. Moreover, she emphasises that the citizenship law brought awareness of the inherent value held by Ladino and the Sephardic culture. She observes how it contributed to changing dynamics in language transmission and that mothers have started passing on some words to their children. However, Lola concludes by suggesting that, while these initiatives are beneficial to boosting the symbolic capital of Judeo-Spanish —"*E se konvertyó en móda perké --- en el múndo entéro se ávla espanyól*" ('it became fashionable, because Spanish is spoken all over the world') — they may not be sufficient to fully revive the language or maintain its widespread use.

6.3 Traumatic language experiences

This section aims to investigate the interplay between *the ideology reflected in national language policies and their effects* (cf. Figure 1. Ch. 6), the specific traumatic events experienced by the Sephardim, and the attitudes reflected in their personal narratives about the past. Additionally, it analyses how these ideologies and policies have profoundly shaped social and linguistic practices across generations. The narratives are interpreted within a system of meaning that connects the semantic level with the emotional and behavioural aspects of the consultants during the interviews (cf. Wieser 1994). This approach seeks to uncover both the conscious and unconscious meanings embedded in the narratives.

In analysing the relationship between traumatic events and language, I draw upon Busch and McNamara's (2020: 327-328) theoretical reflections synthetised below, to systematically explore how language experience and traumatic experience interrelate. Two main aspects of these reflections are particularly relevant to the Turkish Sephardim:

1. **Language in the experience of trauma**: Traumatic events not only influence language directly but also have a profound impact on individuals' linguistic

repertoires, their inclination to learn languages, and their desire to use, maintain, or abandon them. In some cases, individuals may seek refuge in silence as a coping mechanism. Furthermore, experiences of violence may become associated with particular forms of speech, such as specific vocal pitches, accents, or languages linked to the perpetrators or the traumatic events themselves.

2. **Language in the narration of trauma** can be expressed by (a) *linguistic powerlessness in evoking* experiences related to the physical inability to articulate and talk about the traumatic events; (b). *lack of voice* in trauma narration when the individual is denied the right to speak, as in cases of child abuse; (c). *avoidance of painful intrusions* by individuals who may avoid discussing or revisiting traumatic experiences in language based on interdictions, social taboos or shame.

This framework sheds light on how language both shapes and is shaped by traumatic experiences (cf. Frie 2011: 152).

As discussed in section 6.1, the narrative about traumatic experiences involving language emerged prominently during the initial rounds of data coding and analysis, and was not explicitly elicited at the outset. The prominence of these narratives underscores their crucial role in interpreting the pathways between ideologies, attitudes, and practices as well as in understanding the mechanisms of social boundaries and identity construction. The organic emergence of significant themes in line with GTM (cf. § 4.9.2) suggests that these ideologies and policies are deeply embedded in the collective consciousness and play a fundamental role in shaping social dynamics, providing a complex picture of how historical and contemporary ideologies intersect to form the current social and linguistic practices of the Sephardic community.

The role of linguistic assimilation ideologies, as part of the broader *ideologies reflected in national language policies* after the creation of the Turkish Republic, in 1923 was intricate and multifaceted. These ideologies encompassed multiple interconnected layers that influenced the formation of attitudes and language practices among Turkish minorities in general and the Sephardim in particular. This influence operated at various levels of awareness and endures to this day.

The first set of policies aligned with a nationalistic agenda focused on *modernisation, homogenisation, and Turkification* (cf. Figure 1. Chapter 6), initiated after the foundation of the Turkish Republic. Among these, the so-called *Language Revolution* (1930s-1940s) was particularly influential, representing a cornerstone of cultural and social transformation. This movement aimed to reform the Turkish language, simplifying and modernising it to ensure greater accessibility and uniformity across the nation (Çolak 2004). One of the most transformative changes during this period was the adoption of

the Latin alphabet, spearheaded by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, which sought to modernise and standardise the Turkish language. In 1928, the *Turkish Language Association* (Tk. *Türk Dil Kurumu*) was established to oversee the development and implementation of the new Latin-based alphabet. Further laws directly affecting the Sephardim were: the *Surname Law* (Tk. *Soyadı Kanunu,* 1934), which required all Turkish citizens to adopt and use Turkish family names, effectively discouraging the use of non-Turkish names (Türköz 2018) (cf. § 5.4.4); *the Law on Resettlement* (1934), which aimed to encourage the migration of Turkish-speaking populations from rural areas to urban centres, thus promoting the spread of the Turkish language (Çağatay 2001); the *Law on Basic Education* (1961), which made Turkish the primary language of instruction in schools, further promoting linguistic homogenisation by emphasising the use of Turkish as the medium of education; and the *Law on Foundations* (1974), which placed restrictions on the use of non-Turkish languages in religious services and publications to encourage the use of Turkish in religious and cultural contexts (cf. § 5.5.).

The second set of policies pertains to *events and campaigns aimed at persecution and segregation* (cf. Figure 1. Ch. 6), which have had significant implications for the Sephardic community (cf. § 6.2.4). These events resulted in the emergence of traumatic language experiences that have been transmitted cross-generationally and a pervasive culture of fear surrounding the use of Judeo-Spanish in public spaces. While the first generation has direct recollection of these traumatic language experiences, the second and third generations operate with an "inherited memory", a concept inspired by Hirsch's concept of "postmemory" (Hirsch 1997). According to Hirsch:

> [p]ostmemory is distinguished from memory by generational distance and from history by deep personal connection. Postmemory is a powerful and very particular form of memory precisely because its connection to its object or source is mediated not through recollection but through an imaginative investment and creation. Postmemory characterizes the experience of those who grow up dominated by narratives that preceded their birth, whose own belated stories are evacuated by the stories of the previous generation shaped by traumatic events that can be neither understood nor recreated. (Hirsch 1997: 22)

The accounts narrating consultants' first childhood memories related to the languages used in the community pointed to several key events that significantly impacted intergenerational transmission of attitudes and practices. Among these are the grassroots Turkification campaign *Citizen, Speak Turkish!* (cf. § 2.3.6); *the Thrace Pogroms* (1934); *the Wealth Tax* (1942); and the *Istanbul Pogroms* (1956) (cf. § 6.2.4). The *Citizen, Speak Turkish!* campaign is the most prominent in the narratives of all three generations' memories of these ideologies and events aimed at linguistic assimilation (cf. Aslan 2007). Out of 60 individuals, 45 reported this campaign as the primary trigger

for language shift. Searle's (2010) concept of "deontic powers" may best explain why this campaign became so deeply entrenched in people's attitudes and practices.

According to Searle (2010), humans have the capacity to assign functions to objects and people beyond their physical capabilities, which Searle calls "status functions". These functions arise from declarations (oral or written speech acts) that aim to change the status quo. When these declarations are accepted, they come with "deontic powers" that impose obligations, rights, and responsibilities. The power of these declarations is evident in the *Citizen Speak Turkish!* campaign! This government-funded initiative, started by law students, sought to promote linguistic homogenisation in the newly founded Turkish Republic, where the Kemalist national identity was based on a shared language.

Posters with the slogan *Citizen, Speak Turkish!* were placed in major Turkish cities and spread nationwide through mass media. Soon, signs containing this slogan appeared everywhere in public spaces, including theatres and ferries. Although no law prohibited the use of other languages in public, Turkish citizens took it upon themselves to enforce what they saw as essential for national unity. This speech act, imbued with "deontic powers" instilled a culture of fear among non-Turkish speakers, contributing significantly to the ongoing language shift.

Interestingly, an often-overlooked aspect in research is the fact that the proposed language reforms and ideologies promoted since the establishment of the Republic resonated with progressive Jews who held a positive view of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (Seloni & Sarfati 2013: 18). Some Sephardim, who hoped for greater Europeanisation and modernisation, willingly embraced Atatürk's Turkification reforms, welcoming the notion of contributing to a more homogenous, modern, and Europe-oriented society, as highlighted by Robert.

> **6-34. Robert:** En el empesíjo de la República los dirijéntes izyéron syértos muvméntos pára ke tódos empésan a ávlar el túrko, i uvó mízmo, los djudíos fuéron kombatáles de ésta, éstas, éstos páktos "el kompatryót ávla el túrko"!
>
> ('At the beginning of the Republic, the leaders made certain moves for everyone to start speaking Turkish, and even the Jews were affected by these, these, these pacts "The compatriot speaks Turkish!"') [2nd-m-61-fluent-ind]

One notable example of the adoption and dissemination of majority nationalism within the community is the assimilationist campaigns led by the Jewish historian and intellectual Avram Galante. A Turkish nationalist who served as a deputy in the *Grand National Assembly of Turkey*, Galante supported the *Citizen, Speak Turkish!* campaign in his publications (Seloni & Sarfati 2013: 18). Additionally, members of the Jewish community actively promoted the public use of Turkish. In Istanbul, Jews, in collaboration

with representatives from other minorities, established *The Union for the Spread of Turkish Language* (Bali 1999b: 180-181; Seloni & Sarfati 2013: 18).

Today, however, the vast majority of respondents recall being compelled to embrace the new ideology out of fear of discrimination, physical attacks, and repercussions at work.

> **6-35. Robert**: Dospués del empesijó de la República en, la Turkía teníamoz un muy gránde probléma de laz línguas. Porké kuarénta por syén de las persónas no avłávan el túrko. De ke konservímos ésta língua? Porké núnka el empéryo Otománo dishó ke tódos, tódos los otomános déven de ambezársen el otománo, no dishéron úna kóza asemejánte i tódos kontinüáron en káza avlár en djudézmo. Mízmo en la káyes avláron en djudézmo, i las mujéres, únas syértas partidá, no se ambezáron ni el otománo, ni el túrko. La mádre de mi mádre éra un egzémpyo, nasyó en Búrsa, su pádre éra grãn rabíno de Búrsa. Se fue a vénte ányos a la Fránsya i se kazó ayá kon mi grãpapá i no supó, no puedía avlár el turkó, no puedía avlár. Zor, zor!
>
> ('After the beginning of the Republic, Turkey had a very big language problem. Because forty percent of the people did not speak Turkish. Why did we preserve this language? Because the Ottoman Empire never said that all Ottomans must learn Ottoman; they never said anything similar, and everyone continued to speak Judezmo at home. Even in the streets, they spoke Judezmo, and the women, certain groups, did not learn either Ottoman or Turkish. My mother's mother was an example; she was born in Bursa, her father was the grand rabbi of Bursa, and she went to France at twenty years old and married my grandfather there. She didn't know, she couldn't speak Turkish, she couldn't speak it. Difficult, very difficult!') [2nd-m-61-fluent-ind]

Robert highlights an essential aspect of the perception and interpretation of these ideologies: the drastic ideological shift from linguistic, cultural, and religious heterogeneity to swift homogenisation in the early days of the Republic of Turkey. This shift left the minorities of Turkey, particularly the Sephardim, unprepared and confronted with what Robert termed *"un muy gránde probléma de laz línguas*" ('a very big language problem'). Language was now perceived as the primary vehicle for achieving uniformity. The personal anecdote about the speaker's grandmother, who did not speak Turkish despite being born in Bursa and being part of a prominent family (her father was the grand rabbi), further illustrates the strong position that Judeo-Spanish enjoyed within the community (cf. Varon 2016). This anecdote underscores how deeply rooted Judeo-Spanish was in the daily lives and identities of the Sephardim, underscoring the profound impact of the sudden shift towards linguistic uniformity.

According to Robert, many of his friends born in the 1950s still speak what he calls *"túrko charpeádo"* ('broken Turkish'). Interestingly, when talking about one of his friends, Robert unconsciously reproduces the dominant ideologies regarding Turkish language knowledge:

> **6-36. Robert**: Avlá un túrko charpeádo. Ez maz aedádo de mi, ez maz aedádo, ma no avlá, i eskapó el lisé, no, no, no stuvó en la universidad, ma eskapó el lisé, devía de avlár muy, maz buéno el túrko.

(‘He speaks broken Turkish. He is older than me, he is older, but he doesn’t speak and he finished high school, no, no, he wasn’t at the university, but he finished high school, he should speak much, much better Turkish.’) [2nd-m-61-fluent-ind]

Robert assessment of his friend’s Turkish as *charpeado* ‘broken’, coupled with the use of the modal *devia* ‘should’ indicates Robert’s scrutiny of his friend’s Turkish language proficiency, in a present-day context. By evaluating his friend’s language skills against the expectations of the majority, Robert demonstrates the adoption and unconscious reproduction of prevailing homogenisation ideologies. This occurs despite his knowledge of these historical developments, his conscious efforts to combat them, and his awareness of the mechanisms behind these ideologies, as evidenced in his discourse, raising an essential question: what mechanisms contributed to the rapid and effective adoption, internalisation, and intergenerational transmission of these ideologies up to the present day?

6.3.1 Fear – a ‘connecting’ element

This section investigates the mechanisms of fear internalisation and transmission across generations and its impact on the different generations as a connecting element between ideologies, attitudes, and practices in both the past and present. Interpretation of the data reveals a prevailing sense of fear as a primary link between ideologies, attitudes, and practices (cf. 5.3.2). Although the majority of the Sephardim still lived within their own community in what they referred to as the ‘ghetto’ during the 1950s, Roza reveals that their upbringing was overshadowed by the fear of speaking Judeo-Spanish.

6-37. Roza: Si, si de avlár el ladíno i de amostrár, mozós mos engrandesímos un póko kon espánto. Porké los grándes muéstros, mis pádres, mis nónas pasáron múcho négro en el Trákya, nel mil i novesyéntas i trénta i kuándo úvo únas desgrásyas. Ke matáron ijíkas, laz vyoláron, rompyéron los djámes sólo porké son djudíos i porké éran byen de sitüasyón. Por ésto kedó un espánto, i mozós syémpre en la káye, en túrko. Kuándo mos demandávan <Kómo te yámas?> u dezíamos en luguár de Forti, Filiz o en luguár de Sara, Serap, porké ésto moz ambezáron. No moz dishéron espantávos, ma ya se ke moz espantávamos. Venía a la puérta un, úno a demandár úna kóza pishín venía mi nóna <Tu no áƀras! No avrás! Ken es? Demánda ken es!>. Tenían espánto porké tenían úna mãntalité ke los túrkos son négros i los ałmánes matán djudíos. Éra, yo nasí en kuaréntiócho, i sigúro ke no se ołvidó el nazísmo akél tyémpo.

(‘Yes, yes, speaking Ladino and showing it made us feel a bit fearful. Because our elders, my parents, my grandparents, experienced a lot of hardship in [East] Thrace, in the 1930s, when there were some tragedies. They killed little girls, violated them, broke the windows just because they were Jewish and because they were well-off. Because of this, a fear remained, and we always spoke Turkish in the streets. When they asked us: <What is your name?>, we would say, instead of Forti, Filiz or instead of Sara, Serap because that’s what we were taught. They didn’t tell us to be afraid, but I know we were afraid. If someone came to the door to quickly ask for something, my grandmother would say, <Don’t open it! Don’t open it! Who is it? Ask who it is!> They were afraid because they had a mentality that Turks are cruel and Germans kill

> Jews. I was born in 1948, and I'm sure that the memory of Nazism wasn't forgotten at that time.') [1st-f-68-fluent-ind].

Roza's narrative reveals three crucial manifestations and themes surrounding the element of fear, which acts as a connecting thread across generational narratives, intertwining ideologies and language practices. These key elements include:

(1) Trauma-inducing events

According to Roza, this fear stemmed from a series of historical events, such as the *Thrace Pogroms* (1934) (cf. § 6.2.4). These events, which included killings, assaults, and property destruction targeting the Jewish community, left a lasting impact on the community, instilling a deep-seated fear. Here, Roza reproduces the second and third antisemitic discursive tropes identified by Lamprou (2022: 35-43): "Jewish betrayal" and "the Jewish deceitful nature" as reasons for these attacks. This perception of the cause of these "tragedies" is essential, as they are viewed as direct attacks on Jews as a religious minority, rather than as a minority within Turkey.

(2) Concealment of identity – the question of Jewish distinctiveness

The markers that differentiated the Jewish minority from other minorities and could reveal their identity were, according to Roza, the Judeo-Spanish language and Sephardic names. Consequently, individuals began changing their language practices, shifting to Turkish in public and adopting Turkish names to avoid drawing attention to their Jewish identity (cf. Ender 2016; Neyzi 2003). This served as a coping mechanism to protect themselves from further harm and discrimination and to ensure safety and social acceptance (cf. § 5.4.4; 6.3.2).

(3) Intergenerational transmission of fear

Roza further reveals the mechanisms through which fear was transmitted to her generation. In most cases, the first generations that were directly exposed to the traumatic events chose not to recount these events to their children (cf. Erselcan Bentov 2013: 111). Although the older generations did not explicitly discuss their experiences and fears, their behavioural cues, anxiety, strict prohibitions against speaking Judeo-Spanish, the use of Judeo-Spanish as a code-language and protective measures made the traumas of the past even more powerful (cf. Wirth 2022; Wutti 2013b): *"No moz dishéron espantávos, ma ya se ke moz espantávamos"* ('They didn't tell us to be afraid, but I know we were afraid'). The previous generation's silence about these traumatic events has become a concept in its own right among the Turkish Sephardim. The practice of *kayadés* 'keeping quiet' (cf. § 5.3.2), a product of traumatic suppression, appears to have a more profound impact on the second generation, especially in families

where these traumatic events were not openly discussed (cf. Braga, Mello & Fiks 2012; Busch & McNamara 2020; Reddemann 2015). Instead, these experiences were transferred emotionally and behaviourally on an unconscious level (Leys 2000), leading, according to Naftali, to a shift in language use.

> **6-38. Naftali:** I kómo mos peryímos la língua, es ke la kayedéz tyéne, a mi me parése ke la kayedéz tyéne un rölasyón kon la, kon el estádo aktual de la língua. Porké än la méza, än la káza no mos kontáron de éstas istóryas. Kóndo yo teníya diz--dizéremos kínze ányos, u katórze ányos i konosíya únas kózas; ya avía oyído de las kózas kómo *La Furtúna*, kómo *Las Vắnte Klásas*, kómo, kómo el *Vatándash Tűrkche Konúsh* i el *Varlík Vergisí*, el tódo. Estáva preguntándo mi granpapá, i äl dezmazaladó estáva ämpesándo a kontárme, i kuándo mos ayáva, mos ayáva la mi nené, la grámama, mos estáva azyắndo <Kayá', kayámos! Áyde, Moíz, kuálo estás azyắndo!? Désha éstos, no ay, no topítes ótra kóza de de kontár äl chíko!? Ya pasó éste, ya pasó! Ya pasó éste!> I kon ésto, no mos kontáron.
>
> ('And how we lost the language is that *kayadés* ['keeping quiet'] is, it seems to me, related with the current state of the language. Because at the table, at home, they didn't tell us these stories. When I was, let's say, fifteen or fourteen years old and knew a few things; I had already heard about things like the *Wealth Tax*, the *Twenty Classes*, like the *Citizen, Speak Turkish*! and the *Wealth Tax*, all of it. I was asking my grandfather and he, the unlucky one, was starting to tell me, and when my grandmother would hear us, she would say: <Quiet, let's be quiet! Come on, Moiz, what are you doing!? Leave these, don't you have something else to tell the boy!? This has already passed, it passed! This has passed! And with this, they didn't tell us.') [2nd-m-45-fluent-fam12]

Naftali's frustration is palpable as he recounts how his attempts to learn about the tragic events of the past from his grandfather were interrupted by his grandmother's insistence on remaining silent. Only as an adult was he able to learn about these events from history books, enabling him to process the silence that had surrounded him, as he notes later in his narrative: "*Éstas tódas kózas yo me ambezí de los lívros, kuándo yo lo meldí, porké tyenía menestér de ambezárme*" ('All these things I learned from books, when I was reading, because I needed to know')[142]. He suggests that the practice of *kayadés*, or the reluctance to discuss painful past events, was a primary contributing factor in the decline of Judeo-Spanish. The second generation, like the first, avoided using Judeo-Spanish due to the transference of fear. This reproduction of parental behaviour, coupled with the practice of *kayadés*, leads to what Kogan (2002) calls "enactment", a process observed among Holocaust survivors. *Enactment* is manifested as "a compulsion to re-create their parents' experiences in their own lives through concrete acts" (Kogan 2002: 251). For example, Naftali almost compulsively avoided giving his real name, driven by an imitation of his parent's behaviour and inherited fears.

[142] [2nd-m-45-fluent-fam12]

> **6-39. Naftali**: Me'staván demandándo: <Porké te yámas X?[143] Kómo es ke tu puédes te yamár X? No sos túrko?> Le'stáva dizyéndo ke mi mi abuélo víno de de Bélchika i por ésto me yámo X. Aóra, aóra no. Aóra núnka. Te díze, yo so djudyó, es por ésto me yámo X.
>
> ('They were asking me: <Why are you named X? How can you be called X? Aren't you Turkish?>' I was saying that my grandfather came from Belgium and that's why I am named X. Now, not anymore. Now never. I say, <I am Jewish, that's why my name is X.>') [2nd-m-45-fluent-fam12]

He acknowledges gradually becoming aware of the implications of this behaviour for himself and the burden he felt each time he hid behind his name and official narrative in public. Consequently, for the sake of his child, he made a conscious decision to no longer let past fears influence his present.

> **6-40. Naftali**: No se, no se. Es ésto, úna ésta, parése, me parése ke es un espánto ke, ke m'ämbezáron en la káza. Sáves, kuándo sálas, sálgas de la de la káza de nené i dedé de de la granmamá i grandpapá, te dízän: <Ya topítes un umbréla, un parasól, ya tyénes úna kóza, ya tyénes úna chakéta, ya tyénes?> Ésto tódo te dízän en túrko, me me'staván dizyéndo en túrko. I después: <Pásha yüzüdeyáte!> Yüzüdeyáte. *Yüzüdeyáte*, es áze atansyón. Áze atansyón! No kále ke la djáńte sépa ke sos djudyó etsetéra, etsetéra. Ésto es, sáves, el, me dizíyan solaménte <Yüzüdéyate!> Ésto ésto palávra me dizíyan syámpre, syámpre, syámpre en espanyól. En el djudyó. Porké éyos éra úna jenerasyón ke bivyéron la furtuná. I ke bivyéron la el Varlık Vergisi, ke bivyéron *Las Vänte Klásas*, ke biv--, ke, ke, ke, ke bivyéron *Vatandaş Türkçe Konuş!*. Tódo ésto. I por ésto no'stávan muy, muy konténtes. Áma apárte de ésto, éyos metyéron nómbres turkos a sus íjos, ke es mi mádre i mi ónkli.
>
> ('I don't know, I don't know. This is one of those things, it seems, it seems to me, that it is a fear that they tought us at home. You know, when you leave, leave the house of grandma and grandpa, they say: <Did you bring an umbrella, a parasol, do you have something, do you have a jacket, do you have it?< They tell you all this in Turkish, they were telling me in Turkish. And then: <Pasha yüzüdeyáte! Yüzüdeyáte!> *Yüzüdeyáte* means pay attention. Pay attention! People should not know that you are Jewish, etc., etc. This is, you know, they only told me <Yüzüdéyate!> This word they always, always, always told me in [Judeo-]Spanish. In Djudyó. Because they were a generation that lived through the *Thrace Pogroms*. And who lived through the *Varlık Vergisi*[144], who lived through the Wealth Tax, who lived--, who, who, who, who lived through *Citizen Speak Turkish!*. All of that. And because of this, they were not very, very happy. And apart from this, they gave Turkish names to their children, which is my mother and my uncle.') [2nd-m-45-fluent-fam12]

It is important to highlight the mechanisms through which Naftali reports that the transmission of fear occurred. This account provides a compelling example of the enactment of fear and its lasting impact on the psyche and behaviour of the second generation. As previously discussed, Naftali's family did not disclose the tragic events

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[143] I would like to remind the reader that this consultant's real name is not Naftali but an international name. However, to protect his anonymity, I will use his pseudonym throughout the narrative. In the narrative, in order to avoid confusions between the content and the form of his name, I will use X.

[144] *Tax on Fortune and Income* (cf. § 6.3.)

experienced by the older generations. The transmission of fear through the command *"Pasha yüzüdeyate!"* ('My boy, take care!') when leaving the house, coupled with the deliberate choice of the Judeo-Spanish language for this command, left a profound and enduring traumatic imprint on Naftali's psyche, requiring significant conscious effort for him to overcome. Beyond the reported effects of trauma on language and social behaviour, the presence of trauma in the first and second generations, such as in Naftali's family, is evidenced by pervasive feelings of fear, panic attacks, hesitation, avoidance, difficulty in finding words, moments of silence, sadness, indignation, and a sense of burden in their tone (cf. Wirth 2022). Three of the second-generation female consultants were overwhelmed by tears while recounting traumatic events, showing significant signs of emotional distress. As a result, the interviews had to be interrupted and rescheduled. In the second session, we could not return to the previously discussed topics due to the consultants' avoidance and frequent topic changes.

In line with David & Bar-Tal's (2009: 364-365) findings on patterns of community cohesion (cf. § 6.2.4 & 3.2.5), Naftali (cf. 6-38) suggests that if these traumatic events had been more openly shared, the community might have better processed the missing historical context and retained Judeo-Spanish for a longer period.

The different and interrelated traumatic events and ideologies experienced by the Sephardim and named above by Naftali point to cumulative trauma leading to repeated manifestations of fear and isolation of community members (cf. Wutti 2013: 11-12). Drawing on Keilson (1992: 74) regarding the three sequences of traumatisation among Jewish children separated from their parents during the Nazi regime, I have identified three distinct traumatic sequences affecting the Turkish Sephardim:

a. The first traumatic sequence was triggered by antisemitism and anti-minority sentiment following World War I (cf. § 6.2.4).
b. The second traumatic sequence resulted from discriminatory campaigns and events in the early days of the Republic (cf. § 6.2.4).
c. The third traumatic sequence spans the post-Republic period up to the present day.

These sequences of traumatic events contribute to the perpetuation of fear as a dominant emotion in the minority-majority relationship, reinforcing an "us versus them" rhetoric in the navigation of social identity. Rafi's accounts very effectively encapsulate the traumatic sequences outlined above and their effects on different generations.

> **6-41. Rafi:** When I asked my grandparents, why they moved from Galata and sold all their shops, their answers are similar to the stories one always gets to hear. Primarily, the biggest reason is the fact that they felt endangered. The criminality became higher and they witnessed attacks with knife. They moved to the other districts like Kurtuluş and Şişli, because "the others" were doing so. It was a communal movement. My

> grandma's situation is an exception, since she went to a Turkish boarding school because of her family situation. So she mostly thinks and speaks in Turkish, although I hear her speaking Ladino with my mother and her friends as she gets older. Even though she says she would prefer speaking Turkish, she reacts mostly in Ladino when arguing, praying, when getting emotional. I think this preference is not a freedom of choice but a fear, which remained from those times; considering she grew up in a Turkish boarding school with a different name and surname, plus with an imperfect Turkish accent. For me it is very hard to talk about their thoughts on politics, which caused vanishing of these languages, but from what I can analyse and get throughout our conversations is that the fear of the events still remains in them. And my parents' generation? They were ignoring and not talking about the fear and its causes. They barely answered me properly when I asked them about how they feel that Ladino is not spoken anymore. They never wanted to get into trouble, living in diaspora, and that's why they even gave up their language in order to live peacefully. That is why my mother was shocked when she learned at the same time as I was, that her grandmother most probably fled the *Thrace Pogroms*. Our generation vocalises these issues more. But again, it is not that we are fearless, maybe because they have been direct subjects of mass violence and terror in comparison to us. […] [3rd-m-22-neo-fam3]

For Rafi, the perception of his grandparents' and parents' fear, although not directly transmitted, triggered in various aspects of their identity linguistic and social behaviour, such as wearing symbols of their faith like the *Star of David*[145], speaking with an accent, or having non-Turkish names. He highlights the generational differences in the intensity of concealment behaviour. While the first and second generations were more inclined towards concealment and caution, the younger generation exhibits resilience and a desire to confront these issues directly (cf. Olko, Hansen et al. 2020). Rafi points to the transmission of the practice of *kayadés* in his family as a protective mechanism: "*They were ignoring and not talking about the fear and its causes",* or, as he continues later, *"they don't even speak; they have the fear of speaking. And my parents, the fear of asking".* His assertive stance and openness confronting the historical burden of traumatic events in his family reflect a significant shift in trauma-coping among the third generation. This shift, however, does not apply to all generations in the same way (Leonardi, Thüne & Betten 2016: 119). It is essential to note that this pervasive fear is not merely a relic of the past but remains very present in people's narratives and behaviour today. However, as Rafi states, it is less present among the third generation. The resurgence of fear is particularly evident in light of terrorist attacks targeting Turkish Jews in recent decades and evolving attitudes towards Jews, which are influenced by the political relationship between Israel and Turkey.

As this fear recedes among younger generations, the boundaries between majority and minority groups diminish, as evidenced by increased intermarriage,

[145] As revealed in other parts of his narrative.

decreased segregation, and more positive attitudes towards the majority and towards the Turkish language. According to consultants' accounts, mastery of "accentless Turkish" that is indistinguishable from that of the majority (cf. § 6.3.2) plays a decisive role in these shifts in attitudes and behaviour.

Roza regrets sparing her children the feeling of fear, a shift which, for the third generation, has blurred the boundaries between the Jewish minority and majority society. As Roza indicates, the transmission of these traumatic events could have served as a mechanism for group boundary protection.

> **6-42. Roza**: [about her children] No se stan espantándo i mozós no los espantímos a los íjos. Meldáron eskólas túrkas, meldáron ünivérsitas, tenían amígos, vinyéron a káza, kómer, echár, buénos ijíkos, de ke no? Ma puéde ser ke no izímos buéno akél tyémpo, puéde ser kon espánto el asimilasyón no estáva en un luguár muy, muy buéno.
>
> ('[about her children] They are not afraid, and we didn't make our children afraid. They attended Turkish schools, they attended universities, they had friends, they came home, ate, slept, good kids, why not? But perhaps we didn't handle it right in those times, maybe if they felt fear, the assimilation would not have advanced so far.') [1st-f-68-fluent-ind]

According to Roza, the practice of *kayadés* expedited assimilation, facilitating quicker and more thorough integration, which she now deeply regrets.

Another significant aspect revealed in the data sets is the variation in fear-coping mechanisms among the Sephardim. Edna illustrates how different members of her extended family managed fear in distinct ways, leading to different outcomes in language shift.

> **6-43. Edna**: Yo empesé a'ntendér, ke afuéra, mis paryéntes tenían un póko d'espánto de avlár en espanyół, úna língua etranjéra ke la djénte no sta podyéndo entendér. Kualsiker língua, no tenían akél, kómo se díze? Pasénsya de oyír akel tyémpo afuéra, i se dizía: <Ávla en túrko!> [...] Ma tuvyéron múchos, múchas problémes. Ésto es la istória e, ma loz muéstros, mi komünitád teníyan, teníya espánto. [...] Por eksémpyo mi príma, sémoz la mízma edád, la íja de mi õnkl, e ermáno de mi pádre, djustaménte serémoz la mézma edád. Yo ávlo, pórke mi mádre no, no no deshó la língua, ma su famíya tuvyéron maz múcho, s'espantáron maz múcho. Éyos empesáron avlár kon las kreatúras en, en, en túrko en káza, i d'akél tyémpo es ke mi, mi príma no, no sáve aβlár en espanyól. Entyénde, ma no áβla.
>
> ('I began to understand that, outside, my parents had a bit of fear of speaking [Judeo-]Spanish, a foreign language that people could not understand. Whatever language, they did not have, what is it called? Patience to hear it out there, and they would say: <Speak Turkish!> [...] But they had many, many problems. This is the story and, but our people, my community, they had, they had fear. [...] For example, my cousin, we are the same age, the daughter of my uncle, my father's brother, we are exactly the same age. I speak, because my mother did not, did not abandon the language, but her family had more, they were more frightened. They started speaking to the children in, in, in Turkish at home, and from that time, my cousin does not, does not know how to speak [Judeo-]Spanish. She understands, but does not speak.') [2nd-f-60-fluent-fam9]

Edna's mother did not abandon Judeo-Spanish under the external pressure of the *Citizen Speak Turkish!* campaign, allowing Edna to maintain fluency. In contrast, Edna's cousin, raised in a household that succumbed to external pressures and fears to a greater extent, did not learn to speak Judeo-Spanish, although she was able to understand it. It is therefore essential to keep in mind that individuals experience traumatizing events differently based on their social environment and the way the event is interpreted and processed (cf. Vygotsky [1934] 1994).

These cross-generational perspectives on the interpretation and internalisation of traumatic events and ideologies, their effects, and the response mechanisms of different generations are representative of the accounts found throughout the data sets. The patterns identified were used to develop the following flow diagram, which serves as a navigational and visualisation tool, illustrating the interconnectedness among ideologies, attitudes, and practices across three generational cohorts. Over the course of this dissertation, the flow diagram will be enhanced with additional interconnected aspects.

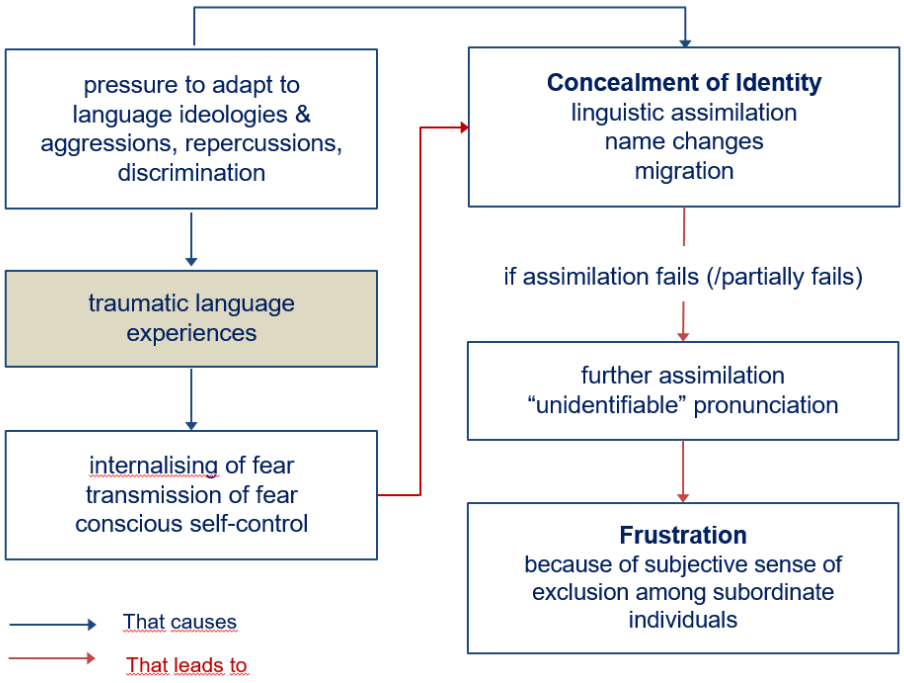


Figure 4. Ch. 6: *Flow diagram – pathways between ideologies, attitudes, practices*

Despite the assimilation strategies and processes discussed above, the Sephardim continue to encounter discrimination, marginalisation, repression, and societal pressure. Many individuals attribute these challenges to the presence of an accent when speaking Turkish, which marks them as different and exposes them to these biases. Second- and

third-generation consultants like Naftali and Salamon highlight the nearly identical transmission of the complex interplay between fear, shame, and social stigmatisation associated with the distinctive 'Sephardic accent' when speaking Turkish.

> **6-44. Naftali**: En la káye, porké avía *Vatandásh Türkche Konúsh*, espantávan. La gänte espantáva de avlár. I keríya, éyos kijíyan avlár än túrko, kuramänte än túrko, áma no lo puedían. Tyénen un aksáṅto. I akäl día, kuándo los, los ke se forsávan pára el, la língua, lo avlávan kon un aksáṅto, i el aksáṅto tambiyän úvo un, un ótro matäryál pára burlárse d'éyos. Ésto es. Böyle!
>
> ('In the street, because there was *Citizen Speak Turkish!*, they were afraid. People were afraid to speak. And they wanted to speak Turkish, fluent Turkish, but they couldn't. They had an accent. And that day, when those who forced themselves to speak the [Turkish] language, spoke it with an accent, the accent also became a, another material for mocking them. That's it. Like that.') [2nd-m-45-fluent-fam12]
>
> **6-45. Salamon**: Kón Atatűrk empesímoz a tenér múchos atákez del nasyonalízmo túrko. I mi pádre ávla muy buéno, muy buéno el ladíno, i me kontáva ke kuándo salía-n la káye kon sus amíɣoz djudíoz áƀla al ladíno, i e en un tyémpo, se aserkávan loz túrkos de mi pádre i le dizían: <No áƀlesh en ótra língua. Sidadáno túrko, áƀla túrko>. I después sería múcho de mozótroz, pórke loz djudíos en, en el tímpo de mi nóna aƀláƀan sólo en espanyól. [...] I por esto, póko a póko, s-empesó a peryér el espanyól, se ryén de mozóz, se burlávan de mozóz, pórke avlámos túrko kon múcho aksénto i el espánto, i el nasionalízmo, i la presyón, tódo esto ízo ke deshármoz de ablár espanyól i dishímoz: <Moz vámoz a aƀlár túrko, pára ke pénsan ke sómoz túrkoz de verdá> i por eso perío la língua.
>
> ('With Atatürk, we began to experience many attacks of Turkish nationalism. My father spoke Ladino very well, and he told me that when he went out on the street with his Jewish friends, they spoke Ladino, and, at one point, the Turks approached my father and said: <Do not speak another language. Turkish Citizen, speak Turkish!> And later, it affected many of us, because the Jews in my grandmother's time spoke only [Judeo-]Spanish. [...] And because of this, little by little, [Judeo-]Spanish began to be lost. They mocked us, they made fun of us because we spoke Turkish with a heavy accent. And the fear and nationalism and the pressure, all of this made us stop speaking [Judeo-]Spanish. We said, <We are going to speak Turkish, so they think we are real Turks>, and that's why the language was lost.') [3rd-m-43-fluent-ind]

The two accounts point to an essential aspect in the intergenerational transmission of trauma: the similarities in perception, discursive reconstruction (use of the inclusive "we" pronoun), and symptoms (such as high emotional involvement, pervasive feelings of fear, panic attacks, and hesitations in discourse, among others) (cf. Leonardi, Thüne & Betten 2016: 77). These similarities indicate a process of "identification" by the second and third generations with the experiences and life stories of their parents and grandparents (cf. Bohleber 2009: 111-112). Salamon's use of the inclusive verbal forms *empesímoz* 'we started' and personal pronoun *mozóz* 'we' indicates the perception of a collective experience in which the speaker is directly included, pointing to Salamon's identification with the group's history and trauma. The process of identification thus serves as a connecting mechanism between different generations. Both Naftali's and Salamon's accounts reflect the flow diagram presented above and highlight the perception of fear of being identified as a Jew based on the presence of the Sephardic

accent when speaking Turkish. On a semiotic level, this accent is perceived as an indicator of failed assimilation. The implications of this perceived failure, along with other trauma coping mechanisms, will be explored in detail in Section 6.3.2.

6.3.2 Shibboleth or learning Turkish to escape recognition

In this section, I analyse the discursive strategies of various speakers regarding the process of social and linguistic unmarking which results from prevailing ideologies and antisemitic and anti-minority discourse. Additionally, I investigate the motivations underlying this unmarking process and its reported consequences for different generations. This analysis will contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the processes of linguistic and social accommodation and the dynamics of language shift among the Sephardim.

The term *shibboleth* (Hebrew שִׁבֹּלֶת *shībboleṯ*, meaning 'part of a plant containing grain') originates from the Old Testament *Book of Judges* (12:5-6). It describes the use of the Hebrew word *shibboleth* as a test word to distinguish between warring communities that spoke closely related language varieties. Specifically, the test word was used to differentiate between the surviving Ephraimites and Gileadites. Those who could correctly pronounce the /ʃ/ sound in shibboleth were allowed to pass, while those who mispronounced it as /s/ in *sibboleth* were identified as fleeing Ephraimites and killed (Busch 2016: 96; McNamara 2005: 352). While this test focused on a different phonological differentiation mechanism, it applies symbolically to the Turkish Sephardim, who place particular emphasis on "accentless" pronunciation of Turkish as the perceived main criterion for acceptance and authenticity.

As discussed in Section 3.5.1, the distinctiveness of Jewish identity has often been viewed through the lens of language behaviour among speakers of Jewish languages. 'Jewish language behaviour' has often been used as a propaganda tool against Jews, who are deemed to lack the 'normal' criteria for group identification and are perceived as 'deceitful'. Roza's (cf. 6-37) narrative of the events and ideologies in her past provides a clear context for understanding the emergence and reception of these ideologies among both the Turkish majority and the Sephardim. The integration of Jews into the new Turkish nation pressured them to assimilate linguistically and conceal any ethnic markers. Ironically, this assimilation often served as a catalyst for antisemitic attitudes (Funkenstein 1993: 232; Myhill 2003: 90) (cf. § 6.2.4). Myhill (2003: 90) writes that the accusation of deception levelled against Jews by different ideologies stems from their "ability to speak non-Jewish languages associated with certain ethnicities and so, by Herderian language-and-identity thinking, to appear to be claiming the identity

associated with that ethnicity". Ideologies of Jewish distinctiveness, based on language behaviour that Jews were pressured to adopt, along with the heightened awareness and vigilance among the Sephardim regarding this distinctiveness and the "marking off" of their group (Herman 1977: 40) (cf. § 3.5.1) result from the loop that connects ideologies and behaviour, underscoring the community's sense of vulnerability and need for vigilance (cf. 6-37).

The decision to conceal one's true ethnoreligious identity is thus driven by various factors. Foremost among these is the fear of encountering antisemitic behaviour and aggression, which poses a perceived threat to individuals' well-being. These concerns create a complex dynamic in which individuals must navigate the delicate balance between self-preservation and societal acceptance. The recognised strategies employed by the Sephardim to erase the indices of their ethnic identity include: (1) *long-term dissimulation strategies* such as *shibboleth* or learning "accentless Turkish" and changing their first names (cf. § 5.4.4) and (2) *situational direct responses* such as hiding their ethnic/religious identity in specific interactions that are deemed dangerous. While the second category is more straightforward and has been addressed in Section 6.2.4, the first category requires closer attention due to the insights it can provide into the connection between antisemitic rhetorical tropes and the motivations and strategies employed to erase social and linguistic markedness.

Long-term dissimulation strategies: shibboleth or learning "accentless Turkish"

As discussed in Section 3.2.5, Bucholtz & Hall (2004) explored how the formation of identity as an ongoing social and political process is shaped by language through the intersection of four semiotic processes: *practice, performance, indexicality, and ideology. Practice*, defined in this context as both habitual and deliberate actions plays a pivotal role. *Practice*, as the repetitive occurrence of events and entities, is instrumental to *indexicality* in the processes of extraction of meaning and denotation. Bucholtz & Hall (2004) define indexicality as "the semiotic operation of juxtaposition, whereby one entity or event points to another" (Bucholtz & Hall 2004: 378). An illustrative instance of indexicality within the Sephardic community lies in the pronunciation of the close back unrounded vowel [ɯ] as a close front unrounded vowel [i]. This linguistic feature is indirectly aligned with the identity category of 'Sephardic pronunciation of Turkish' through a chain of semiotic associations (cf. Ochs 1992). These associations, in turn, contribute to reinforcement of social stereotypes, according to which Sephardic individuals are perceived as having 'bad Turkish pronunciation' as a result of their 'disloyalty' and 'resistance' to learning Turkish and integrating into mainstream society.

Internalisation of these external attitudes and stereotypes gives rise to power hierarchies between languages, which are in turn central to the formation of language ideologies (Kroskrity 2000; 2004; 2010). As a result, Jewish individuals decide to interrupt the transmission of Judeo-Spanish, ensuring that their children learn Turkish instead. Once Turkish becomes the sole language spoken at home, the subsequent focus shifts to eliminating any phonological features that align them with the 'Jewish category'. These language practices, developed in response to social constraints, aim to challenge established stereotypes and balance power relations between Jews as a minority and the Turkish-speaking Muslim majority. The ideological mechanisms at play revolve around the juxtaposition of insiders versus outsiders. As outlined in Section 6.3.1 and as demonstrated in previous studies (Altabev 1996; 1998; Bornes Varol 2013a; Şaul 1983; 2013), the Jewish community identified mastery of 'accentless' Turkish as the primary means of becoming unmarked (cf. Woolard 2004) and achieving successful integration, positive perception, and social approval within mainstream Turkish society.

In Woolard's (2004: 79-81) discussion of the markedness model, a linguistic variety is considered unmarked because it is more frequently selected. The selection is driven by the variety's unmarked status (Myers-Scotton 1993: 115). The markedness model is essential in framing indexicality — a property of linguistic varieties to be socially indexical and "linked with particular types of relationships because they are regularly used in conversations involving such types" (Myers-Scotton 1993: 85). The unmarking of Sephardic speech reflects a broader effort to unmark their identities, aligning with Bucholtz & Hall's (2004: 372) argument that "marked identities are also ideologically associated with marked language". Therefore, the perceived necessity among the Sephardim to alter aspects of their Turkish pronunciation that reveal their Jewishness indicates a desire to unmark their identity through the unmarking of their speech.

Attentional control of Turkish pronunciation to an "unrecognisable degree", in line with the *Communication Accommodation Theory* (cf. § 3.2) (Giles 2008; Giles & Coupland 1991) has emerged as a prevalent theme in the narratives and language behaviour of individuals in both the first and second generations, persisting up to the present day.

> **6-46. Moris:** What it is, is that their accents were broken. When the Jews were speaking in Turkish, their accents were broken. As a result of this it was obvious that one was not a Turk but a Jew, an Armenian or a Greek. [1st-m-81-fluent-fam3]
>
> **6-47. Zelda**: yáni şive, bizim Musevi olduğumuzu anlamasın diye, Jewish, anlamasınlar diye hep evde Türkçe konuşuldu.
>
> ('So the accent, so that they wouldn't understand that we are Jewish, so that they wouldn't understand, we always spoke Turkish at home.') [2nd-f-53-semi-fam13]

Deficient pronunciation skills would expose individuals' Jewish identity, leaving them vulnerable, according to Moris (cf. 6-46) and Zelda (6-47). As revealed by the consultants, the presence of an accent in Turkish is more prevalent among individuals who were raised in Istanbul, where the linguistic practices was diverse and where Jews could choose between Jewish, French, American, and Turkish schools. In contrast, Tal[146] reports that consultants born in other locations such as Çanakkale, Ankara, or Edirne, where educational options were more limited and mostly confined to Turkish schools, did not exhibit a distinct accent in their Turkish. Ezra reveals that speaking "accentless Turkish" was not only a result of her upbringing in Edirne and her linguistic environment, but was in large part due to her conscious efforts and attention to pronunciation.

> **6-48. Ezra:** Şimdi ben Edirne'de büyüdüğüm için, ben Türkçe'yi çok çok iyi konuşuyorum. Ve ben buna özen gösterdim.
>
> ('Because I grew up in Edirne, I can speak Turkish very, very well. And I paid attention to it.') [2nd-f-53-passive-fam2]

Ezra's deliberate focus on correct pronunciation in Turkish stems from her heightened awareness of the distinctive elements that define linguistic and ethnic boundaries, as corroborated by Sandy's narrative.

> **6-49. Sandy**: Belli olurdu Musevi olduğumuz mesela. En güzel Ermeniler konuşurdu Türkçe. Hala konuşurlar çok güzel. Ama şimdiki gençler çok güzel Türkçe konuşuyorlar. Ama unuttular Musevi dilini.
>
> ('It would be obvious that we are Jewish, for example. The Armenians spoke Turkish the best. They still speak it very well. But the young people today speak very good Turkish. But they have forgotten the Jewish language.') [1st-f-78-fluent-fam3]

The contrast that Sandy and Moris (cf. 6-46) draw between Jews and Armenians, who were known to speak Turkish "beautifully", suggests an internalisation of the official ideologies and antisemitic tropes of Jewish "essential otherness" (cf. Lamprou 2022: 35) that characterised the public discourse of her youth. These ideologies portrayed Jews as the least integrated of Turkey's minorities. This comparison resurfaces with the third generation, albeit in complete opposition to the perspectives of the first generation.

> We speak Turkish like Turkish people. In fact like Istanbulite. We don't have an accent. We articulate. No one can guess where we are from. No one asked me if I was not Turkish. But I am sure that question was asked to an Armenian or a Greek. (*Las Ultimas Palavras* 2015: min.: 24:37-27:56)

According to this account from the film *Las ultimas palavras* (2015), the Sephardim have been the most successful of all Turkish minorities in erasing their ethnic and linguistic markers. These successful assimilation efforts indicate the Sephardim's strong

[146] [2nd-m-68-semi-fam11]

determination to overcome imposed boundaries and achieve a more positive evaluation by the majority group (cf. Giles 1977), as Henri discusses.

> **6-50. Henri**: Tódos avlavámos en ispanyól, míra, kuándo vinó akel tyémpo en mil muéve chéntos i sükuénta, sesénta, ampesáron puévlo de la partída <Avlá túrko, avlá túrko, avlá túrko!> Mirímos ke vinó un seséta, seténta, ochénta ke tódo los djudíos ke están avlándos, están avlándo en túrko, se stan tenyéndo ke son judíos. kuálo azyéron? Yo mízmo tambyén, akél tyémpo, mirímos en metér las kreatúras en eskólas túrkas ke no ávlen la língua espanyól, porké en avlándo espanyól se sta entendyéndo. Yo kuálo izé? Yo me hui a diksyón, kurs, me hue a diksyón. Me demandó la profesöra ayá, me demandó la profesöra de ayá: <Porké vinítes akí azér, ambezárte diksyón tu akí?> Porké yo le dishé <Yo so hudío. En avlándo el túrko se sta entendyéndo ke yo so hudío.>, <No,> dishó <no sta entendyéndo!> <Puéde ser estás prestando múcha atansyón a no remarkárme, amá ay únos ke en lo ke remárka buéno, me dízen <Tu soz imigránte, tu sos!>
>
> ('We all spoke in [Judeo-]Spanish, look, when that time came in the 1950s and 60s, they started saying from the authorities, <Speak Turkish, speak Turkish, speak Turkish!> We saw that in the 60s, 70s, and 80s, all the Jews who were speaking, were speaking in Turkish, pretending not to be Jews. What did they do? I myself, at that time, we decided to put the children in Turkish schools, so they wouldn't speak [Judeo-]Spanish because by speaking [Judeo-]Spanish one could understand. What did I do? I went to a diction course, a diction course, the teacher there asked me, the teacher there asked me: <Why did you come here to take a diction course?> <Because>, I told her, <I am Jewish. When I speak Turkish, it becomes obvious that I am Jewish.> She said, <No, it's not obvious!> <Maybe you're paying a lot of attention not to notice, but there are some who, as soon as they notice, say: <You're an immigrant, you are!>') [1st-m-81-fluent-ind]

Henri's account provides a perfect example of a situation in which the *Communication Accommodation Theory* (Giles 2008; Giles & Coupland 1991) (cf. § 3.2) applies. It shows how, under the pressure of the assimilationist ideologies and traumatic language experiences (cf. § 6.3), individuals adjust their speech styles to *converge* with their interlocutors in order to erase any linguistic markers that point to their Jewish identity. While the process of *convergence* generally occurs in order to gain social approval, the main motivator for the Jewish minority appears to be the reduction of discrimination and assurance of safety. Thus, Henri's children were sent to Turkish schools to ensure that the next generation would not face the same linguistic barriers. Henri himself resorts to extreme measures such as diction courses in the quest to achieve "accentless" pronunciation of Turkish which will not differentiate him from native Turkish speakers. The anecdote about being called an immigrant as soon as an accent is noticed points to the social stigmatisation that he repeatedly faced. Henri's accounts of taking diction classes are corroborated by Jak, who expresses remorse over the fact that such measures ultimately led to the decline of Judeo-Spanish.

> **6-51. Jak**: Según mi idéa, las rasónes son múnchas. Akí kuándo avlámos espanyól, otomatikménte, kómo no tyéne relasyón dirékto túrko kon espanyól, la diksión, el dístan de un dyéz métros kuándo ávlas el túrko, ya'sta entendyéndo ke ésta persóna es ajéno; o djudyó o ajéno. I agóra si no avlámos, no avlán espanyól, la diksyón se

va trokár. I veraménte se trokó. Oy en día kuándo ávlo yo el túrko, me tomí diksyón, lesón de diksyón en túrko. Fué ovlegádo. Ma en avlándo yo el túrko, ago atansyón ke séa kon la diksyón túrka. Akéyos tyémpos teníamos myédo. De ken, de kuálo no se. Por sigúro sáves *Vatandaş Türkçe Konuş!*. Mozótros agóra ya teníamos el --- kómo sáve, espánto de avlár. I ésto víno kómo l'espína pára midizína. [...] De sórte ke muryó el Espanyól.

('In my opinion, there are many reasons for this [implying language shift]. Here, when we speak [Judeo-]Spanish, automatically, since Turkish has no direct relation to [Judeo-]Spanish, at a distance of ten meters away, when you speak Turkish it becomes clear that this person is a foreigner; either Jewish or a foreigner. And they thought, if we don't speak [Judeo-]Spanish, the diction changes. And it really has changed. Nowadays, when I speak Turkish, I took diction lessons in Turkish. I was obligated. And, when I speak Turkish, I pay attention to ensure it is with Turkish diction. In those times, we were afraid. Of what or whom, I don't know. For sure, you know *Citizen Speak Turkish!*. We had a --- as you know, a fear of speaking [Judeo-Spanish]. And this came as a thorn for medicine. Like this, [Judeo-]Spanish died.') [1st-m-75-fluent-fam8]

The primary concern thus revolved around eliminating any linguistic markers that could potentially reveal the Sephardim's ethnic affiliation and could be interpreted as a sign of disloyalty or an index of their ethnic otherness which, in their perception and experience, made them vulnerable. The Sephardim strove to be perceived as what Henri calls *"turkos de verda"* ('real Turks').

6-52. Henri: Moz vámoz aβlár túrko, pára ke pénsan ke sómoz túrkoz de verdá, i por eso perío la língua.

('We are going to speak Turkish so that they think we are real Turks, and because of that, the language was lost') [1st-m-81-fluent-ind].

It must be noted, however, that the dynamics surrounding the elimination of any markers pointing to their Jewishness are not a result of a racialised feeling of inferiority, collapse of ego, or evaporation of self-esteem as discussed by Fanon (2008 [1967]), nor do they seem to arise from the alienation and self-hatred of Jewish individuals adopting prejudices attributed to them by the majority (Lessing 1930), feelings of shame towards their own group due to disappointment and failure or resentment towards own group members (Lewisohn 1929) or identification with the majority as oppressors (Allport [1954] 1958) leading to a rejection of their cultural and social characteristics (Lafont 1967; Ninyoles 1988). Instead, these dynamics seem to be motivated first of all by a social hierarchy in which Judeo-Spanish has reached low symbolic capital. In addition, and more importantly, these dynamics of self-effacement arise from traumatic linguistic tension and conflict, resulting in a fear of exclusion and other repercussions. The prevailing motivation is emulating the language of the majority (cf. 6-52) in order to become unrecognisable, thus ensuring safety at both the individual and group levels. This process is different from that of acquiring Turkish in order to enhance the "authenticity" of belonging (cf. Ehala 2018). In the narratives, there are no indications of

shame towards own group or representations of inherent feelings of inferiority. Consequently, when this fear diminishes or when the discourse around Judeo-Spanish becomes more positive, the Sephardim's motivation to embrace Judeo-Spanish resurfaces.

The analysis of the data reveals four distinct discursive tropes surrounding the manifestation of an accent as linguistic marker (a) *increased attention to and awareness of linguistic markers,* (b) *denial of linguistic markers in Turkish*, (c) *pride in the reported absence of linguistic markers*, and (d) *embrace of linguistic markers*. In the following sections, I will present evidence from the data to support these findings.

(a) *Increased attention to and awareness of linguistic markers*

A noteworthy aspect that has emerged from the data analysis is the increased attention given to pronunciation even today, along with continuous vigilance to maintain proper pronunciation.

> **6-53. Robert**: I, éste módo, úna gránde párte de los djudíos, el espanyól da úna entonasyón de kantár. El espanyól ke áze kantár. I los ke la língua primordyál éra el judéo espanyól avlávan en un, un túrko pokitíko mal lográdo, no éra muy famozó lo ke avlávan. I dospués, úna partída kijéron ke los íjoz i íjaz no ávłan ésta língua pára avłár un túrko maz ermozó. I oy, por egzémpyo, en úna gránde partída, no puédes entendér si ez djudío o no, porké avlán normalménte byen el túrko, es el sigúndo púnto. Si, si, si, si, ay persónas, ay persónas i el sigúndo púnto kuálo es? Kuándo frekuéntas lo maz múncho persónaz djudías, un syérto tyémpo dospués la entonasyón mízmo si no konósen el djudézmo, empésa a trokár. I vez ésto en los mansévos kuándo están en la universitád i en liséo i en la universitád ávlan un túrko muy ermózo. Dyéz ányos, kínse ányos dospués se empésa a malográr el túrko, la entonasyón se empésa a azér, a tenér úna entonasyón, mízmo si no konosé ésta língua. Ez muy enteresánte, ya puédes ver.
>
> ('And in this way, a large part of the Jews, [Judeo-]Spanish has a certain musical intonation. [Judeo-]Spanish which makes one sing. Those whose primary language was Judeo-Spanish spoke Turkish with a slightly flawed pronunciation; it wasn't very appreciated, the way they spoke. Later, some decided that their sons and daughters should not speak this language to speak more beautiful Turkish. And today, for example, in a large part, you can't tell if they are Jewish or not because they speak Turkish normally well, which is the second point. Yes, yes, yes, yes, there are people, there are people, and the second point, what is it? When you frequently interact with many Jewish people, after a certain time, the intonation changes even if they don't know Judezmo. You see this in young people when they are in university, in high school and university they speak very beautiful Turkish. Ten years, fifteen years later, their Turkish starts to deteriorate, the intonation starts to have, to take on an intonation even if they don't know the language. It's very interesting, you can see it.') [2nd-m-61-fluent-ind]

According to Robert, the persistence of a distinct accent remains evident at times, even among individuals who have no knowledge of Judeo-Spanish or belong to the third generation. Robert's narrative further highlights the generational shift in language proficiency. His parents' generation, as well as his own, have made significant efforts to improve their Turkish pronunciation, albeit with limited success. According to him,

individuals today have mostly achieved an unrecognisable, accentless pronunciation of Turkish. However, this mastery of the language is often only temporary, as their accent resurfaces when they return to their community. Robert's choice of words in describing Turkish *"túrko muy ermózo"* ('very beautiful Turkish') and contrasting it with "*empésa a malográr el túrko"* ('starts to deteriorate the Turkish') underscores his prevailing unconscious negative attitudes towards having an accent in Turkish.

(b) *Denial of linguistic markers*

Other consultants display a denial of linguistic markers indicating their Jewish identity. When asked if she has a distinct accent in Turkish, Edna's response is unequivocal.

> **6-54. Edna**: No. No, no, no, no. A tódos les parése ke so túrka. Mozótros no tenémoz aksénto. No teníamos. Péro ay múchos ke tyénen. Mi pádre tenía. Miz tántis tódas tenían aksénto.
>
> ('No. No, no, no, no. Everyone thinks I'm Turkish. We don't have an accent. We didn't have one. But there are many who do. My father had one. All my aunts had an accent.') [2nd-f-60-fluent-fam9]

Edna's emphatic denial of having a distinct accent when speaking Turkish reflects a strong desire to be perceived as Turkish: *"A tódos les parése ke so túrka"* ('Everyone thinks I'm Turkish'). She suggests that her generation has successfully adopted Turkish without any noticeable accent, in contrast to her parents' generation. This observation aligns with previous findings, indicating an increased awareness of the linguistic markers (cf. point (a) of this classification) prevalent in earlier generations.

It's essential to note that the internalisation of societal ideologies valuing "accentless" speech as a marker of successful assimilation does not equate to a denial of her Jewish identity or the development of pro-Turkish identities. Nor does it indicate negative attitudes towards Judeo-Spanish. On the contrary, the motivation appears to be purely driven by a desire to demonstrate proficiency in Turkish and navigate her social surroundings fluently and safely. Interestingly, her daughter, Fani[147], observed that despite Edna's continuous efforts to speak "accentless Turkish", in hear view, she still retained a noticeable accent.

(c) *Pride in the reported absence of linguistic markers*

Individuals who report not having an accent when speaking Turkish take great pride in this ability. Sara, for instance, highlights that even native Turks compliment her on her proficiency in Turkish, which she considers a *"un dóno del dyo"* 'a divine gift'.

> **6-55. Sara**: I me dísen los túrkos ke yo téngo úna pronunsyasyón muy, muy buéna

[147] [3rd-f-27-Spanish-fam9]

> del túrko, ésto es kuryózo porké no es sólo del estúdyo ke me víno a ésto, síno ke un dóno del dyo dígo. Verdadménte, porké kuándo ávlo el túrko no se entyénde del tódo ke yo so djudía.
>
> ('And the Turks tell me that I have a very, very good pronunciation of Turkish. This is curious because it's not just from studying that I achieved this, but I say it's a gift from God. Truly, because when I speak Turkish, you can't tell at all that I am Jewish.') [1st-f-75-fluent-ind]

Sara's sense of pride in her Turkish proficiency, validated externally by majority individuals, reflects a heightened awareness of how pronunciation serves as a marker for inclusion or exclusion. Her emphasis on her unrecognisable Turkish pronunciation, especially in contrast to her parents' knowledge of Turkish, underscores the unconscious reproduction of language ideologies. Despite her mastery of Turkish, Sara also possesses a high level of proficiency in multiple languages and maintains positive attitudes toward Judeo-Spanish. As one of the few remaining custodians of the language, she has dedicated decades to its preservation through her work in Judeo-Spanish theatre.

Both Edna's (cf. 6-54) and Sara's (cf. 6-55) narratives suggest that the desire for inclusion and smooth navigation within the majority society does not seem to threaten Sephardic values today. While this assimilation may have led to negative attitudes (cf. § 6.4.1) and drastic changes in language behaviour in the past (cf. § 6.2; 6.3), consultants' current narratives indicate a significant shift in attitudes towards the positive spectrum and in agency towards the preservation of Judeo-Spanish (cf. § 6.4.2).

(d) *Embrace of linguistic markers*

Among the second-generation consultants, Luna exemplifies a distinct perspective regarding the presence of an accent in Turkish. Her extensive foreign language learning background in Spanish, Portuguese, and English, coupled with her three decades of experience as a tourist guide, have heightened her awareness of the significance of linguistic boundaries. Consequently, she has developed an awareness of ethnic markers and their impact on quality of life for Jewish individuals. This awareness has contributed to shaping her attitude, challenging common perceptions regarding linguistic, cultural and ethnic boundaries.

> **6-56. Luna**: Ay, dísyen ke l'asénto! No impórta el asénto. El asénto es el asénto d'éste idyóma. Ya está! Ke mas da el asénto? De kualkyér módo se va notár. Se va notár porké syémpre tenémos álγo diferénte. Syémpre tenémos álγo diferénte.
>
> ('Oh, they say it's the accent. The accent doesn't matter. The accent is just the accent of this language. That's it! What difference does the accent make? It will be noticeable anyway. It will be noticeable because we always have something different. We always have something different.') [2nd-f-55-H-fluent-ind]

Luna's stance is in line with Herman's observations regarding the process of "marking off" (Herman 1977: 40) involving the consciousness among Jews of being different from both the majority and other groups. Whether or not consultants are affected by the linguistic marker as a boundary between the Jewish minority and the Turkish majority, their consciousness of its presence hints at their awareness of their inherent difference and of the "marking off processes" (cf. David & Bar Tal 2009: 362).

Members of the third generation acknowledge the prevalent fear they experienced during their upbringing, stemming from the apprehension of openly expressing their ethnic identity. Although consultants in the second generation (those under the age of 45) and the third generations echo their parents' narratives regarding the presence of a Jewish accent, this generation reproduces the prevailing attitudes and ideologies surrounding accent or their parents' and grandparents' experiences regarding accent with a more neutral observational stance, showing a certain emotional detachment that can be observed in their tone and narrative content. The narratives of the first and second generation, however are more detailed and with a higher emotional involvement (cf. Leonardi, Thüne & Betten 2016: 175).

Kaden (cf. 6-57) grew up understanding that her parents did not want her pronunciation to be as flawed as theirs. However, she acknowledges that despite her lack of knowledge of Judeo-Spanish, she still has an accent in Turkish, feedback she frequently receives from Turkish friends. Unlike her grandmother, who is afraid to reveal her ethnic identity, and her parents, who feel stigmatised and looked down upon, she breaks this pattern by sometimes embracing her otherness'. This acceptance has even motivated her to learn Judeo-Spanish through Spanish classes and internships in Spain.

> **6.57. Kaden**. That's why, to be honest, I prefer to speak Ladino. Because it's a language at the end. And it's a different language. Because either I came from Spanish origin, because sometimes I don't prefer to say that I'm Jewish. It depends where I am, who I am talking to. And sometimes I'm saying that I'm Jewish. It depends. Either Spanish origin or Jewish. But I can say that seventy percent I'm saying that I'm Spanish origin. [3rd-f-33-Spanish-fam6]

In light of evolving global discourses surrounding minority rights and the shifting political landscape in Turkey, this generation has witnessed a transformative shift in their perspectives. They now embrace a sense of pride in their Sephardic heritage. Among the 15 consultants belonging to the third generation, 7 acknowledged having a "slight" accent in Turkish despite not speaking Judeo-Spanish. However, only one of them, Yıldız, expressed reluctance to disclose her ethnic identity in public or felt ashamed of it. Yıldız herself is caught between the burden of her mother's transmitted attitudes and her desire to learn Judeo-Spanish, and decided to do a semester as an Erasmus student in Spain.

The findings among this generation regarding accent as a linguistic marker indicate a broader trend of increased self-acceptance and cultural affirmation among the community's younger members. This generation expresses feelings of acceptance and even positive attitudes towards markers of otherness — whether linguistic or cultural — which are embraced as a source of pride and positive distinction.

6.4 Language attitudes deconstructed

In the previous sections of this chapter, I analysed the mechanisms of ideology internalisation and its effects on the linguistic and social behaviour of different generations. Through this analysis, I incorporated attitudes towards language that are essential in highlighting the interrelations between ideologies and practices. Moreover, in Chapter 5, I examined the attitudes of different generations towards the adaptability and resilience of Sephardic linguistic and cultural identity in the postvernacular stage, building upon Harris's (1985) research.

In this section, I put a particular emphasis on attitudes as a key element in the continuum between ideology and practice. While the factors influencing language behaviour are driven by macro-variables external to the speech community (Grenoble & Whaley 1998: 38), the motivations for such changes stem from the community's attitudes towards their heritage language. Language attitudes play a crucial role in shaping speakers' adaptation of language use during interactions aimed at managing identification with or differentiation from their conversational partners (cf. Giles 2008; Giles & Smith 1979). To achieve this objective, in this section, I will undertake a cross-generational deconstruction of consultants' narratives regarding their attitudes towards and the functions they attribute to Judeo-Spanish in their own perceptions (cf. Bucholtz & Hall 2004: 371). This analysis aims to unveil the processes underlying the formation of these attitudes, their societal operation, and their changing nature over time and across generations.

In line with Baker (1992) I have aimed to uncover attitudes towards specific language behaviours (e.g. attitudes towards non-transmission, cf. § 5.3.2; attitudes towards language shift cf. § 6.4.3) and dispositional tendencies which "may be a better predictor of intention and external behaviour than attitudes to an object" (Baker 1992: 20). For instance, the use of the minority language in Jewish clubs or during Shabbat prayers may offer a more reliable indication of language behaviour than merely having positive attitudes toward a language. Therefore, in assessing consultants' attitudes, I have not implemented a test but rather resorted to the indirect method of extracting attitudes from their narratives, conversations, and language biographies. In doing so, I

have paid careful attention to the meaning attached to both processes and objects (Baker 1992; Sallabank 2013) and have tried, to the best of my ability, to avoid pre-conceived ideas and hypotheses. Moreover, I have paid particular attention to what was not expressed, based on several consultants' observed inability to speak about traumatic events and a very literal lack of voice (cf. Busch 2020). Only a few questions (Q69 to Q87; cf. Appendix 3) turned out to require a more direct answer from the interviewee.

In order to be able to deconstruct language attitudes intergenerationally, I focus on individual cases that are emblematic of many others found in the data. The results presented below represent broader trends within each generational cohort.

In response to the prevailing language ideologies outlined in Section 6.2 and 6.3, I categorise attitudes as follows:

1. *Attitudes resulting from language ideology that reflect societal views and social developments;*
2. *Attitudes resulting from ideologies that reflect national language policies.*

The first set of attitudes has had the most significant impact on consultants across generations, as evidenced by Meri, who harboured deeply negative sentiments towards Judeo-Spanish while maintaining a lifelong appreciation for the Turkish language.

> **6-58. Meri**: En fransé avlávamos en chíkos. I en Héybeli no deshímoz ni a mi mádre ke ávle en Espanyól. S'ambezó de mozós el túrko. I de ke no ávle la língua del país? No me plazía a mi el Espanyól! Porké lo pronunsávan, no muy <Hanúum [derisive tone]! Ande stá tu mádre?> Repuésta: <Mamá, úna mujér demandó por ti!> Antipatík! Entendítes? [...] No, no me plazía la língua, áma mi mamá mos avló. [...] Tódo me eksprímo en Túrko. Lo kéro múncho byen, i lo konózko au fond. Eskrivía muy ermózas kompozisyónes ke se meldáva en la skóla entéra.
>
> ('We used to speak French as children. And in Heybeli, I didn't even let my mother speak [Judeo-]Spanish. She learned Turkish from us. And why should she not speak the language of the country? I didn't like [Judeo-]Spanish! Because they pronounced it, not very [derisive tone] <Lady! Where is your mother?> Response: <Mom, a woman asked for you!> Unpleasant! Understand? [...] No, I didn't like the language, but my mom spoke to us in it. [...] I express everything in Turkish. I love it very much, and I know it in depth. I wrote very beautiful compositions that were read in the whole school.') [1st-f-88-fluent-fam4]

Both Meri's and her siblings' preference for Turkish is evident in the deep emotional attachment to Turkish that they express in their reluctance to engage in Judeo-Spanish conversations with their mother. Meri's rhetorical question: *"I de ke no ávle la língua del país?"* ('And why should she not speak the language of the country?') illustrates the internalisation of prevailing language ideologies of Turkification. This question highlights Meri's perception that not speaking Turkish deviates from the norm, positioning the Sephardim's marked identities as subordinate to the unmarked normative standard (cf. Bucholtz & Hall 2004: 371). Her dislike of the language is rendered here through the indexical relationship between deficient pronunciation in Turkish, attributed to Jews, and

their perceived social deficiency (cf. § 6.3.2) as unequal social actors. Her desire to unmark her Jewish identity (cf. Myers-Scotton 1993: 85) aligns with her refusal to be associated with social stereotypes surrounding the Turkish Sephardim. For Meri, excelling in Turkish — evidenced by her command and positive attitudes towards the language — serves as a coping mechanism for erasing difference and challenging attributed stereotypes. This ultimately helps her achieve positive perception within mainstream Turkish society.

Meri's derisive tone, dislike, indignation, and frustration become clearer when considering her discomfort with being addressed as *madam*, (cf. § 6.2.1). In that narrative, Meri describes a past moment in which she actively rejected the label that portrayed Jewish women as 'outsiders'. In the semiotic system of meaning, her disdain for Judeo-Spanish and preference for Turkish underscore the correlation between pressure to assimilate and the desire for social integration.

It is worth noting that throughout our interview, Meri never explicitly connected her negative attitudes towards Judeo-Spanish to any specific historical events. Nor did she mention any negative experiences involving language-based discrimination during the early days of the Republic. In her narrative of the past, I observed an almost forced trivialisation of events (cf. Wirth 2022: 169). However, insights from her daughter, Emel, provide a broader context for understanding the mechanisms behind Meri's reception, internalisation, and reproduction of ideology. Emel's accounts suggest that broader social and cultural pressures significantly shaped Meri's attitudes, offering a deeper understanding of the underlying factors that influenced her linguistic attitudes and language practices.

> **6-59. Emel**: Éya éra úna buéna túrka. Íja de Atatűrk. Veraménte, éya no kíjo ke kuándo no se ávla en túrko; mózos los hudíos teníamos akí úna fasón de avlár en kantándo. Kómo stás? Éstas buéna? [singing tone] Éste módo. Mi mádre no kíjo ésto. I no me metyó a la skóla djudía. Me metío a úna eskóla, la priméra eskóla del estádo túrka. I tódas las la kritikáron: <De ke? Tenémos eskólas djudías!> <No kéro!> dísho. <Ke sépa el túrko buéno.> I veraménte, éya me avláva tódo en túrko. Mi pádre kon mi mádre avlávan éntre éyos en djudéo-espanyól.
>
> ('She was a good Turk. A daughter of Atatürk. Truly, she didn't like when people did not speak Turkish; we Jews here had a way of speaking as if we were singing. How are you? Are you well? [singing tone] This way. My mother didn't want this. And she didn't enroll me in a Jewish school. She put me in a school, the first state school in Turkey. And everyone criticised her, saying: <Why? We have Jewish schools!> <I don't want it. Let her know good Turkish,> she said. And truly, she spoke to me entirely in Turkish. My father and my mother spoke to each other in Judeo-Spanish.') [2nd-f-64-fluent-fam4]

Although the interview with Emel took place two years after the interview with her mother, Meri, Emel reproduced in exact detail her mother's main discourse elements regarding Jewish phonological markers in spoken Turkish and her successful internalisation of

homogenisation ideologies. Throughout the interview, it became clear that Meri was part of the progressive Jewish elite educated in the AIU schools and welcomed Atatürk's reforms as a move towards modernism and alignment with European values. The ideological pressure to adopt Turkish was thus perceived on the fertile ground of AIU ideologies which had weakened the prestige and symbolic capital of Judeo-Spanish (cf. 6.2.1). Meri's primary language choice for communication within her family and among friends is French. The role of Turkish as the language of social acceptance further reinforces her negative attitudes towards Judeo-Spanish and motivates her to excel in Turkish.

The apparent contradictions in Meri's discourse reveal a further apparent contradiction between her reported ideologies and attitudes on the one hand and her actual uninterrupted practice of Judeo-Spanish within the family on the other. This contradiction can be interpreted through the categorisation proposed by Busch and Reddemann (2013: 29) which juxtapositions *linguistic power vs. powerlessness and belonging vs. non-belonging*. The different ideological layers (1 & 2), presented in Figure 1. Ch. 6 and repeated here for convenience, intersect in Meri's language attitudes, revealing a complex interconnection between her ideological beliefs, her desire to protect her children from discrimination, and her determination to establish herself as an equal member of Turkish society.

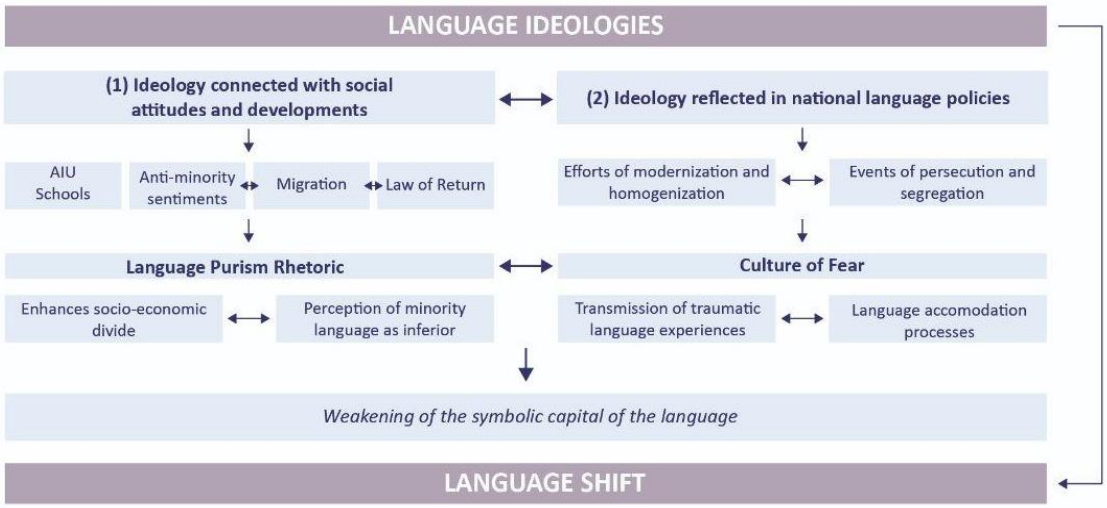


Figure 1. Ch. 6: *Ideology types among the Sephardim* – repeated

This interpretation is further supported by Meri's change in attitudes towards Judeo-Spanish in adulthood, as revealed later in her interview: *"Dospués ke me engrandesí me víno el meóyo"* ('After I grew older, I came to my senses'). Meri's personal

journey, akin to that of many Sephardim, unveils what seems like an irreconcilable dichotomy between her initial negative attitudes towards Judeo-Spanish and her remarkable proficiency in the language, coupled with her unwavering commitment to its preservation.

Meri's commitment to preserving her proficiency in Judeo-Spanish over the years, despite her expressed negative attitudes, points to her unconscious desire not to lose touch with her linguistic heritage. Emel reveals that Meri not only spoke Judeo-Spanish with her husband but also actively sought out reading materials in the language, even as she decided not to transmit the language to her children. It was only when Emel reached adulthood that Meri started to speak Judeo-Spanish with her daughter and encouraged her to write for the *Şalom* newspaper, as well as the monthly Judeo-Spanish supplement *El Amaneser*. Having ensured that her daughter would not be socially marginalised based on a perception of "broken Turkish", she changed her language practice in intra-family communication once again, a trend that I discussed more in depth in Section 5.3.

Moreover, as noted in Section 5.2.2, a person's attitudes towards language learning in general provide further clues to understanding whether attitudes towards individual languages are the result of language ideologies or personal attitudes towards language acquisition and learning as a set of internalised values and multilingual practices. Meri's exceptional command of multiple languages, including Turkish, Judeo-Spanish, French, Hebrew, and Greek, discussed in Section 5.2.2 (cf. 5-6), indicates how multilingualism can facilitate changing language practices. Therefore, it should not be excluded that the culture and practice of multilingualism played an essential role in her desire to master Turkish at a high level of expression.

Meri, who belongs to the first generation, shares striking similarities in language attitudes with second-generation consultants who have internalised and embraced the prevailing language ideologies that shape their language behaviour. This suggests that the boundaries between generations in terms of language attitudes are not fixed but rather fluid, contingent upon external factors (upbringing, educational background, and level of engagement in civic activities) and an internal set of individual values (attitudes towards language learning and multilingualism).

Another insight into the mechanisms of intergenerational attitude formation is provided by Mordo, a second-generation consultant, whose attitudes towards Judeo-Spanish and rejection of learning and speaking the language are at the extreme negative end of the attitude spectrum.

> **6-60. Mordo**: I never learned, I was not taught Djudeo-Espanyol. Because my grandfather, my mother's father was the leader of the association named *Vatandaş Türkçe Konuş*, meaning *Citizen, Speak Turkish!*. He was a nationalist, Turkish

> nationalist. He didn't let my parents speak, my parents and my grandparents, speak Djudeo-Espanyol near me. I never heard Djudeo-Espanyol till the age of, let me say, 12 or 13. Then I learned, I didn't learn, but I began to understand it. Because of course, although they did not speak Ladino in front of me but, in certain things that the didn't want me to understand, they spoke among themselves, or they spoke with their parents; not with my mother's father but with other parents and I heard something. But this was never my language. [2nd-m-59-passive-fam1]

On his maternal grandparents' side, there were family members who, just like Meri, did not challenge homogenisation ideologies, showcasing their loyalty and displaying their sense of nationalism by adhering to the *Citizen, Speak Turkish!* campaign as discussed in Section 6.3. This adherence is depicted here as a deliberate act of allegiance to the Turkish state, manifested primarily by prohibiting family members to speak Judeo-Spanish. Mordo's delayed and indirect exposure to Judeo-Spanish (overheard conversations and exposure to it as a code language) led to a reported disconnection between his personal identity and the language itself evidenced by the phrase "*But this was never my language"*. For most of his adult life, Mordo admits to having reproduced his grandparents' and his father's negative attitudes towards Judeo-Spanish.

> **6-61. Mordo**: My father, you know [emphasing tone], spoke very good Turkish. He had Turkish friends. He read two newspapers everyday of Turkish like *Cumhuriyet* [Tk. 'Republik'] and *Milliyet* ['Nation'], some cult newspapers. He, every week, when I was 12 or 13 years of age, gave me books to read like Maksim Gorky, Dostoevsky, Victor Hugo and so on, in Turkish. For his age, and for his generation, he was an educated man. But he had some, let me say, solutions in his mind, which were not true after certain time; but he changed them as well when he got older. [2nd-m-59-passive-fam1]

Mordo's use of the discourse marker *you know* emphasises his tone and serves to assert from the onset that his father, unlike many other Turkish Sephardim of his generation, *"spoke very good Turkish"*, had Turkish friends, and read prominent Turkish newspapers. He wants to ensure that I, as the interviewer, understand and acknowledge this distinction between his fathers' linguistic, social, and cultural integration and that of others, thus challenging any preconceived notions or common knowledge about the linguistic abilities of Turkish Sephardim of his generation. Moreover, Mordo's father actively focused on ensuring that he acquired a high level of proficiency in Turkish. The remark *"he had some, let me say, solutions in his mind, which were not true after a certain time"* alludes to the dynamic evolution of his father's attitudes towards Sephardic values and the Judeo-Spanish language over time. Although Mordo's overt attitudes towards Judeo-Spanish have moved towards the positive end of the spectrum, he reveals, like Meri (cf. 6-58), intricate covert layers in his perceptions when hearing Judeo-Spanish.

> **6-62. Mordo**: So it is very irritating for me now still when I hear from a very young person a word like *maltekére* 'does not like you' during his Turkish speech. [2nd-m-

59-passive-fam1]

The speaker's evident emotional discomfort and irritation upon hearing Judeo-Spanish expressions underscores internalised ideologies towards maintaining linguistic purity and avoiding language mixing.

> **6-63. Mordo**: I can, actually talk Ladino. But there is something else, you know, I begin to tell it now. After this age, in our family people who talk Ladino, were thought that they were from the lower class. This, you know, this is something that was not talked openly but we, the children, could understand. And this is through, for example, when I see somebody in my age, or maybe even younger than my age, using Ladino words, not for joking but to tell something within the Turkish conversation, I still get irritated. You know? [2nd-m-59-passive-fam1]

Mordo's acknowledgment that he can *actually* speak Judeo-Spanish comes as a surprise at that point in the interview, especially after Mordo has repeatedly expressed his preference for conducting the interview in English. This disclosure, which was made almost as if revealing a secret, highlights an emotional response and a new level of awareness and attitudes towards Judeo-Spanish among the Sephardim. Moreover, Mordo notes that this attitude towards Judeo-Spanish was implicitly understood by the children in the family, highlighting how language ideologies were passed down through social cues and family interactions rather than direct communication. The children internalised these attitudes without them being overtly conveyed. These tacitly ingrained beliefs within the family's dynamics re-surface today in the form of strong emotional responses.

Mordo expresses irritation when peers or younger individuals use Judeo-Spanish words in a Turkish conversation for purposes other than humour. This reaction recalls the AIU ideologies and migration dynamics (cf. § 6.2.1; 6.2.2) that associated Judeo-Spanish with lower social classes. As discussed in Section 6.2.2, as a young man, Mordo witnessed the convergence of different social classes in youth clubs, highlighting essential moments in his socialisation that have influenced his language use and perceptions. Moreover, Mordo's irritation could be a result of his internalised discomfort and possibly a sense of embarrassment and shame associated with the language, which persists even when it is used by others in a contemporary context. Moreover, it can also point to his frustration at his language insecurities of not being able to speak Judeo-Spanish fluently, an insight offered by his daughter's perspective. Despite his overt self-reported negative attitudes towards Judeo-Spanish, his daughter, Suzan[148], revealed that Mordo loves and often listens to music in Judeo-Spanish: *"My father actually loves it"*.

[148] [3rd-f-22-Spanish-fam1]

Perla, Mordo's mother, provides a more nuanced insight into the origins of Mordo's negative attitudes towards Judeo-Spanish. According to her, their family's decision to adopt Turkish at home stemmed from a profound fear of openly embracing their heritage language. According to Perla, this fear was rooted in the traumatic experiences of her father, Mordo's grandfather, who was conscripted into forced labour in Anatolia in 1941[149]:

> **6-64. Perla**: Malorozaménte. Estan urasheándo múcho kon mozótros. I aóra en día. I aóra en día. Úvo el tyémpo de las gérras seγúnda i la priméra, entendítes? A tódos los no-túrkos ke son, no sólo djudíos, ay djudíos, gréγos, arménis, no se kuálo, A akéyos loz tomáron, loz mandáron a Anadó, pára ke áγan soldát, soldát, askerlík. Esto s'eskapó, dospués dishéron ke el, el el país se sta emprovesyéndo. El tyémpo de la gérra estó avlándo, esto, se sta emprovesyéndo. Tyene menestér de monéda. De ken van a tomár?! De los túrkos, no. De mozós, del gréγo, del erméni, no se kuálo. Ya entedítes? El ke no púdo dár úna sóma, los embyó a Anadól a partír pyédras. Mi pádre se fwe. Se fue ayá. Lo mandáron, no tenía éste kárar de monéda. Esto tódo es un pasáje en la vída. Pórke mozótros, malorozaménte --- aóra ya tenémoz un Izraél, ke moz puedémos ir ayá, ke es muéstro país, áma akí yá mos, yá mos auzímos. Sémos ke akí nasímos, ke akí mos engrandesímos, meldímos. No, no mos puéden arankár d'akí!
>
> ('Unfortunately [we are afraid]. They are always bothering us. Even nowadays. Even nowadays. There was the time of the first and second wars, you understand? They took all the non-Turks, not just Jews, there were Jews, Greeks, Armenians, you name it. They took them and sent them to Anatolia to be soldiers, soldiers, conscripted. This finished, then they said the country was becoming poorer. During the war, they said this, that is getting poorer. It needs money. Who are they going to take it from?! Not from the Turks. From us, from the Greeks, the Armenians, you name it. You understand? Those who couldn't pay a sum were sent to Anatolia to break stones. My father went. He went there. They sent him because he didn't have that kind of money. This is all a passage in life. Because, unfortunately for us --- now we have Israel, where we can go, which is our country, but we already got used here. We were born here, we grew up here, we studied here. No, they can't uproot us from here.') [1st-f-88-fluent-fam1]

Perla's narrative provides crucial context for understanding the historical and emotional backdrop against which Mordo's negative attitudes towards Judeo-Spanish developed. His father's negative attitudes towards Judeo-Spanish and insistence on his children learning perfect Turkish likely stemmed unconsciously from the hardships his own parents experienced, particularly his father's forced labour in Anatolia and the imposition of the *Wealth Tax* in 1942 (cf. § 6.2.4). These events were covered in *kayadés* (cf. § 6.3.1), and while not explicitly transmitted across generations, they were implicitly conveyed through practices and positive attitudes towards Turkish. Perla's account

[149] In 1941, Jewish and Christian men of military age were conscripted into special army reserve labour units in remote areas of Anatolia, where many died due to harsh conditions. The forced labour policy lasted for several years until the end of the war, after which the labourers were gradually released and allowed to return to their homes and communities (Baer 2020: 156).

underscores that the prohibition on speaking Judeo-Spanish was a powerful incentive for not transmitting the language to their children, rooted in the fear of repercussions for challenging prevailing ideologies like the *Citizen speak Turkish!* campaign.

> **6-65. Perla**: E aún tyémpo, el tyémpo de la gérra seγúnda, akí kitáron úna ley, ke maz de túrko no van avlár ningúnos. Po-- por esto, por esto, miz íjíkos no sáven el espanyól. No les ambezímos. Mos, mó loz defendyéron.
>
> ('At one time, during the Second World War, they passed a law here that no other language but Turkish was to be spoken by all. Because of this, my children don't know [Judeo-]Spanish. We didn't teach them. They prohibited us.') [1st-f-88-fluent-fam1]

This narrative confirms the results discussed in Section 6.3 and 6.3.1 regarding the mechanisms of intergenerational transmission of traumatic language experiences and fear as the cause of changing social and linguistic practices. These two intergenerational perspectives not only shed light on the different external factors that can shape attitudes, but also point to variation in attitudes in the same individual depending on their different levels of consciousness and life stages.

In Mordo's discourse, notable contradictions emerge regarding his perspectives on language mixing. While his irritation towards language mixing is evident in narrative 6-63, subsequent segments of his narrative reveal a more nuanced and favourable stance. As he discusses his inclination to incorporate Judeo-Spanish words into his Turkish writing, Mordo highlights a distinct language practice that underscores conflicting linguistic attitudes. These contradictions result from the contradicting multi-layered and varying language ideologies that I have observed at different levels of awareness.

> **6-66. Mordo**: Because it is in our culture. It's funny. To make it funny and show our cultural difference, the way that the Jews look at the life, even in the worst occasions find a way to laugh and to be happy about it and use it in their languages. This is why I use those words. [2nd-m-59-passive-fam1]

Mordo's accounts here shows yet another aspect, namely the speaker's recognition of the cultural significance attached to these individual words. It implies that Judeo-Spanish becomes a vehicle for reflecting cultural uniqueness and conveying Jewish perspectives on shared experiences. Humour emerges as the domain in which Mordo most vividly exemplifies this perspective.

> **6-67. Mordo**: We usually speak Ladino, I also use some sentences to make fun. To make fun. I heard them and because I like them, I learned them. Because Ladino, maybe I'm right, maybe I'm wrong, Ladino is a very interesting, you know, has a package of very interesting culture. Like kidding with yourself. This is different way of thinking, humanistic way of thinking. You cannot do it in Turkish as good as Ladino. Kidding with ourselves. You know, when you say something to a friend in Turkish the same word, it's like a curse. But when it's used in Ladino it's like a joke. The same word! [2nd-m-59-passive-fam1]

Mordo's change in discourse in reference to humour in Judeo-Spanish reveals a different narrative from that seen in the previous paragraphs. Mordo's interest in these humorous

sentences stems from a genuine enjoyment of them. This positive sentiment towards Judeo-Spanish alludes to an actual personal affinity for the language. His use of expressions like *"very interesting culture"* paired with "*this is different way of thinking"* emphasises the cultural depth he associates with Judeo-Spanish. Furthermore, this phrase not only underscores its distinctiveness, but also accentuates the unique perspective it offers for self-reflection and humour, in line with the results in Section 5.6. Mordo's emphasis on cultural elements and linguistic nuances demonstrates an awareness of the multifaceted role that Judeo-Spanish plays in shaping identity in interaction. By referencing *"a humanistic way of thinking"* Mordo underscores how Judeo-Spanish imparts a distinct mindset and contributes to a broader humanistic outlook. These attitudes stem from a different set of positive ideologies regarding Judeo-Spanish, which have evolved over the past four decades (cf. § 2.3.7). This shift is influenced by the increased international recognition of minority languages and the heightened attention Judeo-Spanish received around the 500th anniversary of Jewish settlement in the Ottoman Empire. Additionally, there have been shifts in public discourse regarding Turkish Jews and their language.

When asked about his language preference in terms of sound, Mordo chose Judeo-Spanish, indicating a personal affinity for its phonetic qualities despite his earlier irritation with language mixing.

> **6-68. Mordo**: I like the sounding of Ladino, is a wonderful language. It's a language of people.[...] For me, it's, you know, when I hear Ladino I feel a bit sensible as well, you know. It's like a family language. It's not my family's language but it's a family language. A group language, it's a culture. [2nd-m-59-passive-fam1]

Here Mordo further elucidates what seemed like an explicit denial of a bond with Judeo-Spanish in his previous statement (cf. 6-60) *"But this was never my language"*. In this paragraph, his assertion that Ladino is a *"wonderful language"* reflects his admiration for its intrinsic aesthetic and linguistic attributes. The phrases: *"it's a language of people", "family language", "group language", and "a culture"* reflect the connection he perceives between Judeo-Spanish and Sephardic collective identity and cultural heritage. The emotional response that Judeo-Spanish elicits in Mordo upon hearing it suggests a deep-rooted connection between the language and the consultant's feelings. However, despite Mordo's affirmative view of Ladino and its multifaceted roles and despite his desire to learn it, he would not change anything in his or his family's language behaviour if those changes would affect his Turkish pronunciation.

> **6-69. Mordo**: I wish I could learn Ladino, but still if it was going to affect my Turkish pronunciation I wouldn't like, want it. Because I believe I speak good Turkish, I write in Turkish. [2nd-m-59-passive-fam1]

This acknowledgment reveals an internal conflict between his desire to learn Judeo-Spanish and his reluctance to compromise his well-established proficiency in Turkish, should he be compelled to choose between the two. The speaker's emphasis on his strong Turkish language skills underscores the importance he places on maintaining his existing linguistic abilities, as highlighted by his statement: *"Because I believe I speak good Turkish".* This stance is shared by all consultants, except one (cf. 6-56. Luna)

Mordo's narrative provides an excellent example of how personal experiences and societal influences intersect to shape a hierarchy of attitudes towards Judeo-Spanish, resulting from ideological ranking. This ranking "enables the identities of the more powerful group to become less recognisable" (Bucholtz & Hall 2004: 372). It also underscores how intergenerational trauma and the fear of repercussions play a crucial role in the way these ideological rankings are internalised and mirrored into contradictory and simultaneously positive and negative language attitudes and practices.

6.4.1 Lenses on Judeo-Spanish

Drawing on insights gained in Section 3.3.6, this section examines how ideological lenses on Judeo-Spanish are reflected in speakers' language attitudes, perceptions, emotions, beliefs, and evaluations within the broader ideological landscape (cf. Gal & Irvine 2019).

A main characteristic affecting the perception of the status of Judeo-Spanish is its abundance of contact elements, reflecting multiple layers of linguistic contact and its mixed nature (Altabev 2003; Gerson 1983; 1986). Since Pulido's *philosephardism campaign* (cf. § 3.5.2), Judeo-Spanish has been viewed through two major ideological lenses: *purist* (X is the only correct way of speaking) and *essentialist* (to be X, you have to speak X). While language variation, code-mixing and code-switching has been identified in this study as the prevalent stimulus for negative attitudes within the first category, 'authenticity' emerged as the dominant discursive element in the second category.

Understanding speaker insecurity

Crosslinguistically, there are prevalent negative attitudes towards variation driven by language ideologies that promote the idea of linguistic purity and resistance to change. In the Sephardic context, variation is particularly stigmatised. On the one hand, linguistic variation is perceived as a consequence of the imposition of the dominant language, which contributed to the decline of the heritage language in the first place. On the other hand, the process of language attrition within the community has resulted in the formation

of *hierarchies of authenticity* among different generations and profiles of speakers, creating a continuum of varying language competencies (Sallabank 2013). The interruption of intergenerational language transmission and the subsequent decline in proficiency among younger speakers contribute to a sense of linguistic insecurity (Abtahian & Quinn 2017: 137) observed across all generations. Labov (1966) initially conceptualised linguistic insecurity as a discrepancy between individuals' idealised form of language and their actual linguistic competence. Meyerhoff (2018) defined linguistic insecurity as:

> [s]peakers' feeling that the variety they use is somehow inferior, ugly or bad. Negative attitudes to one's own variety expressed in aesthetic or moral terms. (Meyerhoff 2018: 192)

The perception of Judeo-Spanish as a deficient, inferior language, as a language in decay and deformation, as "gibberish" (Farhi: 1937: 157) was the result of purist ideologies (cf. § 6.2.1). This attitude towards Judeo-Spanish, the result of the dominant culture's ability to impose its status on the subordinate Sephardic minority (cf. Bourdieu 1991) was reproduced by both Sephardic intellectuals and community members (Altabev 2003; Gerson 1983; 1986), instilling insecurity in speakers and marking a change in intergenerational language transmission. Drawing on the results of Abtahian & Quinn[150] (2017: 137), I have identified four major types of language insecurity among the Sephardim:

1) insecurity of fluent speakers,
2) insecurity of semi-speakers with reduced language proficiency
3) insecurity of non-speakers who chose Spanish over Judeo-Spanish
4) insecurity of semi- and non-speakers whose cultural authenticity is questioned.

These four types of linguistic insecurity have further ramifications which will be discussed below.

1) Insecurity of fluent speakers

Roza's motivation to attend classes at the Cervantes Institute was driven by internalised attitudes that Judeo-Spanish is the language of the uneducated masses, lacking standardisation and characterised by high variation in both structure and script. Despite

[150] Abtahian & Quinn's (2017: 137-151) categories have been reformulated and slightly modified to fit the contextual backgrounds of the Sephardim. These categories were:
1) the insecurity of speakers who were punished for speaking their native languages,
2) the insecurity of young speakers who might be criticised by older fluent speakers for not speaking the language correctly,
3) the insecurity of non-speakers whose identity/authenticity/solidarity is questioned due to not speaking their ancestral languages.

being one of the most fluent speakers of Judeo-Spanish and highly active in language maintenance, Roza acknowledged a lifelong insecurity when it came to writing in Judeo-Spanish. To address this insecurity, she decided to take Spanish classes in order gain practice in writing Judeo-Spanish, even if that had to happen through Spanish courses.

> **6-70. Roza**: Me, me ayudó, me ayudó múncho al eskrivír ke m'ambezí, no savía, porke eskriví a la priméra klása, en priméro díshe: <Estó entendyéndo tódo lo ke díze la profesöra>. Ma no es kómo díɣo yo, ay múnchas diferénsyas en avlándo.
>
> ('It helped me, it helped me a lot with writing because I learned, I didn't know, because I wrote in the first class, at first I said, I understand everything the teacher says. But it's not like I say it, there are many differences in speaking.') [1st-f-68-fluent-ind]

Roza realised during her Spanish course that the differences between Judeo-Spanish and Spanish were greater than she had anticipated. However, she acknowledged that the Spanish course helped her demystify the imagined hurdles of writing Judeo-Spanish. Previously, she wrote in Turkish script and was unaware of the existing standardised script.

Mendi's insecurities manifest in two ways: firstly, though a lack of consistent language practice, and secondly, though an underlying uncertainty shaped by purist ideologies that disapprove of code-mixing.

> **6-71. Mendi**: Oy, kuándo me kéro eksprimír yo, kon byérvos adekuados me eksprímo en túrko. [...] Sigúro ke no está abastándo. I pára dar úna konferensía en Espánya, ke fué el ótro ányo en Madríd o en Tolédo, túve el menestér de karishtiréar [> Tk. *karıştırmak* 'to mix']. Sáves karishtireár? De mirár al diksionário. Kómo me puédo eksprimír i topár un byérvo mas adekuádo ke el lo ke se.
>
> ('Today, when I want to express myself with appropriate words, I express myself in Turkish. [...] Surely, it [Judeo-Spanish] is not enough. And to give a conference in Spain, which was last year in Madrid or Toledo, I had to mix. Do you know *karishtiréar* [> Tk. *karıştırmak* 'to mix']? [I had to] to look in the dictionary. How can I express myself and find a more appropriate word than the one I know.' [1st-m-70-fluent-ind]

Mendi articulates a sentiment of not being adequately equipped in Judeo-Spanish, as indicated by his statement *"sigúro ke no está abastándo"* ('Surely, it is not enough'), revealing his awareness of what he perceives as a shortcoming in Judeo-Spanish. Importantly, his insecurity does not arise solely from his inability to recall suitable words; rather, it stems from a desire to impose a purist perspective on Judeo-Spanish. This viewpoint seeks to preserve a version of Judeo-Spanish that is free from Turkish loanwords, as evidenced in his phrase *"un byérvo mas adekuádo ke el lo ke se"* ('a more appropriate word than the one I know').

The prevalent perception of Judeo-Spanish by the first generation as an "impure", "contaminated", and "broken language"— a perception which stems from code-mixing, code-switching, lack of standardisation, and the primarily oral transmission of the language — has led to increased attentional control among speakers.

> **6-72. Roza**: Aɣóra me, me sto dándo a la péna pára no mesklár palávras túrkas al avlár, porké kéro avlárlo buéno.
>
> ('Now I am trying not to mix Turkish words when I speak, because I want to speak it well.') [1st-f-68-fluent-ind]

Out of 22 first-generation consultants, six men and nine women reported taking Spanish courses to address their insecurities in Judeo-Spanish. For most of them, these courses aimed to prevent further language erosion, provide practice at writing in Judeo-Spanish, and expand their vocabulary. This choice, however, seems to have heightened awareness of the distinctions between Judeo-Spanish and Spanish, further intensifying this generation's attitudes towards the various layers of linguistic contact within Judeo-Spanish, as noted by Rita.

> **6-73. Rita**: Ma es diferénte la língua muéstra. Porké mozós avlámos aryénto de ésta língua i el fransé, i en espanyól, i en túrko lo *karıshtıreámos* tódo. Yáni, djústo, djústo no lo avlámos el espanyól. Ma ya entendémos. [1st-m-81-fluent-ind]
>
> ('But our language is different [from Peninsular Spanish]. Because, in this language, we speak a mix of French and [Judeo-]Spanish and Turkish, we mix everything. So, we don't speak it as we should. But we understand it.') [1st-m-81-fluent-ind]

Six consultants — five male and one female — perceived the multi-layered contact elements in Judeo-Spanish, along with the practices of code-mixing and code-switching, as positive and enriching. They viewed these features as enabling Judeo-Spanish to encompass diverse worldviews and cultures, as illustrated by Mendi.

> **6-74. Mendi:** No ez mesklatína ke, ke kyéro dezír, áma un amalgám kulturál. Esto no se yáma úna dekadénsya, síno ke úna evolusyón. Úna evulushyón de la língua úna --- evolushyón de la kultúra ke syémpre se está evaluándo tambyén.
>
> ('It's not a mixing that I mean, but rather a cultural amalgam. This isn't called a decadence, but rather an evolution. An evolution of the language --- an evolution of the culture that is always evolving as well.') [1st-m-70-fluent-ind]

2) Insecurity of semi-speakers with reduced language proficiency

Language insecurity is predominantly observed among second-generation consultants. Neama, who was raised in a family that shifted to Turkish during the early years of the Republic, experienced Judeo-Spanish primarily as a code language, or when used selectively within the family, particularly with members who were less inclined to embrace the language shift. However, being part of the Jewish community meant regular exposure to Judeo-Spanish: "*Un póko ya oyía, no múncho"* ('I was hearing a bit, not much'). After getting married, Neama experienced a higher level of exposure to Judeo-Spanish. Nevertheless, she refrained from actively speaking the language with her friends, as it was not a language they felt comfortable speaking.

> **6-75. Neama**: Avlár, no'stáva popülér. No'stávamos avlándo. Ấntro no, no avlámos múncho. No avlámos múncho. Un póko, kómo te dizer, tyenémos únos kalıpés [< Tk. 'expressions'] de avlár un póko. Kuálo dizímos? Kómo ladíno únas kózas. En el túrko

avlámos, un póko metémos. Ya puéren avlár, áma no kéren avlár. Yo éste módo ésto pensándo. Se'stan avervuesándo. No se de ke. [...] Me paresé a éyos estarán vinyándo, se'stan auervesándo kuándo van a avlár ésto língua <no es buéno língua>. De ke? No se. Áma ésta bayayí [> Tk. '*bayağı*- cheap, vulgar'] kómo se díze. [2nd-f-49-semi-fam3]

('Speaking, wasn't popular. We were not speaking. Among ourselves, we didn't speak much. We didn't speak much. A bit, how can I say, we had some expressions for speaking a little. What did we say? Some things in Ladino. We spoke in Turkish, mixing in a little bit. They [her friends] can speak but don't want to. I think this way. They get embarrassed. I don't know why. [...] It seems to me they get embarrassed when they are going to speak this language <it's not a good language>. Why? I don't know. But it's considered cheap, as they say.') [2nd-f-49-semi-fam3]

The paragraph above reveals three interconnected layers of linguistic insecurity shared by Neama and her peers. Firstly, she points to an individual insecurity regarding their ability to speak Judeo-Spanish fluently and accurately. She mentions that they would often be subjected to family teasing or hear comments like: *"Estávan dizyéndo, el language* [English] *ke no se, no'stan avlándo elmózo"* ('They were saying, the language, I don't know, they are not speaking beautifully'). This aspect is further corroborated by another episode in her narrative in which a senior co-worker, who was proficient in Judeo-Spanish, playfully teased her about her language use.

6-76. Neama: Un día, yo me hué ayá kíje éste módo, no víde a äl akí estáva, únas kózas no'sto no me'sta akua-- akodrándo, díshe un boz, el: <Dilinizi eşek arısı soksun! [> Tk. an idiom, 'may your tongue get stung by a bumblebee!] No'stas avlándo buéno! Ken ésta avlándo?> [2nd-f-49-semi-fam3]

('One day, I went there and I don't know how it happened, I didn't see who was there, and some things I can't quite remember, but a voice said, he: <'May your tongue get stung by a bumblebee! You're not speaking well! Who is speaking?>') [2nd-f-49-semi-fam3]

Neama acknowledges that receiving feedback from more proficient speakers has induced feelings of insecurity and discouraged her from actively speaking Judeo-Spanish in the past. Within her own family, Neama's and her husband's way of speaking Judeo-Spanish was met with reactions that discouraged them, as evidenced by comments made by Neama's mother-in-law, Lili, on her son's partial fluency in the language.

6-77. Lili: Yo avláva en Espanyól. Yo a Albért mísmo lo avláva en Espanyól. Si, pára ke se ambezáran. A ver, áma avlár no se, te píshas de la rísa kuándo ávlan.

('I spoke in [Judeo-]Spanish. I spoke to Albert himself in [Judeo-]Spanish. Yes, so that they would learn. But, you see, when they speak, I don't know, you burst out laughing.') [1st-f-87-fluent-fam3]

Secondly, the desire to speak Turkish without an accent added to the pressure individuals felt to prioritise Turkish fluency over using Judeo-Spanish: *"no puéren avlár Turko elmózo"* ('they cannot speak Turkish beautifully'). Thirdly, due to both internal (purist) and external (essentialist) ideologies, her generation developed negative

attitudes towards Judeo-Spanish, regarding Judeo-Spanish as inferior, cheap, and vulgar and leading to an additional layer of insecurity about whether Judeo-Spanish itself was a "good" language (cf. Abtahian & Quinn 2017: 140).

Disfluency markers (hesitations, repetitions, self-corrections, pauses) point to Neama's level of language attrition (cf. Schmid 2011: 21-23). The increased attentional control observed in Neama's narration suggest an additional indicator of the internalised pressure she felt regarding her level of language attrition. Despite her insistence on responding in Judeo-Spanish, she continually apologised for her perceived limited knowledge and numerous mistakes. Throughout the interview, Neama displayed self-consciousness about what she perceived as a good level of Judeo-Spanish. Her insecurity thus stemmed from the discrepancy between her perception of good language competence and her actual linguistic abilities.

Speakers' insecurity represents both sites of ideological production and metapragmatic commentary (cf. Kroskrity 2004: 506), the latter being evidenced by speaker's heightened awareness of the ideological processes at play, as highlighted in Viki's narrative.

> **6-78. Viki**: Yo lez avlí, komo a mi ay muy póka djénte, porké avía i un pensé en la Turkía, avlár en djudéo espanyól no ez ermózo, no es ermozo ke sta avlándo porké lo avlávan négro. En savyéndo lo buéno, no lo avlávan kómo benadám. I en las káyes, tódos dizían <ávla túrko!> Éste módo. Si mozos oían --- éra ésta fráza. Ésto mos embarasáva i mos espantávamos. Áma yo lez dezía a los íjos: <Yo en káza vos va a ávlar djudéo espanyól, vozós avlá en túrko, no problém!>.
>
> ('I spoke [Judeo-Spanish] to them [her children], there are very few people like me, because in Turkey there was a thought that speaking Judeo-Spanish is not beautiful, it's not beautiful because they spoke it poorly. Knowing it well, they didn't speak it properly. And, in the streets, everyone would say: <'Speak Turkish!'> like this. If they heard us, that's what they would say. This embarrassed us and made us scared. But I told my children: <At home, I will speak to you in Judeo-Spanish, you speak Turkish, no problem!>')

The phrase *"E en savyéndo lo buéno, no lo avlávan kómo benadám"* ('Knowing it well, they didn't speak it properly') highlights a discrepancy between the perceived proficiency in and actual use of Judeo-Spanish, even among those considered fluent speakers. Viki's frustration stems from the perceived impoverishment of the language due to people's lack of motivation in maintaining Judeo-Spanish at a high level of expression. Her narrative, too, mirrors both the ideologies of language purism and linguistic homogenisation. Additionally, she acknowledges that external pressure to speak Turkish contributed to the shift away from Judeo-Spanish. Both Neama's (cf. 6-76) and Viki's (6-78) remarks underscore the complex interplay between different types of ideologies that shape language insecurity and the shared perception of appropriate language use.

Another aspect of language insecurity stems from changes within Judeo-Spanish over the past thirty years. There was a noticeable increase in the use of Spanish loanwords during this time, leading to confusion among speakers, as in the case of Edna.

> **6-79. Edna**: Puéde ser están tomándo del espanyól modérno. Esto no se. No se si akél vyérvo es del espanyól modérno o del ladíno. Eso no se, ma lo ke kéro savér es --- Kréo ke káda vyérvo tyéne --- doz módos de --- de dizírlo e el espanyól aktüél, de oy i el espanyól vyéjo muéstro. Por ekzémpyo ay únos kuantos vyérvos ke se, trokár, kambyár, por ekzémpyo. Mozótros no dizímos *kambyár*, dizímos *trokár*. *Trokár* ahóra no s-está empleándo. A lo ke se.
>
> ('They might be taking from modern Spanish. I don't know this. I don't know if that verb is from modern Spanish or from Ladino. I don't know that, but what I want to know is --- I believe each word has --- two ways of --- saying it and one is the current Spanish, from today, and the old [Judeo-]Spanish of ours. For example, there are a few verbs that I know, *trokár*, *kambyár*, for example. We don't say *kambyár* we say *trokár* 'to change'. *Trokár* is not being used now, as far as I know.') [2nd-f-60-fluent-fam9]

In this excerpt, Edna shares her perception of a change in Judeo-Spanish vocabulary while reading the monthly Judeo-Spanish supplement, *El Amaneser*. Her reported insecurity arises from her uncertainty about the accurate rendition of specific words. Motivated by her desire to maintain the authenticity of Judeo-Spanish, she resolved to refer to a Judeo-Spanish dictionary which could aid her in better understanding the diverse lexical variations in contemporary Judeo-Spanish. The predominant attitude toward Judeo-Spanish among the second generation is one of regret and nostalgia for an imagined past in which Judeo-Spanish was "pure" and was commonly used as a spoken vernacular in daily life. This regret stems from a sense of incomplete language ownership and a resulting sense of incomplete 'authenticity'.

3) Insecurity of non-speakers who choose Spanish over Judeo-Spanish

The attitudes of the third generation towards Judeo-Spanish highlight a contemporary perspective influenced by globalisation, digitalisation, and an evolving understanding of identity. For this generation, Judeo-Spanish has transitioned from a traditional means of communication to a symbolic emblem of heritage. Their discourse exhibits a blend of pride and curiosity, but also regret over non-transmission and feelings of exclusion (cf. § 5.3.2) revealing how they navigate the dichotomy between their linguistic heritage and the consequences of non-transmission. This cohort's attitudes are also shaped by a growing awareness of language shift and generally positive evaluations of the language. Treysi indicates that, unlike her parents' and grandparents' generation, her own generation does not view the mixed nature of Judeo-Spanish negatively.

> **6-80. Treysi**: From our generation, I don't think anyone has negative. It's just so outdated for us. It's more like a joke when we speak or when we mention Ladino. But it's never negative. If I had to pick one of them, I would say positive. [3rd-f-40-passive-fam11]

Treysi's accounts corroborate the findings in Section 5.6, which indicate that Judeo-Spanish is predominantly used in a humorous context: *"like a joke".* The perception of Judeo-Spanish as a relic of the past and unfit for contemporary communication — *"it's just so outdated for us"* — represents the predominant attitude among this generational cohort. As discussed in Section 5.3.2, consultants in this group often turn to what they call "modern Spanish" either as a springboard for their Judeo-Spanish learning process or as what they perceive as the closest approximation to Judeo-Spanish. Among the third generation, I have observed a process of blurring of boundaries between Spanish and Judeo-Spanish, as shown in Rafi's narrative.

> **6-81. Rafi**: Since I was very little I really listened a lot to the Italian and Spanish songs. So that's because it was kind of my fantasy, so to say, to speak those languages. And I really enjoy speaking them, hearing them, communicating with them a lot. In Spanish but also in Italian. [3rd-m-22-neo-fam3]

Rafi's account indicates a strong personal motivation and an aspirational connection to both Spanish and Italian. His childhood *fantasy* likely fuelled his desire to learn and use these languages and through them to access Judeo-Spanish. This blurring of boundaries is also an indicator of the resilience of heritage speakers in ensuring access to important aspects of their cultural heritage. Yıldız's narrative, however, gives insight into a further, more nuanced level of interpretation.

> **6-82. Yıldız**: Preféro espanyól modérno, aún no me gústa múcho el ladíno. Pórke ay múnchas palábras diferéntes, úsa de palábra diferénte. Kuándo léo álgo en ládino es un póko difísil, o ablár kon mis abuélos, avéses téngo ke desír <ke díses, no intyéndo ke estás ablándo!> Pórke kómo las palábras i fráses son diferéntes en ládino para mi, porké no se, talvés, peró kuándo ablámos, me sentí kómo éso. Kómo kuándo pregúnto: <kómo se yáma éste bólsa?> Dísen: <chánta>. <Chánta no, chánta es túrko, no es chánta, es bólsa!> <No, es chánta!> I por éso tenémos syémpre éste konversasyón i no kéro asér ésta konversasyón pórke me gustaría aprendér espanyól modérno i no kyéro intervenír mi espanyól kon ótras lénguas diferántes.
>
> ('I prefer Modern Spanish, I still don't like Ladino very much. Because there are many different words, the use of different words. When I read something in Ladino it is a little difficult, or when I speak with my grandparents, sometimes I have to say: <What are you saying? I don't understand what you are talking about!> Because the words and phrases are different in Ladino for me, I don't know, maybe, but when we talk, I feel like that. Like when I ask: <What is this bag called?> They say, <chánta>. Chánta no, *chánta* is Turkish, it's not *chánta*, it's *bólsa*>.<No, it's *chánta*!> And that's why we always have this conversation and I don't want to have this conversation because I would like to learn modern Spanish and I don't want to mix my [Peninsular] Spanish with other different languages'). [3rd-f-30-Spanish-fam13]

At first glance, Yıldız seems to prefer Spanish over Judeo-Spanish based on internalised ideologies of language purism, which consider Judeo-Spanish an 'inferior',

‘contaminated’ language due to its multilayered contact influences. However, a more in-depth analysis and triangulation of this account with the previously expressed attitudes of Yıldız and her mother (cf. § 6.3.2) with intra-family language transmission dynamics reveal a more complex interpretation.

The sentence *“aún no me gústa múcho el ladíno”* (‘I still don’t like Ladino very much’) and particularly the adverb *aún* ‘still’ carry significant implications regarding the speaker’s ongoing attitude towards Ladino. It implies that there has been an expectation or possibility that her attitudes might change over time. It hints at a potential hope (from herself or others) that she would grow to appreciate or like Judeo-Spanish more as she became more familiar with it. This hope was one of the reasons why she chose to go to Spain on an Erasmus semester (cf. § 6.2.3). The sentence underscores, however, the fact that this expected change has not occurred, highlighting her inability to develop a greater appreciation for Judeo-Spanish. Contextualising these accounts against the prevailing intergenerational fear of disclosing their Jewish identity in Yıldız’s family, as portrayed in Section 6.3.2, and connecting this context with her continued narrative, reveals a convergence of different types of ideologies in her discourse that may have influenced her current attitudes towards, practices in, and aspirations for Judeo-Spanish.

> **6-83. Yıldız:** Pórke kómo túrko, kómo túrka, kómo me gústa ablár korektaménte, pára mi espanyól móderno es mas kórekta, o mas komún, o mas --- puédo kontinuar, puédo ablár kon ótras persás [personas]. I, kuándo véngo Espánya o Kúba o algún ótro lugár, puédo ablár. Pórke kómo, me entyéndes, nesesíto explikárme en úna léngua kómo túrko, no kyéro tenér ése timidés en espanyól o ótra léngua.
>
> (‘Because like in Turkish, as a Turk, as I like to speak correctly, for me, modern Spanish is more correct, or more common, or more --- I can continue, I can speak with other people. And, when I go to Spain or Cuba or any other place, I can speak. Because, you understand, I need to express myself in a language like in Turkish, I don’t want to have that timidity in [Peninsular] Spanish or another language.’) [3rd-f-30-Spanish-fam13]

Yıldız’s choice of “modern Spanish” over Judeo-Spanish suggests a preference for a standardised, ‘pure’ form of the language. She finds “modern Spanish” to be *more correct* or *more common* indicating an alignment with purist ideologies. However, her emphasis on her positionality — *kómo túrko, kómo túrka, kómo túrko* ‘like in Turkish’, ‘as a Turk’, ‘in a language like Turkish’ — indicates a resurgence of internalised language homogenisation ideologies and the intergenerationally transmitted behavioural pattern of vigilance in speaking Turkish ‘like a Turk’ to eliminate markers of Jewish identity.

This suggests an intergenerational transmission of language insecurity, which I have observed in her mother and which Yıldız identifies here as *timidés* ‘timidity’. Although this timidity might be interpreted from a general perspective of any L2 language learner navigating a new language in conversation, in this context, it points to a particular

phenomenon of intergenerational attitudes, reflecting the broader issue of linguistic insecurity passed down through generations and influenced by historical and social pressures to conform to dominant language norms and conceal minority identities.

In the same vein, if I extend this insight to the interpretation of language attitudes among the second and third generations, I conclude that while attitudes towards Judeo-Spanish resulting from (2) *attitudes resulting from ideologies that reflect national language policies* (cf. § 6.3) involving traumatic language experiences have had the most significant impact on people's behaviour, they have been rendered invisible (covert) by (1) *language ideologies that reflect societal views and social developments* (cf. § 6.2). One possible explanation for their covert nature might be the practice of *kayadés* (keeping quiet) about these traumatic language experiences. Another explanation might lie in the lack of discourse regarding the effects of traumatic events on speakers. Moreover, this phenomenon could also point to a trauma-coping mechanism of self-protection. It appears easier to attribute language shift to an inherent feature of the language (its mixed nature) rather than to the inherent characteristics of the people speaking it (the antisemitic and anti-minority trope of "otherness"). In line with Baker (1992: 41-44), accurately contextualising overt attitudes against speakers' language backgrounds and intergenerational transmission has proven essential. This deeper analysis reveals how historical traumas and social expectations have perpetuated a cycle of linguistic insecurity, compelling different generations to favour languages perceived as 'pure' based on their main feature of being 'unmarked'.

4) Insecurity of non- and semi-speakers whose cultural authenticity is questioned

In line with Abtahian & Quinn's (2017: 143) findings, second-generation and third-generation speakers may experience L2-learner performance anxiety, making them hesitant to learn or use the language in the presence of proficient speakers, as explained in the second category above. This fear of judgment, often based on negative past communication experiences, may even have led to the avoidance of intergenerational interactions in the heritage language altogether. As a result of these processes, semi- and non-speakers often experience a profound sense of incompleteness and lack of authenticity, affecting both their linguistic and social identities.

Among ethnic groups, Jews and Gypsies are often considered the least authentic in terms of the language-and-identity relationship (Myhill 2003: 94). Neither group is associated with a single native language, which nationalist ideologies have historically regarded as a sign of promiscuity. The juxtaposition of authenticity and non-authenticity has been central to nation-state-building since the French Revolution and was ultimately

a basis for the Nazis' extermination policies (cf. § 3.2.1). As Myhill (2003: 95) notes, this ideology results in a hierarchy of authenticity that marginalises entire ethnic groups.

Among the Sephardim, I have recorded an enhanced awareness of the ideologies around authenticity, which is reflected on two contrasting levels. Firstly, in their pursuit of native-like and accentless proficiency in the language of the majority, they engage in a process of *erasure* (cf. Gal & Irvine 2000; § 3.2.5) of features that are inconsistent with the prevailing ideology of language homogenisation towards Turkish. Secondly, the loss of Judeo-Spanish is felt as a loss in cultural authenticity, particularly among the second and third generations (Edwards 2010; Fishman 1964; 1985b; Harris 1985).

Judeo-Spanish lies at the core of how authenticity structures the social space in two directions: as an element of exclusion (X is not a member of Y if they are not an authentic speaker of the language of Y) and as inclusion (X is an authentic member of Y if they speak language of Y). In Ehala's (2018: 104-106) terms, authenticity among Sephardim manifests both as the adoption of change and resistance to it, reflecting the contradictions arising from the process of *minoritarisation* and *majoritarisation* discussed by Blachet (2012: 152-155; 2016: 71). The tension, conflict, and contradictions resulting from this opposition are most visible within the second generation, which exists in a state of limbo between the antagonistic forces and conflicting representations regarding Judeo-Spanish. This generation has neither achieved the authenticity of being perceived as true members of the majority (based on the presence of an accent in Turkish), nor do they seem to have taken conscious agency towards securing the position of Judeo-Spanish as a core element of their identity, as members of the third generations do. (cf. § 5.4.5; § 5.6) The third generation counterbalances loss in authenticity by taking agency in employing Judeo-Spanish on a performative and symbolic level.

6.4.2 Changing attitudes

During the 1970s, the prospects for the survival of Judeo-Spanish were arguably at their lowest ebb. However, a significant shift in attitudes emerged during the 1980s, attributable to several key factors. Firstly, the lifting of the travel ban for Turkish citizens enabled the Turkish Sephardim to travel and experience the benefits of communicating in Judeo-Spanish with Spanish speakers in different countries. Simultaneously, the establishment of the Cervantes Institute in Istanbul in 1991 played a pivotal role in bridging the perceived "difference gap" between Judeo-Spanish and Spanish.

This era also witnessed a surge in scholarly initiatives focused on researching Sephardic culture and language. The perception of Judeo-Spanish as a "worthy" language was notably influenced by the changing international discourses surrounding

endangered languages, particularly in the early 21st century. These external factors ignited a renewed interest in the heritage language within the community itself, as noted by Gerson Şarhon (2011). The heightened attention that Judeo-Spanish received on the international stage significantly influenced how speakers of different generations re-evaluated their linguistic heritage.

In the subsequent analysis, I will examine the cross-generational shifts in attitudes towards Judeo-Spanish as revealed in the narratives of three different generations within a single family: the grandmother, daughter-in-law, and grandson. These individuals serve as representative examples of the evolving attitudes across generations.

Sandy, the grandmother portrays the differences in perception between the time of her youth and today.

> **6-84. Sandy:** No es pänsár kómo d'aγóra. Aγóra ésta ótro módo de pensérios. Tódos kéren savér i todós kéren avlár [Judeo-Spanish]. [...] Agóra k'estámos akeyándo. Ántes no avía! Aγóra estámos avlándo mas múncho de ladíno. [...] Aγóra a mi me sta plazyéndo múncho.
>
> ('It's not like thinking nowadays [refering to the past]. Now, there's another way of thinking. Everyone wants to know and everyone wants to speak [Judeo-Spanish]. [...] Now that we are realising. Before, it wasn't like that! Now we are speaking a lot more Ladino. [...] Now, I am enjoying it a lot.') [1st-f-78-fluent-fam3]

Sandy's perspective reflects a drastic shift in people's attitudes and practice compared to her youth and a growing interest in language acquisition despite reduced proficiency in the language and the imminence of language shift. The sentence *"Aγóra a mi me'sta plazyéndo múncho"* ('Now I am enjoying it a lot') shows a change in her own attitudes towards the positive end of the spectrum. This stance needs to be contextualised in view of the prevailing fear of speaking the language and the practice of *kayadés* in her family, as seen in Section 6.3.2. Sandy's negative attitudes and her decision not to transmit the language and not to "enjoy" speaking it in the past were conditioned by the fear instilled by homogenisation policies, particularly the *Citizen Speak Turkish!* campaign, and the potential repercussions of using a minority language.

Her daughter-in-law Neama's observations regarding attitude shift show a higher level of complexity. On the attitude formation spectrum, Neama is positioned at the point of transition from negative to positive attitudes.

> **6-85. Neama**: Yo kuándo éra chíka no éstava éste kádar, aγóra ya'sta un póko mas, los mansévos aγóra kérän avlár. En eskóla metyéron en espanyól, éste módo. Ésta un póko, mas múncho éstan avlándo. Me sto, me sta paresyándo.
>
> ('When I was little, it wasn't like this. Now it's a bit more; young people now want to speak it. They introduced it in school, this way. It's a bit more, more people are speaking it now. This is what it seems to me.') [1st-f-78-fluent-fam3]

Neama noticed a growing interest in Judeo-Spanish among the younger generation, who are eager to learn it as a second language. In her own family, this renewed enthusiasm

is fuelled by her sons' curiosity and their active efforts to learn Judeo-Spanish alongside Spanish. Notably, both of her sons' studies and professions are unrelated to language. Moreover, their exposure to Judeo-Spanish within the family was not greater than that of the average Sephardic family, which might have led to more favourable attitudes. By triangulating Neama's and Rafi's narratives, it can be concluded that Rafi's motivation to learn Spanish and Judeo-Spanish was purely driven by a desire to connect with his Sephardic heritage.

> **6-86. Neama**: Kon [Rafi[151]] me ambezó ke ésto es ovliγádo de avlár, por mozós. I yo díshe si, tyéne razón. De ke, kuálo me pasó, sáves? De ke no avlímos? A mi, de mi pára mi, me íze muy, muy, kómo se díze, *sinirlendim*. [> Tk. 'I got angry'] De ke no avlí? Ve kuándo yo aγóra estó avlándo kon mis amíγas, mo'stámos riyándo. Múncho mo'stámos riyándo. Estámos dizyándo <Ay, kómo stámos avlándo? Kómo mis mádres. Kómo la grámama>, stámos dizyändo, áma ésto mirándo, mo'stá plazyándo avlár [...] tyenémos aryánto. Kerémos avlár.
>
> ('With [Rafi], I learned that it is necessary for us to speak it. And I said, yes, he is right. Why, what happened, you know? Why didn't we speak? Thinking about this, by myself, I got very, very, how do you say, angry. Why didn't we speak it? Now, when I talk about this with my friends, we laugh. We laugh a lot. We say, <Oh, how are we speaking? Like our mothers. Like our grandmothers>, we say this, but I see, that we enjoy speaking it […], we have it inside, we want to speak.') [2nd-f-49-semi-fam3]

According to Neama, her son Rafi emphasised the significance of preserving, enhancing, and passing on whatever knowledge of Judeo-Spanish she has. His interest in Judeo-Spanish sparked a process of conscious self-reflection regarding the interruption of language transmission. This reflection led to feelings of anger and frustration about the neglect of Judeo-Spanish. With her friends, she found not only a renewed desire to speak the language — *"kerémos avlár"* ('we want to speak') — but also satisfaction in doing so — *"mo'stá plazyándo avlár"* ('we enjoy speaking it'). Moreover, she realised that her connection with Judeo-Spanish had never been severed — *"tyenémos aryánto"* ('we have it inside') — it had always been an integral part of her, in a latent state. The shift in general attitudes towards Judeo-Spanish, coupled with her sons' interest in their heritage language, felt to Neama like a liberation, finally allowing her to speak the language without constraints.

Neama's perception of her language proficiency, like that of many individuals in her generational cohort, changed following her visit to Spain. Her newfound ability to communicate effectively in Judeo-Spanish there, where she realised she was understood, sheds light on the untapped linguistic potential within individuals who were previously unaware of their proficiency or harboured linguistic insecurities in the

[151] The name has been altered in accordance with the anonymisation protocols adhered to in this study.

language. This experienced intelligibility between Judeo-Spanish and Spanish also removed the perceived considerable differences between the two varieties for her.

The factors contributing to evolving attitudes towards Judeo-Spanish, as delineated by Neama, find further substantiation and alignment in the narrative of her son, Rafi.

> **6-87. Rafi**: I remember that I was asking [why they don't speak Judeo-Spanish]. And actually my parents, and also like, my aunt and uncle, they were regarding the language as 'fake Spanish'. So they weren't even considering it as a language to speak. I don't know how they got this mentality but in the recent years they have completely changed their view. Now they say all the time that: <Ladino is very important, because Spanish is spoken throughout the world. Is good to know so you can communicate with more people>. But I remember, in some cases they mentioned Spanish, the Castellano as the real Spanish. Which for me was really complicated to distinguish those in my mind. Because I was really young to understand. […] I think, because, when I started being interested and I also pushed them into this. And I think that also changed their perspective somehow and they realised that. It's important too, especially when they realised it, when they were put into situations where they had to communicate. Because my parents are not fully competent in English, and when somebody speaks Spanish, for example when my brother's Argentinian friend came, they spoke the whole time in Ladino. They saw that they could fully communicate with the people from different places of the world. I think that also made them realise that this language is important. Somehow. [3rd-m-22-neo-fam3]

Rafi recalls that his parents and extended family regarded Judeo-Spanish as "fake Spanish", dismissing it as illegitimate and preferring "Castellano", which they saw as the "real Spanish". This view reflects internalised language ideologies that favour standardised languages over mixed languages like Judeo-Spanish, viewing the latter as less valuable.

However, Rafi notes a significant shift in his family's attitudes in recent years. The same comparative mechanism that once led to the devaluation of Judeo-Spanish is now contributing to its recognition. Initially dismissed for its perceived difference and inferiority to the more prestigious Spanish, Judeo-Spanish is now valued for its similarities to Spanish. This transformation illustrates how the mechanism of *sameness* and *difference* (Bucholtz & Hall 2004), which is central to identity formation, also shapes language attitudes, emphasising the critical role of attitudes in identity formation.

Rafi's narrative also aligns with his mother's, attributing part of this attitudinal shift to his own interest in Judeo-Spanish and his efforts to encourage his family to appreciate and use the language. His enthusiasm and advocacy have likely been pivotal in changing their perceptions, highlighting the profound impact of intergenerational dynamics on language attitudes.

In addition to the factors which have led to a shift in attitudes, another significant catalyst that emerged from the data was the implementation of the *Law of Return* (Bill of June 11, 2015). As discussed in depth in Section 6.2.5, while the law's language requirements sparked numerous discussions within Istanbul's Sephardic community,

they also bestowed significance upon and instilled pride in speaking Judeo-Spanish. This legislation heightened awareness of the inherent value of Judeo-Spanish and Sephardic culture, further contributing to the positive shift in attitudes toward the heritage language.

> **6-88. Salamon**: Aóra está empesándo a notár la --- la importánsya del espanyól, pórke no moz tándo náda la syudanía espanyól, la nasyonád espanyól, ma ántez no, no no dáva, no se dáva tánta emportánsya. Aóra estámos perdyéndo el espanyól i kuándo períaz úna kóza empézaz a dar valór, No?
>
> ('Now they are starting to notice the --- the importance of [Judeo-]Spanish, because they are granting us Spanish citizenship, Spanish nationality, but before, no, it wasn't given that much importance. Now we are losing [Judeo-]Spanish and when you lose something, you start to value it, right?') [3rd-m-43-fluent-ind]

Beyond the Spanish nationality law, Salamon's account highlights another significant factor contributing to the shift in attitudes towards Judeo-Spanish: the imminent risk of losing the heritage language. The forthcoming chapter examines the intergenerational differences in perspectives regarding the perceived consequences of language shift.

6.4.3 Attitudes towards language shift

As anticipated in the introduction to this study (cf. Ch. 1), and drawing on Myhill's (2003) perspective on the relationship between Jewish languages and identity, it might be presumed that the Sephardim's individual and collective identity is not significantly impacted by language shift and that this shift is perceived from a neutral standpoint. This section aims to examine the extent to which this applies to the Turkish Sephardim by investigating the perceived impact of language shift on their individual and group identity formation. To this end, I will explore representative perspectives in each generational cohort.

First generation – "a scar on the heart"

Habib's expressed attitudes towards language shift are most representative of the first generation of fluent speakers. While this generation's overt attitudes towards Judeo-Spanish are predominantly negative, his responses regarding language maintenance and language shift reveal covert positive language attitudes.

> **6-89. Habib:** Aɣóra se sta peryéndo, no ez muy korékto lo, lo sta peryéndo porké aɣóra ay spektákolos en, en djudéo-espanyół ke stan azyéndo i ke mos stámos yéndo a vérlos. Ántes no avía ésto. [...] Yo no me hui! Amá el espektákl ke izyéron estáva muy, muy, muy ermózo en espanyól! No se si ez el espanyól ke stash pensándo vozós, korékto, amá pue' ser avía byérvos en túrko aryénto i en ótraz línguas. Amá ésto está dándo un pokitíko merák.
>
> ('Now it's being lost, it's not very correct, it's being lost because now there are shows in Judeo-Spanish that they are doing, and we are going to see them. Before, there was none of this. [...] I didn't go! But the show they did was very, very, very beautiful in [Judeo-]Spanish! I don't know if it's the Spanish you are thinking of, the correct one,

but maybe there were words in Turkish inside and in other languages. But this is giving a little bit of curiosity.') [1st-m-73-fluent-ind]

Habib's statement points to the imminence of language shift as an incentive for language recognition and maintenance efforts through cultural events, as evidenced by his appreciation *"estáva muy, muy, muy ermózo en espanyól"* ('was very, very, very beautiful in [Judeo-]Spanish'), even if his engagement is limited. Furthermore, his remark regarding code-mixing during these plays highlights his perception of the hybrid nature of contemporary Judeo-Spanish performances, which may not adhere to purist standards but still contribute to a sense of cultural curiosity and continuity. Habib's narrative displays ambivalent attitudes: on the one hand, he recognises the language's decline in both structure and practice. On the other hand, he values the renewed interest and cultural initiatives surrounding it. Moreover, his denial of complete language shift and hope for survival point to overall covert positive attitudes towards Judeo-Spanish, a sense of optimism and desire for future transmission and preservation by the younger generation.

6-90. Habib: Kréo ke no se va a perdér porké aẏóra ampesáron --- a las persónas kéren ambezárse, kéren savér los djudíos, avló por los djudíos. [...] Los íjos kéren ambezársen, kómo no kéren?

('I believe it won't be lost because now they are starting --- people want to learn it, Jews want to know it, I'm speaking about the Jews. [...] The children want to learn it, how would they not?') [1st-m-73-fluent-ind]

The phrase *"kómo no kéren?"* ('how would they not?') implies that learning Judeo-Spanish is almost a given for children, perhaps due to his perception of increased cultural initiatives or an implicit link between Judeo-Spanish language and Sephardic heritage. Building upon his response, I asked which language is at the core of Turkish Sephardic identity. Habib's answer continued in the same ambivalent vein.

6-91. Habib: Yo me konsintyó, el ebréo ke kále ke lo sépa, kále ke me ambezé, kále ke, ke mélde éste módo konsyénto. Al espanyól pénso savérlo porké kuándo téngo menestér o kuándo sálgo afuéra puédo avlár, puédo enkóntrar múncha djénte ke puédan avlár en espanyól.

('I consider, I need to know Hebrew, I need to learn it, I need to read it, I feel this way. [Judeo-]Spanish, I think I should know for when I need it, or when I go outside, I can speak, I can find many people who can speak Spanish.') [1st-m-73-fluent-ind]

Habib's emphasis on the necessity of knowing, learning, and reading Hebrew reflects a strong sense of cultural and religious obligation. This stance aligns with Myhill's (2003) boundary type of religion/tradition (cf. Ch. 1), highlighting the role of Hebrew in the interconnectedness between different Jewish subgroups. The significance associated with Hebrew in Jewish religious practices is clearly reflected in Habib's and the first generation's felt need to master Hebrew to ensure Jewish cultural and religious continuity. Jak's narrative also aligns with Myhill's (2003: 95) findings regarding the role

of Hebrew among Jews. However, his accounts propose a different perspective on the relationship between the 'native' language, Judeo-Spanish, and his generation's identity.

> **6-92. Jak:** Ah, me tokátes úna yága. Me tokátes úna yága ke me se ízo úna yága en el korasón. La téngo akí. Porké? Los hudíos ke vinyéron de la Espánya, trayéron la língua súya porké un país ke mos enbió, no se, áma porké el ebréo --- el ebréo --- ma el ebréo malorósaménte no la avlávan. Después de úna epóka, el ebréo kedó sólo en las orasyónes. La uníka kóza ke aze adjuntár al puéblo de Israél es la língua, áma ónde? No en los países ke el bíve, las orasiónes. En mísma orasyón ke úno djudyó bíve en Espánya, ótra ke bíve en Fránsia, un djudyó en Antártika la mísma orasyón la van azér en Ebréo. La'ntyénde, no la'ntyénde, ma es úna kóza ke áze a tódos los djudyós. Unidád. Ke es la mísma. De sórte ke, éste Espanyól el Ladíno a mi, me se ízo úna, úna yága. De ónde ampesí? Yo, pue' ser ke te dísho mi íjo, un tyémpo ónde ásemos los sermónes, las ávlas en la sinagóga éra el Espanól. I estás vyéndo ke éstas avlándo úna língua de tu mádre, de tu pádre úna língua. I kuándo estás avlándo, tódos t'entyénden, las ojós están --- ke'stas en káza. [...] Kuándo avlámos el Espanyól kon mi sinyóra mádre, sinyór pádre éra úna língua muéstra, ke lo gozávamos. [...] Ésto éra úna valór, ke, malorosaménte, la huventúd, juventúd, daínda no stan gozándo esto. No éstan gozándo ésto, l'está vinyéndo muy estrányo. I por ésto, es úna língua ke mos, kon muéstras mános la derukímos. úna língua ke mos kon las mános. El govérno lo kúlpa, o no lo kúpa, yo no sto bushkándo. amá yo, la realidád, oy en día, ke esta lingua --- [...] I imajínate ke difikultád tuvímos mozótros, para podér eksprimírmos [en túrko]; pará dar antendér los sintimyéntos en úna língua ke yo no sto vyéndo, ni lo sto pensándo. Meóyo lavoráva en Espanyól. Porké éra la língua de mi káza, [?], en tódo módo de lugár. Los amigos, toðos. [1st-m-75-fluent-fam8]
>
> ('Oh, you touched a wound. You touched a wound that made a scar in my heart. I have it here. Why? The Jews who came from Spain brought their language because the country that sent us, I don't know why, but Hebrew --- Hebrew --- but unfortunately, they did not speak Hebrew. After a while, Hebrew remained only in prayers. The only thing that unites the people of Israel is the language, but where? Not in the countries they live in, in the prayers. In the same prayer that a Jew lives in Spain, another one in France, a Jew in Antarctica, the same prayer will be done in Hebrew. They understand it, they don't understand it, but it is something that makes all Jews united. It is the same. So that, this [Judeo-]Spanish, Ladino, to me, became a wound. Where did I start? Maybe my son told you, there was a time when the sermons, the speeches in the synagogue were in [Judeo-]Spanish. And you see that you are speaking a language of your mother, of your father. And when you are speaking, everyone understands you, their eyes are — you [understand that you] are at home. [...] When we spoke [Judeo-]Spanish with my dear mother, dear father, it was our language, and we enjoyed it. [...] This was a value, that unfortunately, the youth today are not enjoying this. They are not enjoying this, it appears very strange to them. And because of this, it is a language that we, with our hands, we let go. A language that we, with our hands. Whether the government is to blame, or not to blame, I am not looking, but the reality today is that this language --- […] And imagine the difficulty we had, to be able to express ourselves [in Turkish]; to make our feelings understood in a language that I am not seeing, nor thinking in. My mind worked in [Judeo-]Spanish. Because it was the language of my home, [?] in every place. My friends, all of them.') [1st-m-75-fluent-fam8]

Jak's accounts reveal a profound emotional response to language shift, evidenced by the vivid metaphor of a wound that has scarred his heart *"úna yága en el korasón"* ('a scar in my heart'). This metaphor, along with his tone of sorrow and disappointment, and at the same time of indignation, highlights the deep sense of loss and pain which he

associates with the decline of Judeo-Spanish. In his narrative, he reflects on the historical trajectory of Jewish linguistic practices, noting Hebrew's central role for Jewish groups irrespective of geography. However, he observes that Hebrew, despite its significance in prayers and Jewish unity and identity, was no longer spoken after the exile from Spain. Instead, Judeo-Spanish became not only the spoken vernacular but also a language used in religious rituals, sermons, and speeches — a language that, in his view, connected generations and created a sense of home and belonging.

Jak reminisces about the time when Judeo-Spanish was spoken at home and in the synagogue, highlighting the joy and connection it brought. The transition from Judeo-Spanish to Turkish, a language in which it was difficult to express his feelings and thoughts *"dar antendér los sintimyéntos en úna língua ke yo no sto vyéndo, ni lo sto pensándo"* ('to make our feelings understood in a language that I am not seeing, nor thinking in'), reflects the profound impact of language shift. For Jak and his generation, Judeo-Spanish was the closest in reflecting their personal and collective identity. Jak feels a heavy burden of responsibility for not passing on the language to subsequent generations, indicating an awareness and acceptance of his role in the language loss: *"kon muéstras mános la derukímos"* ('with our hands, we let go'). His attitudes towards language shift range from profound sadness at the perceived loss of the heritage language to self-reflective frustration over missed opportunities for language transmission.

The attitudes of this generation towards language shift are marked by regret, guilt, a sense of loss of Sephardic values, and heightened awareness of the ongoing language shift. This generation appears to be the most affected by language shift. However, I have also recorded a strong sense of hope that younger generations will show resilience in preserving Judeo-Spanish through Spanish. For this generation, in view of the imminence of obsolescence, structural differences and status discrepancies between Spanish and Judeo-Spanish appear irrelevant, leading to blurred boundaries in the process of identification. Discourses within this cohort reveal that language shift tends to impact men more than women. This disparity may be attributed to women's activism in support of language maintenance, their heightened awareness of ongoing preservation efforts, and their proactive approach in learning Spanish to gain confidence in Judeo-Spanish (cf. § 5.2.1).

Second generation – "between the heart and the brain"

The second generation's prevailing narrative regarding language shift reveals a tension that arises from conflicting emotions and rational thoughts about the survival and demise

of Judeo-Spanish. Naftali's discourse effectively encapsulates this internal conflict, highlighting the second generation's position, caught between an emotional desire for the resilience of Judeo-Spanish and rational acceptance of its imminent shift.

> **6-93. Naftali**: La priméra v'a vinír de de mi korasón, ésta língua v'a, v'a bivír. Ésta língua bíve, estámos azyéndo tódo lo ke es posíble. Éstan azyándo, el djánte ésta azyándo, tódo lo lo ke es posíble pára no puéder parár, ke no muére ésta língua. La sigúnda vyéne del meéyo, lo ke es mas rasyonál. Muryó. Ésta língua muryó. Porké kómo no puedémos ensenyár ésta língua a mos, a muéstros íjos, a mos, a mos krea---, a mos los kreatúras, muryó.
>
> ('The first one comes from my heart, this language will, will live. This language lives, we are doing everything possible. They are doing, people are doing everything possible to not stop, so this language does not die. The second comes from the brain, what is more rational. It died. This language died. Because since we cannot teach this language to our, to our children, to our, to our children, it died.')

The tension in Naftali's discourse manifests as a dissonance between the emotional desire for continuation and rational acceptance, past versus present: *v'a bivír* 'will live' vs. *muryó* 'it died'. On an emotional level, he nurtures hope for survival based on perceived ongoing community maintenance efforts and shared responsibility within the community: *"Éstan azyándo, el djánte ésta azyándo, tódo lo, lo ke es posíble"* ('They are doing, people are doing everything possible'). However, despite these efforts, Naftali acknowledges that the language has effectively died because it is not passed on to the children, which for him is the primary indicator of linguistic vitality. The conflict between these two dimensions highlights Naftali's strong emotional response and sense of loss, coupled with a need for resignation.

In the second generational cohort, like the first, I observed an awareness of the maintenance efforts within the community, as this generation is at the forefront of preservation today. These maintenance efforts are carried out mainly by women. Furthermore, I have documented numerous instances in which language shift was met with resistance, as exemplified by Viki.

> **6-94. Viki**: Ke va a pasár? Yo va azér éstos teátros fin a ke puédo, ken vyéne va a oyír. Tú, estás azyéndo úna kóza, el ótro está azyéndo ótra kóza, éste módo, éste módo, kréygo ke no se va a peryér. E míra, éya tyéne kuantos mansévos elévos. Kóma éya en el múndo entéro averá. Averá!
>
> ('What will happen? I will do these plays as long as I can, whoever comes will listen. You, you are doing one thing, the other person is doing another thing, this way, this way, I believe it will not be lost. And look, she has some young students. Like her, there will be many around the whole world. There will be!' [2nd-f-63-fluent-fam10]

Viki's account offers insight into her determination and optimism regarding the preservation of Judeo-Spanish through cultural practices like theatre. She embraces her role in language maintenance, demonstrating a strong commitment to continuing these efforts *"fin a ke puédo"* ('as long as I can'). She further emphasises the importance of

shared responsibility in language preservation, noting that each community member contributes in their own way. She believes that with the ongoing interest of the younger generation "*mansévos elévos"* ('young students') and a global perspective, the language can be sustained for the future. This global perspective is reflected to varying degrees in the narratives of her generation, who show belief in the potential for global commitment to Judeo-Spanish language preservation.

Remarkably, out of 22 consultants, only one, Zelda, displayed overt indifference towards language shift.

> **6-95. Zelda**: Bana bir şey farketmiyor. yáni, şu anda çok geçerli olan konuşulan şey ya İngilizce, İspanyolca ama bizim konuştuğumuz İspanyolca değil. yáni bazı yerlerde, kayınvalidem seyahate gittiği zaman bazı yerlerde derdi ki < yáni ben İngilizce bilmiyorum, Fransızca bilmiyorum.> İspanyolca ile konuşabildiği yerler vardı ama her yerde değil. Her yerde anlaşılmıyor bizim İspanyolca. Benziyor ama aynı değil. Onun için yáni ---
>
> ('It doesn't matter to me. Well the current binding language is English, Spanish, but not the [Judeo-]Spanish that we talk. Well in some places, when my mother-in-law was travelling, she used to say: <I don't know English, French.> There were some places where she could speak [Judeo-]Spanish, but not everywhere. Not in everywhere our [Judeo-]Spanish is understood. It is alike but not the same. Because of that well ---') [2nd-f-53-semi-fam13]

Zelda's narrative begins with a sense of indifference towards the language, *"bana bir şey farketmiyor"* ('It doesn't matter to me'), highlighting the importance of English and Spanish, which are more widely spoken in the global context. Her distinction between the "Spanish that we talk" and Spanish suggests a perceived inferiority or lack of relevance of Judeo-Spanish in the modern socio-economic reality. This indicates a prioritisation of practical communication skills over heritage preservation. Zelda's overt attitudes towards language shift align with her language behaviour (refusal to speak the language) and social behaviour (concealing her Jewish identity). However, they contrast with her covert attitudes towards Judeo-Spanish. During our interview, Zelda displayed particular pride in her daughter Yıldız's proficiency in Spanish and her interest in learning Judeo-Spanish, reflecting a complex interplay between overt indifference and covert pride in her heritage.

Similar to the first generation, most consultants in this generational cohort harbour hope that the third generation will compensate for the loss of Judeo-Spanish by learning Spanish, reflecting the blurred boundaries between the two languages. Additionally, the trend of women having more positive attitudes towards the survival of Judeo-Spanish *"in some way or another"*[152] continues in this generation. The burden of

[152] Ezra: [2nd-f-53-passive-fam2]

guilt, regret and shame for not transmitting the language weighs more heavily on the second generation, as the shift is more distinctly evident for them.

> **6-96. Edna**: La djénte --- están --- están pensándo ke el ladíno ez muy emportánte i lez está embarasándo, ke maz no s-está tánto empleándo la língua, ke no s-está aƀlándo. Lez está embarasándo, ma no sáven kómo van a tornár atrás.
>
> 'The people --- they are --- they are thinking that Ladino is very important and it embarrasses them that the language is not being used much, that it is not being spoken. It embarrasses them, but they don't know how they are going to turn back [2nd-f-60-fluent-fam9]

As portrayed in Section 5.3.2, the second generation regrets not having passed down the language, often influenced by their children's frustration at not learning a language that could have provided opportunities in the globalised world. Not seeing a solution to the state and status of Judeo-Spanish, many consultants show resignation: *"No, no ay ke azér en esto!"* ('there is nothing to do in this case').

The perceived effects for the majority of speakers are related to the blurring or complete dissolution of the boundaries between the Sephardim and the majority society, as Bensyon acknowledges.

> **6-97. Bensyon**: Ishté! La diferénsya es ladíno. Mos azémos kómo éyos. En tódo. En tódo. […] Áma lo ke dishítes es vedrá, mozós si no avlámos akí éste ladíno, no lo tenémos en ladíno; no es muéstro, áma lo izímos muéstro. No es muéstro, lo izímos muéstro. Si es un pedáso de la vída muéstra. Ésto si.
>
> ('Here it is. The difference is Ladino. We are becoming like them. In everything. In everything. […] if we don't speak Ladino here, we don't have it in Ladino; it's not ours but we made it ours. It's not ours, we make it ours. It is a piece of our life. This, yes.') [2nd-m-61-fluent-ind]

Bensyon highlights a critical tension between assimilation and the preservation of Judeo-Spanish. He suggests that language shift implies a loss of cultural distinctiveness, as indicated by the phrase *"no es muéstro, lo izímos muéstro"* ('it's not ours, but we made it ours'). This phrase reflects the historical transition from Hebrew to Spanish, which, over the course of centuries, through habitus, became an inherent part of the Sephardic community's lives and cultural expression. The discursive strategies of repetition of the phrase *"no es muéstro, áma lo izímos muéstro"* underscore the idea that cultural identity is not static but evolves through adaptation and adoption. Bensyon points out that the current process of language shift involves another period of transition for the Sephardim, who will need to embrace and integrate Turkish until it becomes an intrinsic part of their identity. His perspective suggests that while assimilation may threaten cultural distinctiveness, there is also a resilient capacity within the community to adapt and redefine their cultural heritage through new linguistic practices. This idea is in line with Fishman's (1989 [1977]: 36-37) findings on evolving ethnicity, identity, and authenticity: The more it changes the more it remains the same.

Third generation – erasure of distinctiveness?

Evolving attitudes towards Judeo-Spanish, which have diminished the perceived disparities between Spanish and Judeo-Spanish, have sparked a significant transformation in language practices, particularly within the third generation. For the third generation, the decision to learn Spanish is driven by two contextual factors. On the one hand, socio-political transformations within the Sephardic community (such as the 2015 citizenship law) and global shifts (like globalisation) have drawn Spanish and Judeo-Spanish into closer alignment in the perception of Turkish Sephardim. This convergence is particularly pronounced in the mindset of the third generation. The perception of language shift is viewed mainly through the prism of this convergence, diminishing the perceived effects of language shift among this generation.

Compared to the first and second generational cohorts, attitudes within this generation cover a broader spectrum. Some express negative feelings, such as being deprived of the opportunity to acquire Judeo-Spanish and disappointment in the second generation for failing to transmit the language. Others maintain neutral stances or have hope for the resilience and continuity of Sephardic culture despite the language shift. Consultants like Salamon base their negative attitudes towards language shift on the perceived loss of cultural distinctiveness, sense of identity, and heritage.

> **6-98. Salamon**: Yo a vézez ðo a las klísaz, a laz iglézias i véo por mi écho, ðo al Patriarkádo Ortodókso de Estambúl k-está por Féne i ðéo ke loz γréγoz éntre éyoz ávlan en gréγo. Loz djudíos están aðlándo túrko perfékto. Está buéno ke áðle en túrko. En la káye puéden aðlár túrko. Me akí no aðlámoz ni ebréo ni ladíno. Solaménte loz vyéjoz. Ayér, en el día internasyonál del ladíno, lo ke remarkí, lo ke puéd ser ke remarkáron múchoz, ez ke dísho: <La sóla língua ke se ða ablar ayá va ser ladíno!>. Muy buéno. I kuando aðía interváloz éntre úna kóza i ótra, loz djudíos ke ávlan? En túrko. En el *Día Internasyonál del Ladíno*. Me víno káda ves dezír, al soðretódo a la djénte maz γránde de mi: <Si puéde ser aðláte nel ladíno. Oy ez el *Día Internasyonál del Ladíno*. Estás, estáyj avlándo en túrko!> A mi me plazería ke loz djudíoz konserváran al espanyól, si no puéden konservár el espanyól ke s'ambezáran ebréo. Sólo ablándo túrko moz azejámoz múcho maz a loz túrkoz e úna kóza ke moz diferensía ez la língua. No podémoz perder laz línguas ke fue --- ke ázen párte de muéstra kultúra. En la kultura sefardí ez espanyól, el ladíno en djudeo-espanyól. En la kultúra Ashkenáziz yidish, no? Éstas son línguas muy importántez ke ázen párte de la erénsya kulturál djudía.
>
> ('Sometimes I go to the churches, and I see, because of my profession [as a tourist guide]. I go to the Orthodox Patriarchate of Istanbul in Fener and I see that the Greeks among themselves speak Greek. The Jews are speaking perfect Turkish. It's good to speak Turkish. On the street, they can speak Turkish. But here, we don't speak either Hebrew or Ladino. Only the old people. Yesterday, on *International Ladino Day*, what I noticed, what many others might have noticed, is that they said: <The only language that will be spoken here will be Ladino!> Very good. But during the intervals between one thing and another, what did the Jews speak? Turkish. On *International Ladino Day*. I felt like telling especially the older people, <If possible, speak in Ladino. Today is *International Ladino Day*. And you are speaking in Turkish!>. I would be pleased if the Jews preserved [Judeo-]Spanish. If they can't preserve [Judeo-]Spanish, they

> should learn Hebrew. Only speaking Turkish makes us much closer to the Turks, and one thing that differentiates us, is the language. We cannot lose the languages that are part of our culture. In Sephardic culture, it's [Judeo-]Spanish, Ladino, Judeo-Spanish. In Ashkenazi culture, it's Yiddish, right? These are very important languages that are part of the Jewish cultural heritage.') [3rd-m-43-fluent-ind]

Salamon, who works as a tour guide, possesses a unique observational standpoint. He draws a comparison between different ethnic groups and their language practices, concluding that, unlike other minorities such as the Greeks, the Sephardim predominantly speak Turkish. While he acknowledges the necessity of speaking Turkish in public, Salamon regrets that the Sephardim lack a language of their own, speaking neither Judeo-Spanish nor Hebrew. His narrative highlights his disappointment with the irony observed on International Ladino Day, where despite the emphasis on Ladino, community members defaulted to Turkish during breaks between events. The stark contrast between his observed efforts in language and cultural preservation and the power of habitual practice leaves him with a bitter taste. This sentiment is fuelled by Salamon's concern about language shift and its effects on erasing cultural and group distinctiveness, which he views as crucial to cultural identity. His assertion that losing their language means losing a significant part of their culture underscores his belief in the intrinsic link between language and Sephardic cultural heritage.

At the opposite end of the attitudinal spectrum is Suzan, who nurtures hope in the resilience of the Sephardim's distinctiveness and cultural endurance beyond language shift.

> **6-99. Suzan**: I don't think so. We, Jewish people, most of the time and actually in every way, think they're different from other people. I think that way. I am not a religious person, but try to keep my traditions, like I want to celebrate like Bairams, festivals and I don't do that because of --- that I'm a religious person. I just want to teach to my children these festivals and traditions as well. But I think language is not the carrier of the tradition. Maybe it's not true, but for me it's not very ---. Maybe solidarity and maybe because of the antisemitism and mix mirages. The Jewish tradition, the Turkish-Jewish tradition loses some things from the identity, but ---. Yes, the language is one of them, but it doesn't affect as much my life or my daily life. [3rd-f-22-Spanish-fam1]

Suzan, unlike Salamon, does not see language as a primary vehicle for maintaining Jewish tradition or marking Jewish distinctiveness. For her, the uniqueness of Jewish culture resides in cultural and traditional practices. She emphasises that although she is not religious, these practices are essential to her, and she wishes to pass them on to her children. Her viewpoint reflects a nuanced understanding of identity, where traditions and solidarity, potentially influenced by experiences of antisemitism, play a more significant role than language. Despite recognising the loss of language as one component of identity, Suzan does not perceive it as substantially impacting her daily life.

Analysing the perspectives of Suzan and Salamon within this generational cohort through Baker's (1992: 41-44) variables influencing attitudes, a strong correlation is observed between proficiency in Judeo-Spanish, multilingualism, and less favourable attitudes towards language shift. Additionally, prevailing overt negative attitudes towards Judeo-Spanish in Suzan's family result in more positive or neutral attitudes towards language shift. Her upbringing in an environment where her father, Mordo, explicitly and performatively refused to speak Judeo-Spanish appears to have shaped her attitudes towards language shift and her emotional attachment to the language (cf. § 6.4). The contrasting perspectives of Suzan and Salamon highlight the varying degrees of importance individuals place on language based on their exposure, proficiency, and overt attitudes towards it.

6.5 Concluding discussions

By drawing on a multi-level semiotic approach, this chapter has investigated the interplay between various interrelated ideologies that have influenced attitudes, language practices, and identification with Judeo-Spanish among the Sephardim. The first set of ideologies, which are linked to *social attitudes and developments*, weakened the symbolic capital of Judeo-Spanish by exacerbating socio-economic disparities through the AIU schools, shaping identity negotiations through internal and external migration, and perpetuating antisemitic and anti-minority discourse that marked Judeo-Spanish as a sign of 'otherness' and 'Jewish betrayal'. Renewed discussions of language purism and authenticity in the context of the *Law of Return* also further impacted these dynamics.

The second set of ideologies, reflected in national language policies, revolved around (a) *policies aimed at modernisation, homogenisation, and Turkification*, and (b) *interconnected events and campaigns aimed at segregation and persecution*. These policies and events led to the internalisation of threats and instilled a culture of fear that has been transmitted across generations, leading to a swift change in language attitudes and practices.

Regarding the AIU school system, I have illustrated how the AIU's promotion of French language and culture led to the emergence of Judéo-Fragnol and established a new linguistic hierarchy, with French at the top and Judeo-Spanish at the bottom. The adoption of French influenced the community's social structure by exacerbating social disparities and instilling enduring positive attitudes towards French. French became synonymous with social advancement while Judeo-Spanish was associated with backwardness and lower social classes.

Internal migration significantly reshaped the Sephardic community in Turkey from the 1930s to the 1960s, merging diverse social classes and educational backgrounds in Istanbul. This convergence altered language practices, with an impact much like that of AIU education. Consultants' narratives highlight the shift from a close-knit, insular community to one grappling with internal divisions and external pressures. On a linguistic level, this period engendered division between those who adopted French and Turkish as markers of higher status and those who continued to use Judeo-Spanish, which was increasingly viewed as a lower-class, mixed, and inferior language. Moreover, the narratives reveal the duality of living in a protective but segregated 'ghetto', the internalised sense of 'otherness', and the pressing need for integration into broader Turkish society. Youth organisations played a pivotal role in bridging these divides among the younger generations, fostering a blending of traditions, beliefs, and language practices and leading to the emergence of a more homogeneous community in subsequent generations which corresponds to the third generation in this dissertation.

This homogeneity was, however, once again disrupted by emigration trends, particularly emigration to Israel, the United States, and Europe, which has significantly reduced the community's population. Emigration has been a constant since the founding of Israel. It is characterised by shifting motivations, ranging from nationalist ideals to contemporary economic and political challenges in Turkey. Recent socio-political developments, including increased Islamification and antisemitism, have intensified emigration, especially among the third generation, who express a strong desire to leave due to the increase in perceived threats and the lack of socio-economic opportunities. Consultants' narratives reveal generational discrepancies in attitudes towards emigration: older generations are hesitant due to logistical and language barriers, while younger generations are more inclined to emigrate for better prospects.

Attachment to Israel remains strong among older consultants, who see it as a 'home country' despite its challenges. In contrast, younger Sephardim prefer Spain and other European countries over Israel, driven by cultural familiarity and a desire to connect with their heritage. Declining identification with contemporary Turkey enhances the longing for an 'imagined homeland', with older generations focusing on Israel and younger generations on Spain. Linguistically, this translates into an increased interest in learning Hebrew and Spanish among the younger generations, reflecting broader socio-political dynamics and ongoing negotiations of Sephardic identity. Interestingly, emigration choices are, more often than not, motivated by linguistic considerations.

In the face of the historical trauma of expulsion, the requirements of language proficiency and familiarity with the social and cultural reality of Spain imposed by the *Law*

of Return were met with a strong emotional response from community consultants. These requirements were perceived not merely as administrative hurdles, but as deeply intertwined with the community's identity, self-perception, and self-worth. The process of validation therefore provokes a range of emotional responses, from frustration and discontent to a sense of being undervalued and insulted, reviving the historical trauma of expulsion. This is evident in consultants' strong emotional involvement or detachment and feelings of indignation, resentment and rejection.

The interplay between the ideologies and tragic events surrounding national minority languages and homogenisation policies in the early years of the Turkish Republic, rising anti-minority sentiment and antisemitism, and traumatic language experiences such as *Citizen Speak Turkish campaign!* have profoundly shaped the social and linguistic attitudes and practices of the Sephardim. The drastic shift from cultural and linguistic heterogeneity to uniformity caught many Sephardim unprepared, leading to swift generational shifts in language practices and the mechanisms of negotiating social identities. Some Sephardim initially embraced Turkification reforms, hoping for modernisation and greater Europeanisation, yet today, most recall adopting the new ideology out of a fear of repercussions. The impact of the intergenerational transmission of fear is best evidenced in the practice of *kayadés* ('keeping quiet') and in the latent transmission of fear through different behavioural patterns. Thus, ideological pressure to adapt, coupled with aggression, discrimination, and other negative repercussions leads to traumatic language experiences and feelings of fear, which has been transmitted intergenerationally.

Personal accounts vividly capture how fear of speaking Judeo-Spanish permeated the daily lives of the Sephardim, compelling families to adopt Turkish names, remove all symbols pointing to their Jewishness (*Star of David* necklaces) and speak Turkish in public to avoid drawing attention to their Jewish identity. This fear was not openly discussed; it was silently absorbed and internalised, creating a pervasive sense of caution and vigilance in social interactions and language use. The first generation made the conscious decision to conceal traumatic events.

Frustration, indignation, and regret characterise the second and third generations' reactions to their parents' and grandparents' concealment of past traumas. The practice of *kayadés*, or keeping quiet, fostered assimilation by depriving the younger generations of a full understanding of their cultural and linguistic heritage. Instead, they were left to piece together their history from books and external sources, often realising the magnitude and burden of past traumas only in adulthood. The accounts of the second and third generations reveal how these historical fears still resonate today and highlight

a significant generational shift from the silent endurance of their parents and grandparents to more vocal confrontations of the past today. This shift indicates a critical change in coping mechanisms and a newfound resilience in navigating the social space.

The intergenerational transmission of fear, particularly around language use, points to the complex relationship between assimilation and identity preservation. Accounts of mockery and exclusion experienced due to an accent when speaking Turkish reveal how linguistic markers became a battleground for establishing social boundaries. This fear of being perceived as 'other' drove deeper assimilation and heightened vigilance. The pervasive theme of fear, whether from direct experiences or inherited memories, act as a powerful connector across generations. It shapes how Sephardim perceive their past, interact in their present, and envision their future. As younger generations become more vocal and assertive, they challenge the silent fears of their predecessors, seeking to reconcile their Sephardic heritage with their contemporary identities, often through the means of Spanish.

The concept of *shibboleth*, symbolising the process of unmarking identity through language, offers a nuanced lens to understand the dynamics of assimilation and identity preservation among the Turkish Sephardim. The second and third generations reflect the intense efforts made by the Sephardim to master Turkish pronunciation, often taking diction lessons to eliminate any trace of a Jewish accent. This pursuit of linguistic assimilation was not merely undertaken to achieve social acceptance, but was seen as a means of ensuring safety and reducing discrimination.

The narratives further reveal a generational shift in attitudes. The older generations viewed the elimination of accents as a necessary survival strategy, even taking pride in this successful assimilation as a reflection of the internalisation of prevailing ideologies. Younger consultants in the second and third generations display a more nuanced approach. They express a blend of pride and pragmatic concealment, acknowledging their Jewish heritage while strategically revealing or concealing it based on context. This shift signifies a growing sense of self-acceptance and a desire to reconnect with their Sephardic roots, manifested in an increased interest in learning Judeo-Spanish.

These external socio-political events have left an imprint on individuals' attitudes, which were reflected in their language choice, religious rites, community organisation and cohesion. But most significantly, it is reflected in their introvert behaviour in the majority context, the individual's scepticism and visible fear of expressing themselves freely, even decades after the repressing elements have been removed. This sometimes extreme 'vigilance' was observed and reported openly and repeatedly, particularly by the

third generation. Young Sephardim would often recall the emphasis with which they were asked not to divulge their ethnic affiliation to anyone under any circumstance once they stepped out of the house.

The deconstruction of language attitudes from an intergenerational perspective reveals how deeply ideology has shaped language practices over time. The narratives revealed that language attitudes are not just reflections of personal preferences but are deeply intertwined with different types of socio-political ideologies and historical experiences. The internalization of and reproduction of often overlapped ideologies resulted in contradicting language attitudes on different levels of awareness, shaping how individuals perceive and engage with Judeo-Spanish. Moreover I illustrated how attitudes towards Judeo-Spanish have evolved over time, influenced by both external factors like national language policies and internal community dynamics. The shift from negative to more positive attitudes toward Judeo-Spanish in recent years reflects broader societal changes and a growing awareness of the language's cultural significance. However, this shift also reveals the tensions and contradictions within individuals, who often hold simultaneous positive and negative attitudes toward the language. These conflicting attitudes often stem from a recognized need to assimilate into the dominant culture while also striving to preserve a unique linguistic and cultural identity.

The examination of specific cases, such as those of Meri, Mordo, and others, provided an understanding of how language attitudes are formed, transmitted, and transformed across generations. I highlighted that while fear and societal pressures have historically driven language shift, there is also a persistent underlying attachment to Judeo-Spanish that surfaces in different ways across generations in form of covert language attitudes.

Attitudes towards Judeo-Spanish emerged as not always directly connected with the time, duration and intensity of exposure to Judeo-Spanish. Edna[153], whose mother tongue is Judeo-Spanish, who was almost exclusively exposed to Judeo-Spanish until school age, who lived in a neighbourhood with predominantly Sephardim shares the same positive attitudes towards Judeo-Spanish like Naftali[154], who was only sporadically exposed to Judeo-Spanish in his childhood and who discovered the language in his adult age or like Milen[155] who was not exposed to Judeo-Spanish at all in her family and who

[153] [2nd-f-60-fluent-fam9]
[154] [2nd-m-45-H-fluent-fam12]
[155] [3rd-f-38-neo-ind]

learned Judeo-Spanish through Spanish. As this chapter demonstrated, the strongest predictors of positive attitudes toward Judeo-Spanish are rooted in a combination of early childhood exposure to the language, alongside exposure to both overt and covert positive attitudes toward Judeo-Spanish and multilingualism.

Finally, as explored in Section 3.4.1, the discourse surrounding trauma remains contentious, largely due to the challenge of categorizing and describing symptoms within the constraints of existing frameworks. In this chapter, I sought to expand this discourse by offering new insights into how intergenerational ideologies, attitudes, and practices interact across three different generations. This chapter discussed the complex dynamics that shape and are shaped by trauma, adding depth to our understanding of its impact on language and cultural identity.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

This chapter discusses the results of my investigation in relation to the initial research questions. It explores the potential implications of language shift for identification processes among the Sephardim, and outlines directions for future research based on the present findings. This conclusion brings together the different chapters in a process of theoretical abstraction, in line with the processes of GTM. The theoretical abstractions presented below are based on the data analysis presented in chapters 5 and 6. The conclusion proceeds through different sets of analytic results in an order motivated by causal relationships which do not always reflect the chronology and structure of the thesis. This dissertation has employed the terms 'identity' and 'identification' interchangeably, based on their productivity in social sciences, sociolinguistics, and linguistic anthropology. However, identity has been approached not as a fixed concept, but as dynamic "acts of identification", and "tactics of intersubjectivity" (cf. Bucholtz & Hall 2004: 332), in which individuals actively participate in the construction of meaning through language.

This dissertation gathered empirical evidence to offer a comprehensive perspective on the causes and consequences of language shift across three generations of Turkish Sephardim, each with varying levels of language competence. It explored the interconnection between ideology, attitudes, and language practices to understand the role of postvernacular Judeo-Spanish for these generations of language users within the Turkish Sephardic community. Notably, given the paucity of research on the third generation, whose members possess only limited knowledge of Judeo-Spanish, this study provided crucial insights into how this generation navigates processes of identification through language. Additionally, it highlighted trauma and its impact as a significant factor in shaping language practices, attitudes, and the perceived value of Judeo-Spanish. Furthermore, the dissertation presented evidence of shifting attitudes towards Judeo-Spanish across generations. The fluid boundaries among Romance languages, particularly the growing prominence of Spanish within the Turkish Sephardic context, as well as multilingual practices, were identified as key drivers of these attitudinal changes, which are discussed in greater detail in Section 7.4.2 of this conclusion.

7.1 Methodology

The findings of this dissertation are grounded in a qualitative analysis of data collected through various types of interviews, using both primary and supplemental data

collection techniques. The study involved 60 participants in Istanbul, Turkey, who were interviewed over a five-year period from 2012 to 2017. A unique aspect of this research was the inclusion of a relatively large number of participants from three generations of Sephardim within the same family clusters (8 two-generation family clusters, 5 two-generation family clusters, and 26 individual participants who did not belong to a family cluster), which ensured more representative results across the data sets. Data collection focused on eliciting participants' subjective interpretations of their experiences within the interpretative and theoretical framework of this study. A key emphasis was placed on community empowerment through the active involvement of community members, including the selection of a community assistant who was involved in all stages of the research. The research also included an additional language documentation project comprising 50 annotated interviews, which were made freely available on YouTube. These interviews captured representative aspects of the Judeo-Spanish language community. This approach aimed to facilitate a community-based, social constructionist framework wherein local individuals have the opportunity to represent their own languages.

7.2 Data description and interpretation

The interpretative framework of this dissertation operates on two complementary levels: the *descriptive level*, driven by *Grounded Theory Methodology* (GTM) (cf. § 4.9.2), and the *interpretative level*, as depicted in Figure 1. Ch. 4. and repeated here for convenience.

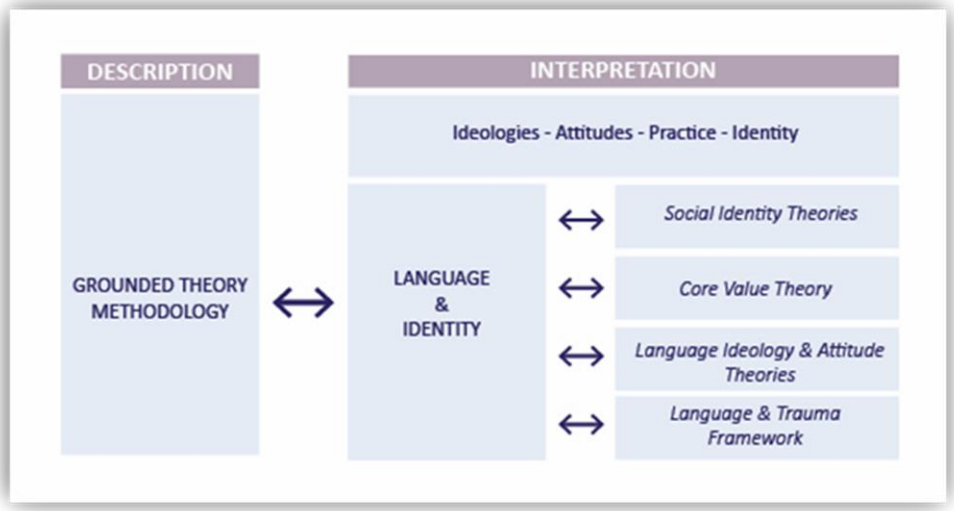


Figure 1. Ch. 4: *Multi-dimensional research strategy* - repeated

On the descriptive level, GTM was employed as a work-process-oriented approach, enabling systematic and dynamic data collection, coding, and analysis. This methodology facilitated a stable comparative perspective across different data sets, which was crucial for developing the interpretative level of analysis.

On the *interpretative* level, my inquiry is grounded in a multi-layered theoretical framework that examines the interplay between ideologies, attitudes, practices, and social identity within the context of Judeo-Spanish in Istanbul. In line with the constructivist approach, which acknowledges the varied contexts that lead to language shift and the multiplicity of its outcomes, I have employed an iterative interpretative method, which systematically narrows the scope from the general to specific contexts through each iteration phase. The interpretative analysis therefore opens by addressing the broader linguistic dimensions of social identity before focusing on key aspects that are relevant to minority languages. It then homes in on specific trends within Jewish communities, ultimately narrowing the focus to the Eastern Sephardic and Turkish Sephardic contexts. This approach allows for a nuanced exploration of language and identity, accommodating the complexity and variability inherent in these processes.

This interaction of theory and exploration is primarily informed by the theoretical approach of the *language and identity framework* developed by Bucholtz & Hall (2004), who conceptualise the relationship between language and identity through four semiotic processes: *practice*, *indexicality*, *ideology*, and *performance*. I have supplemented this key framework with insights from scholars such as Haarmann (1986), Edwards (2009), Fishman (1999), Joseph (2004), Kroskrity (1993; 2004), Myhill (1999; 2003; 2004), and Spolsky (1983; 2010; 2014; 2006) in order to gain a deeper understanding of the dynamics of language and identity within the specific context of the Turkish Sephardim.

In the first iteration phase, I have integrated a diverse array of theoretical perspectives rooted in *social identity theories* (Barth 1998 [1969]; Barth 2000; Tajfel 1981), *Communication Accommodation Theory* (Giles & Coupland 1991; Giles & Smith 1979) and a socio-psychological understanding of collective identity (David & Bar-Tal 2009). Together, these theories elucidate the intricate links between language, context, and identity, positioning social identity as the essential catalyst for coordinated behaviours among individuals and groups striving to preserve shared core values (cf. § 4.1; Ch. 3).

For the second iteration phase, I have adopted *Core Value Theory* (Secombe 2016; Smolicz 1980; Smolicz 1991; Smolicz 1992; Smolicz & Lean 1979; 2001) to interpret the position that Judeo-Spanish holds in the Sephardic hierarchy of values.

In the third iteration phase, I have drawn on the *Ideology of Language* framework (Kroskrity 2000; 2004; 2010; 2009; Schieffelin, Woolard & Kroskrity 1998; Woolard 1998) and Gal & Irvine's (2019) semiotic perspective. In a minority context, investigating language ideologies requires looking at the dominant ideologies imposed by the majority and the ideologies of the minority group that challenges or accepts them (Langman 2013: 247). I explored both how top-down dominant majority ideologies and power relations affect the minority's language representations and attitudes and the bottom-up minority processes of internalising and reproducing prevailing ideologies in the form of language attitudes and language practices. Additionally, I incorporated insights from research on *language attitudes* (Baker 1992; Bradley 2013, 2019; Fishman 2002; 1999; 2001, 2007, 2010; Sallabank 2013: 64; Schiffman 2002 [1996]). In my investigation of attitudes, I adopted Sallabank's (2013) view that attitudes, perceptions, beliefs, and ideologies can be viewed on a continuum of overarching predispositions.

In exploring the relationship between *language and trauma*, I employed the theoretical framework advanced by Busch (2015; 2016), as well as contributions from Busch and colleagues (Busch & McNamara 2020; Busch & Reddemann 2013). My investigation was also informed by insights from psychoanalysis studies (Frie 2011) and research examining trauma and healing in indigenous societies (Abtahian & Quinn 2017; Mckenzie 2022).

Lastly, I draw on studies spanning several decades which explored or marginally touched on the impact of language attitudes on language shift among the Turkish Sephardim: (Altabev 1998, 2003; Bornes Varol 1991, 1998, 2005, 2006, 2013a, 1998; Brink-Danan 2011a, 2011b; Gerson 1983, 1986, 2011, 2019; Harris 1982a, 1985, 1994, 2006, 2011; Romero 2012). These studies highlight factors such as the emergence of new nation-states, internal community language policies, and demographic shifts. They show that, despite language shift, Judeo-Spanish continues to hold symbolic significance for Sephardic identity, serving as a marker of ethnicity, as an *associated language* (Arnold 2018) and an integral part of the younger generation's imaginative connection to the past (cf. Christodouleas 2008: 203). A common thread in these findings is the emphasis on cultural practices, such as the observance of Jewish holidays, as key pillars in maintaining Sephardic identity. This dissertation complements these studies by offering a comprehensive perspective that was hitherto lacking on the interconnections between ideologies, attitudes, and practices, and how these reflect the identification of different generations of Sephardim with Judeo-Spanish as a postvernacular language.

7.3 A model for the relationship between ideology, attitudes and practices

The present dissertation has identified two central categories of language ideologies that profoundly influence attitudes and practices within the Sephardic community: *1) the ideology connected with social attitudes and developments* and (*2) the ideology reflected in national language policies and their effects*. The first category refers to the ideologies propagated by the *Alliance Israélite Universelle* education system as well as anti-minority and antisemitic sentiments, migration patterns, and the *Law of Return*, all of which contribute to the *rhetoric of language purism*. This rhetoric portrays Judeo-Spanish as an inferior, mixed language associated with lower social classes. The second category includes state-led efforts towards modernisation and homogenisation, as well as incidences of persecution and segregation, which have led to the emergence of a *culture of fear rhetoric*.

Fear as a 'connecting' element across generations provides a compelling lens through which the evolution of Judeo-Spanish among the Turkish Sephardim can be understood. This fear, deeply rooted in both the historical trauma of expulsion and the periodic resurgence of antisemitic and anti-minority sentiment, has woven its way through successive generations, shaping behaviours and attitudes in profound ways. Across all three generations, narratives consistently highlight this *culture of fear* as the predominant explanation for historical language shift. The discourse about the effect of language ideologies as mirrored in cross-generational narratives can be divided into three different types of processes, in line with the categorisation proposed by Busch § Reddemann (2013: 29):

a. Awareness of boundaries between the self and the other
b. Linguistic power vs. powerlessness
c. Belonging vs. non-belonging

The feeling of fear as a result of traumatic language experiences, whether directly experienced or indirectly transmitted, is one of the central elements connecting these processes. These findings enable the development of a causal model that interlinks ideology, attitudes, and practices. This model will serve as the framework for summarising the core findings presented throughout this dissertation. Figure 1. Ch. 7 below presents the main findings of this causal model to provide a comprehensive picture of how and why Sephardic identity is created through language (cf. Bucholtz & Hall 2004: 332). [156]

[156] This model continues and extends the processes illustrated in Figure 4. Ch. 6.

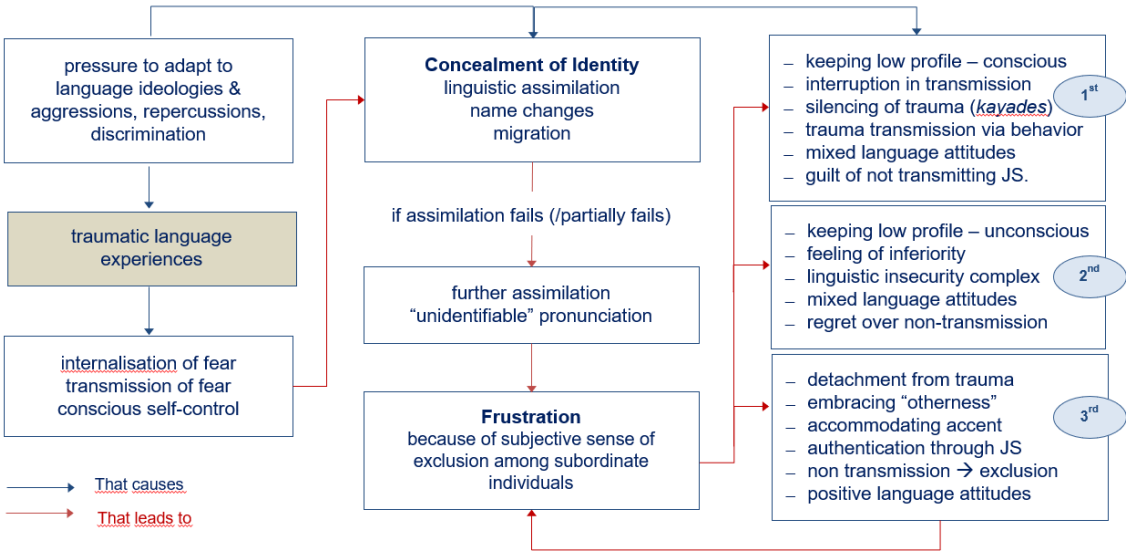


Figure 1. Ch. 7: *Flow diagram – pathways: ideologies, attitudes, practices – cross-generational perspective*

The *Citizen, Speak Turkish!* campaign, widely cited in personal narratives, has crystallised in the perceptions of the majority of consultants as the most significant measure of linguistic homogenisation and the main cause of fear. As the narratives show, this campaign had an extremely profound impact because, although it was a top-down measure, it manifested publicly as a bottom-up effort by ordinary citizens to enforce linguistic uniformity. The ordinary citizen became an omnipresent enforcer of linguistic conformity, continually reminding minority individuals of their 'otherness'.

The first generation, who grew up under the direct pressure of assimilation ideologies and experienced the most episodes of aggression and repercussions, endured traumatic events related to language use. In response, this generation internalised fear and adopted *adequation* as a "tactic of intersubjectivity" (cf. Bucholtz & Hall 2004: 382). Unlike *distinction*, *adequation* involves the pursuit of sufficient sameness with the majority to make differences between the minority and majority less marked. The first generation's *adequation* tactics aimed to avoid discrimination and other negative repercussions while ensuring the continuity of their sense of community and culture.

In the Sephardic context, *adequation* emerged from contested similarity and not as a "consensual process of equation" (cf. Bucholtz & Hall 2004: 382). *Adequation* involves strategies of concealment of individuals' ethnic identity in the majority context. The strategies of concealment employed by this generation included linguistic assimilation; alteration of their first names or the adoption of Turkish ones; migration

within Turkey to districts with predominantly Turkish populations; emigration, mainly to Israel, Europe, and the United States; and maintaining a low profile in public spaces.

Despite concerted efforts at *adequation*, including the interruption of transmission of the Judeo-Spanish language within families and the adoption of Turkish in public spaces, Sephardic ethnic identity remained distinctly marked by the persistence of a Sephardic accent in Turkish, as reflected in reactions from majority individuals. These reactions often manifested as inquiries in the shared public space aimed at pinpointing the identity and place of origin of Turkish Sephardic individuals. To mitigate this, individuals engaged in further "tactics of intersubjectivity" (cf. Bucholtz & Hall 2004: 370), particularly through processes of *authentication*, which involve the construction of a 'credible' or 'genuine' identity, as opposed to *denaturalisation*, 'the production of an identity that is perceived as incredible or non-genuine' (cf. Bucholtz & Hall 2004: 385; § 3.2.5). *Authentication* strategies are deployed specifically through the convergence of an individual's accent with that of the majority, aligning with the principles of *Communication Accommodation Theory* (Giles, 2008; Giles & Coupland, 1991; cf. § 6.3.2). This convergence is not simply about linguistic adaptation — it involves an intense, conscious and long-term process of *shibboleth* (cf. § 6.3.2) to erase any phonetic markers that are stereotypically associated with Jewish/Sephardic identity in an essentialist reading of language-and-identity relationship discourse (cf. § 3.2.1).

Authentication comes as a direct response to the nationalist rhetoric deployed in Turkey since the establishment of the Republic, particularly in the wake of linguistic homogenisation campaigns such as the *Citizen, Speak Turkish!* campaign. Moreover, *authentication* stands in causal relation to the antisemitic tropes of Jewish 'betrayal' which portray Jews as treacherous, deceitful, and essentially different (cf. Lamprou 2022: 43; § 6.2.4). The process of *authentication* is reinforced through heightened attentional control aimed at achieving 'accentless' or what is perceived as 'native-like' Turkish pronunciation, reflecting an effort to achieve social and political empowerment and recognition of individuals as legitimate participants in nationalist projects in which language is considered the cornerstone of national unity and language choice indexes particular nationalist stances (cf. Bucholtz & Hall 2004: 385).

Some consultants from the second and third generations even resorted to taking diction lessons to eliminate any trace of a Sephardic accent. The importance placed on achieving accent-free Turkish is further evidenced by the pride consultants expressed when their Sephardic identity could not be inferred from their speech alone. Lastly, the process of *authentication* is evident in the active participation of Sephardic elites in assimilationist campaigns. A notable example is Avram Galante's support for the *Citizen,*

Speak Turkish! campaign (Seloni & Sarfati 2013: 18) and efforts by Sephardic elites to promote the public use of Turkish, particularly through their involvement with *The Union for the Spread of the Turkish Language* (Bali 1999b: 180-181; Seloni & Sarfati 2013: 18). This involvement reflects a deliberate alignment with nationalist ideals, reinforcing a 'credible' identity within the broader societal context.

Interestingly, even when linguistic accommodation successfully produces 'unidentifiable' Turkish pronunciation, Sephardic individuals often experience a persistent subjective sense of exclusion that lingers after linguistic accommodation has taken place. This enduring sense of 'otherness' and lack of acceptance, despite the centuries-long presence of the Sephardim in Turkey, is reflected in the persistent conflation of anti-Israel rhetoric with antisemitic rhetoric, which resurfaces in response to evolving political dynamics between Israel and Turkey, reinforcing the perception that Jews remain unwelcome in the country. The very participants who initially embraced language shift and strategies of *adequation* and *authentication* now express regret for not preserving and passing down Judeo-Spanish. This regret is particularly poignant when they compare themselves to other ethnic minorities like Armenians and Greeks who, despite similar experiences of discrimination and suppression, have maintained their minority languages. Among the first generation, this regret is often coupled with self-reproach and feelings of guilt for their perceived complicity in the interruption of intergenerational language transmission.

Ironically, despite successful linguistic accommodation among the majority of the Sephardim today, the rhetoric of *denaturalisation* — the opposite of *authentication* (cf. Bucholtz & Hall 2004: 385) — remains pervasive. This *denaturalisation* manifests in the perception that the way Sephardim speak Turkish is seen as 'inauthentic' or 'dubious', reflecting a broader societal attitude of exclusion. This observation highlights the mechanisms underpinning the *denaturalisation* rhetoric employed in Nazi propaganda during World War II, which sought to delegitimise Jewish identity as 'non-genuine' and 'unbelievable'. In this propaganda, anchored in an essentialist reading of identity, Jews were perceived as lacking the 'normal' criteria for group identification, particularly because they were viewed as lacking a distinct ethnic language of their own. This absence was manipulated to portray Jewish identity as inherently 'abnormal' or 'illegitimate', furthering their exclusion and dehumanisation (cf. § 3.2.1; 3.5.1; 6.3.2). Thus, in the case of the Turkish Sephardim, *adequation* and *denaturalisation* are represented in opposition to each other and yet are causally linked. In other words, the Sephardim were pressured to abandon their ethnic language to conform to the ideal of linguistic homogenisation, and yet after successfully doing so, they are still 'othered' and

‘other themselves’ precisely because they have conformed to the official nationalistic agenda. This paradox — in which conformity to nationalistic ideals still results in marginalisation — illustrates the convergence of different types of ideologies within the Sephardic community (cf. § 6.2, 6.3).

All three generations have employed these tactics to different extents, and each generation has developed distinct strategies to cope with intergenerationally transmitted trauma and feelings of fear. In the following sections, I will discuss the findings specific to each generational cohort.

Intergenerational transmission gives rise to a complex palette of attitudes and emotions, which are shaped by historical, social, and familial dynamics. The considerations of speakers’ understanding of their pragmatic and metapragmatic actions (cf. Bucholtz & Hall 2004: 371) in respect to transmission and language learning have resulted in the following clustered tendencies in response to the *culture of fear rhetoric*.

7.3.1 Intergenerational responses to the culture of fear ideologies

First generation

In the first generation, traumatic experiences were systematically suppressed, resulting in the adoption of *kayadés,* a practice of ‘keeping quiet’. This silencing of trauma, however, did not prevent the transmission of fear. Instead, it was passed on to the second generation through both emotional and behavioural cues, albeit unconsciously. This intergenerational transmission of fear manifested in behaviours such as excessive caution in social interactions, persistent reminders to the younger generations to conceal their ethnic identity in public, and a reluctance to engage in discussions about painful historical events. Members of this generation began enrolling their children in Turkish schools, shifted to using Turkish in private settings, and rapidly reduced their use of Judeo-Spanish across various domains.

Regarding their attitudes towards Judeo-Spanish, the first generation’s perception of Judeo-Spanish became deeply entrenched within a hierarchical framework that ranked languages according to perceived social prestige. Judeo-Spanish, in particular, was viewed as inferior in comparison to languages like French, which were associated with higher social status and modernity. This perception was further reinforced by the association of Judeo-Spanish with the lower social classes and its characterisation as a mixed and impure language. The rhetoric of *language purism* appears to have supplanted *culture of fear* rhetoric at the level of attitude formation in consultants’ retrospective narratives. This process appears as a coping mechanism for the underlying trauma. By silencing the traumatic past, this generational cohort adopted

a narrative that could justify and rationalise the interruption in intergenerational language transmission. This overlap in attitudes made the decision to abandon Judeo-Spanish more psychologically bearable and socially motivated. However, when asked today about the prevailing cause of language shift, this generation points exclusively to the ideologies of the *culture of fear* and not to *language purism* rhetoric. This observation, however, should be understood as an emerging tendency rather than a fully quantifiable and measurable result within the scope of the methodologies employed in the present dissertation. The nature of this finding suggests a pattern that warrants further investigation with more precise tools and methods that could provide a more definitive measurement.

Today, the first generation exhibits mixed feelings towards language shift. While some express guilt and regret, others feel a sense of alienation and isolation due to the interruption of linguistic and cultural practices. For the first generation, the loss of Judeo-Spanish represents more than just a shift in language: it signifies an erosion of sociocultural distinctiveness and a feeling of displacement within their own families and broader community. Non-transmission among this generation was a conscious decision which today inspires guilt at their acknowledged role in interrupting language transmission. For this generation, the fear of social exclusion was among the prevailing reasons for the interruption of transmission.

Second generation

The second generation largely recreated their parents' behaviour through an unconscious process (cf. Kogan 2002: 251). This behaviour was driven by covert negative attitudes towards Judeo-Spanish, rooted in a transmitted fear of speaking the language in public, the lack of social status associated with the language, and their own insecurity due to limited proficiency in the language. Consequently, they maintained a low profile and associated Judeo-Spanish with feelings of threat and fear and linguistic inferiority. Most individuals in this generational cohort were socialised in a predominantly Turkish-speaking environment, although their parents spoke Judeo-Spanish among themselves. Despite these factors, this context resulted in a relatively high number of fluent speakers (13 out of 22) compared to semi-speakers (6) and passive speakers (3). Family exposure, particularly the use of Judeo-Spanish as a code language, provided the third generation with enough language input for use in communication within the community or while travelling, but did not establish a strong foundation for language transmission to the next generation, even as attitudes shifted from negative to positive.

In the past, predominant negative attitudes were attributed to both language purism rhetoric and this generation's limited proficiency in Judeo-Spanish. Attitudinal shifts among this generation typically occurred in adulthood, when individuals' exposure to and interactions in Judeo-Spanish became more frequent. The second generation demonstrates a lack of awareness regarding their role in language transmission, coupled with regret and language insecurity. Their insecurity stems primarily from a perceived insufficiency in their knowledge of Judeo-Spanish, a consequence of indirect language transmission. This generation often experiences a sense of unfulfilled responsibility and delayed learning due to ideological pressures, leading to language acquisition only in adulthood. However, over the past two decades, with increased international attention on Judeo-Spanish, these attitudes have shifted towards a more positive outlook. This generation is at the forefront of language maintenance and revitalisation efforts. Among the second generation, there is often a lack of awareness of their existing language skills, which tend to surface primarily during interactions with Spanish speakers.

Third generation

The third generation marks a significant shift in the intergenerational transmission of fear and language practices by breaking the cycle and adopting new strategies for social and linguistic identification. While the first generation primarily used *authentication* strategies to assimilate, such as *converging* their accents with the majority, the third generation exhibits a marked tendency towards *divergence* (Giles, 2008; Giles & Coupland, 1991). Having fully integrated into the majority society on the linguistic level, this generation increasingly employs linguistic elements that highlight their distinctiveness in social interactions. While the first and second generations leaned toward strategies of identity concealment and vigilance, the younger generation displays greater resilience and a willingness to confront and contest these practices. Unlike their grandparents, who sought *authentication* through Turkish, the third generation embraces 'otherness' and *authentication* by using Judeo-Spanish and Spanish as tools of cultural affirmation. Moreover, rather than measuring authenticity solely based on linguistic proficiency, authenticity is now seen as the shared ability to adeptly imitate the code-switching and code-mixing practices of the first and second generations. This third generation often regards Judeo-Spanish with awe and fascination, seeing it as a vessel for their imagined Hispanic Sephardic identity. This shift is driven both by global developments in the rhetoric surrounding endangered languages and minority values and by a strong sense of exclusion due to their limited exposure to and knowledge of Judeo-Spanish.

This generation is also the generation most profoundly impacted by language shift, often experiencing frustration and disappointment over their sense of loss and disconnection from their family's cultural and linguistic heritage. The strongest attitudinal responses were targeted at the use of Judeo-Spanish as a code language, which generated ambivalent feelings among third-generation consultants. Some feel disconnected from family gatherings, since they are unable to understand conversations, while for others, it sparks curiosity and facilitates language learning.

The present study results show that the third generation navigates the challenges arising from the feeling of exclusion by leveraging the symbolic function of postvernacular language use, particularly through the performance of 'last words'. For many, learning Spanish represents the closest linguistic bridge to their heritage language, offering not only a way to reconnect with Judeo-Spanish but also a practical tool for communication with Spanish speakers in professional settings and during international travel. In contrast to the first and second generations, for whom Israel is the predominant choice for emigration, the third generation prioritises Spain due to a stronger linguistic and cultural identification. Furthermore, within the third generation, there is a notable trend of reintroducing Sephardic names, reflecting a renewed pride in their heritage and a deliberate reclamation of Sephardic identity. This resurgence underscores the enduring significance of names as cultural symbols among the Turkish Sephardim and marks a clear departure from past ideologies.

7.4 Crossgenerational tendencies

Today, Judeo-Spanish is an endangered language in a postvernacular stage. It is no longer used as a daily spoken vernacular across generations but is instead engaged with in a performative manner, serving a symbolic function to reinforce cultural distinctiveness. Despite its primarily symbolic role, 43 out of 60 participants still consider Judeo-Spanish their mother tongue, underscoring its enduring value among the Turkish Sephardim, pointing to a notable discrepancy between self-reported estimates of Judeo-Spanish use within the community and actual observed language use (cf. § 5.4). This persistence is mainly driven by multilingual practices, code-mixing, and the continued use of Judeo-Spanish as a code language within the community.

Judeo-Spanish continues to be used across several domains, although its functions and significance have evolved. Within families and in intra-group communication, the language is still spoken by some elders who are proficient in Judeo-Spanish, while younger peers often use it as a code language. Beyond these interpersonal contexts, Judeo-Spanish persists to a limited degree in religious worship

at the beginning or end of prayers in Hebrew. It also plays a prominent role in theatrical, musical, and humorous performances, where it serves today predominantly as a performative act and a bridge between the different generations and fluency levels.

The use of “last words” (cf. § 5.4.5) by the third generation of Sephardim serves as a crucial intergenerational link, enabling the continuation of Sephardic heritage in the postvernacular stage. Mastery of these expressions not only signifies ‘authentic’ membership within the Turkish Sephardic community but also sustains a sense of positive distinctiveness across generations, especially in the context of shifting attitudes and evolving international dynamics. ‘Fluency’ in “last words” exemplifies innovative strategies for negotiating ethnic identity markers through language, with humour playing a significant role in this process. Judeo-Spanish is also used in international communication with non-Sephardic Spanish speakers and is actively maintained through online platforms and community hubs dedicated to language learning and preservation.

Different generations of Turkish Sephardim engage with Judeo-Spanish in distinct ways. While the first generation uses it as an unmarked spoken vernacular within specific domains of daily life, the third generation primarily uses Judeo-Spanish elements for marked, performative roles in the form of individual words and expressions. These expressions evoke associations, memories, or emotions, although — or even because — they do not fully understand the meaning behind these expressions. This use of Judeo-Spanish creates a sense of intergenerational connection and establishes what I have termed a *rhetorical legacy zone* in which individuals feel rooted.

In the domain of worship, different generations display different preferences for specific languages in prayer. The first generation predominantly uses Hebrew and Judeo-Spanish, viewing the former as the most ‘authentic’ language for communicating with the divine. However, the second generation employs only Hebrew as their primary liturgical language, with limited Judeo-Spanish phrases inserted into prayers, while Turkish has become the language of personal prayer for the third generation. The third generation’s experience represents a diminished connection to the traditional languages of prayer, particularly Hebrew. I observed a collective desire to understand religious readings during rituals, prompting younger consultants to advocate for readings in Turkish. The widespread lamentation over the lack of Hebrew proficiency among Turkish Jews reflects a disconnect from this aspect of their heritage, pointing to a tension between tradition and modernity in religious practices amidst the increased secularisation and modernisation of the Jewish community in Istanbul. The decline in the role of Hebrew in ritualised prayer within households signals a further historic shift in the enduring nature of multilingualism within Jewish societies (cf. Spolsky 2010). Over the

millennia, religion has provided a nurturing environment for Hebrew, revealing deep connections between belief systems and language. These connections, whether direct or indirect, significantly influence the language culture, the structuring of core values in the relationship between language and identity, and the position of the spoken vernacular among diverse Jewish groups in general and among the Sephardim in particular.

Performances in Judeo-Spanish are perhaps the most effective means of enhancing cultural distinctiveness. They are not so much associated with contemporary Sephardic life as with an imagined past, sites, and culture (cf. Shandler 2006: 134). Beyond serving as a platform for artistic creation and socialisation, theatre activities today contribute to language maintenance, strengthening the connections between different generations and levels of fluency and between individual identity and the heritage language. These performances are highlighted as a deliberate and conscious form of social expression that amplifies awareness of language as a marked act of expression. It is the domain in which ideologies are most uncensored and exposed with performances serving as both a response to dominant ideologies and a means of resisting the decline of the language by actively challenge prevailing norms (Bucholtz & Hall 2004: 382).

On the level of performance, the intersection between *practice*, *performance*, *indexicality*, and *ideology* (Bucholtz & Hall 2004) becomes apparent in shaping Sephardic identity. Different generations within the Sephardic community engage with performance acts in distinct ways. While the first and second generations may emulate code-mixing practices as a form of inclusion, the third generation may employ processes of impersonation and dissociation to connect with their linguistic heritage. Performances serve as transmission channels and more accessible language learning platforms for the younger generation. Music performances have also played a vital role in raising awareness of Judeo-Spanish worldwide, fostering international visibility and shifting attitudes towards its endangered status and role within the community.

Online platforms and social media represent another venue that is contributing to a shift in attitudes and language use and maintenance. These platforms serve as digital homelands (cf. Brink-Danan 2011c; Bunin Benor 2011; Held 2010; Romero 2017) for Sephardic communities, facilitating language transmission and maintenance efforts beyond geographical boundaries. They create a sense of community and belonging for the Sephardic diaspora, enabling linguistic reassembly and cultural exchange beyond physical borders. While some online communities are managed by individuals with descriptive objectives, others operate under the guidance of central institutions like the *Sephardic Centre of Istanbul* (SKAD, cf. § 5.8) with the goal of promoting standardisation

and language preservation. However, among this study's consultants, awareness of such hubs and participation in them is limited to a handful of people involved in the language maintenance and revitalisation efforts surrounding the SKAD.

The use of Judeo-Spanish as a code language across generations despite varying fluency levels reflects a broader in-group practice of maintaining privacy and reinforcing group boundaries and as a protective measure in contexts where revealing ethnic identity might be risky, such as the military. While this practice unintentionally represents the most effective means of intergenerational language transmission which enhances multilingual practices, it evokes mixed emotions among third-generation participants: some feel excluded, while others are inspired to learn the language.

Despite historical tendencies to downplay the use of Judeo-Spanish due to fear or low prestige, there is now a growing pride and awareness of the language's cultural significance. This renewed appreciation has led some individuals from the second and third generations to make deliberate efforts to speak Judeo-Spanish within the family. Despite these increasingly positive attitudes, the perception of a continuous threat of antisemitism and heightened vigilance persist into the present day, featuring in the narratives of all generations with regard to their status as a Turkish minority, both in the past and the present. While there was no clear indication of clinically-defined trauma disorders, the psychological burden was evident across all three generations. 53 out of 60 participants reported having experienced episodes of discrimination as members of the Jewish minority, which points to an increased awareness of threats and heightened vigilance in public spaces. These narratives overlap in content, perceived effects, and emotional responses to perceived injustices. The primary difference between generations lies in the consultants' narration strategies. The first and second generations embed their accounts of antisemitism within a master narrative of their privileged status in Turkey, reproducing the official narrative of Turkey's image of multicultural tolerance. In contrast, the third generation speaks about these issues more directly, contesting the prevailing rhetoric of the past.

The narratives of the first and second generations are characterised by avoidance, detachment, and contradictions regarding the signs and effects of antisemitism, likely as a strategy to avoid further conflict. Conversely, the third generation demonstrates an ease and detachment in thematising and confronting both the past and the present. This shift suggests a possible diminishment of traumatising effects on the third generation, who were not directly involved in antisemitic events or intense identity negotiations. Their more open approach could also be attributed to greater linguistic integration and a lessened sense of immediate threat. Generational differences highlight

a broader change in how the community engages with its historical and contemporary experiences of antisemitism, signalling a potential move towards greater self-assertion in their Jewish identity within the Turkish context.

Another important event that is both deeply anchored in ideological work and strongly reflected in language practices is represented in consultants' narratives about the *Law of Return* (2015). This law, which grants Spanish citizenship to Sephardim who meet certain requirements, has reignited debates about language purity and the value of Judeo-Spanish, along with its status and cultural capital. While the older generations grapple with feelings of historical injustice and the challenges of proving their cultural ties to Spain, the younger generation embraces the chance to strengthen their linguistic and cultural connections to Spain, pointing to the evolving nature of group boundaries, identity, and the implications of shifts in the perception of the heritage language across different generations.

The most significant cross-generational shift observed is the evolution of attitudes towards Judeo-Spanish, transitioning from perceptions of Judeo-Spanish as a 'mixed' and 'impure' language to a more positive recognition of its value in reinforcing Sephardic distinctiveness. This attitudinal shift has likely contributed to a broader acknowledgment of past traumatic events as pivotal in driving language shift.

This study has shown that speakers from different generations navigate their language insecurities and perceptions of authenticity in different ways. As fluency decreases across generations, each generation interprets the core elements that define authenticity differently. For the first and second generations, authenticity is perceived as fluency in the language, speaking it without resorting to code-mixing and code-switching. For the third generation, authenticity is associated with the ability to successfully imitate code-mixing and to use specific items of vocabulary, "last words", in a performative manner and within the right social context.

The findings of this dissertation align with the views of Herman (1977) and David & Bar-Tal (2009) on the global interconnectedness of Jewish communities, suggesting that changes in one part of the community resonate throughout the entire diaspora (cf. § 3.2.4). The language practices of the Turkish Sephardim reflect trends seen in other Sephardic communities worldwide. The study also underscores the impact of Zionist ideology, which has historically encouraged Jewish immigrants to prioritise Hebrew, often at the expense of their diasporic languages (cf. Perelmutter 2018: 529). This pressure to know and learn Hebrew is reflected in the consultant's narratives in this study in form of a perceived international 'expectation' and is most prominent among the second and third generations. Moreover, contrary to Myhill's (2003) assertion that

language adapts to cultural habitus rather than shaping it, the findings in this dissertation suggest a mutual influence. In particular, these findings show how language preferences and language knowledge can influence migration choices.

In conclusion, the relationship between language and Sephardic identity is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that cannot be solely explained by a community's collective efforts towards language preservation. As explored in the Sephardic context, a variety of internal and external factors have shaped and sometimes even counteracted the community's intent to maintain its linguistic heritage. Thus, a more accurate predictor of the link between language and identity lies in cross-generational attitudes toward language shift, the perceived effects of that shift, and the strategies and practices (*habitus*) employed by the community to construct identity through language after the original factors driving the shift have dissipated. In the following discussion, I will outline two key directions identified in the current study as essential for understanding the role of Judeo-Spanish in Sephardic identity.

7.4.1 Fluid boundaries among Romance languages

Across all generational cohorts, I consistently observed the fluid and permeable boundaries between various Romance languages, both historically and in contemporary contexts. Despite the transition to Turkish, Sephardic Jews' perception of Romance languages has remained strongly positive across the generations. Positive attitudes towards other Romance languages such as French, Italian, and Spanish perhaps reflect not only the influence of the *Alliance Israélite Universelle* and French education but also a historical, undifferentiated perception of Romance varieties among Jews. This perception has its roots in Medieval Spain before the Jewish Expulsion (Aslanov 2023: 28). During the 16th century, it facilitated the process of koinéization among Ottoman Jews, leading to the emergence of a unified and cohesive Ottoman Sephardic identity among second- and third-generation exiles, which had previously been lacking (cf. Minervini 2023: 267). In this historical context, supported by the socio-economic, political, and ideological environment, Judeo-Spanish developed as a "key element of Sephardic communal identity" (Minervini 2023: 275).

This perception of Romance languages as historically fluid, combined with repeated language shifts, likely played a crucial role in the Sephardic response to Turkification policies and ideologies of linguistic purism. Moreover, it may be an underlying factor for the blurring of boundaries between Judeo-Spanish and Spanish in

the identity formation of the third generation today, or even a coping mechanism of the third generation as it faces language loss and a reflection of their desire for continuity[157].

7.4.2 Multilingualism as a core value

Kemalist language ideologies advocating for Turkish as the national language have strongly influenced the multilingual dynamics among the Sephardim. Consultants expressed nostalgia for a bygone era of multilingualism, acknowledging its vital role in preserving Sephardic distinctiveness. Multilingualism is perceived by the majority of consultants as a core value of Sephardic identity and as a source of cultural relativity and flexibility in understanding the other. With the disappearance of Judeo-Spanish among the Sephardic community, what is perceived as lost is the multiplicity of cultural references inherent in Judeo-Spanish as a language that has incorporated a multitude of worldviews through multi-layered language contact and code-mixing practices (cf. Bornes Varol 2013b: 32), and thus the multiple identities that came with these practices. However, this study reveals that multilingual practices are still strongly represented in the Sephardic community: Judeo-Spanish is Viki's preferred language, although she thinks in Turkish and prays in Hebrew. When she addresses God in a personal way, however, she does so in Turkish and Judeo-Spanish. "*A, kon el Dyo, yo d'aryénto kuándo avló, ávlo i en túrko i en espanyól"* ('Ah, with God, when I speak from my heart, when I speak, I speak both in Turkish and in Spanish'). The language of her emotions is also a mix of Judeo-Spanish and Turkish: "*Espanyól kon túrko melanjádo"* ('a mix of Spanish and Turkish'). Among the third generation, the decline in Judeo-Spanish and French is counterbalanced by the acquisition of English and Spanish, suggesting that multilingualism is not necessarily shrinking, but rather evolving.

It is not a single language but the Sephardim's habitus of navigating social and linguistic shifts — expressed through multilingual practices — that stands out as a defining feature of Sephardic identity across generations. The core findings of this thesis underscore the role of Judeo-Spanish within a repertoire of languages and a dynamic process of navigating evolving language choices, in line with David & Bar-Tal (2009: 373) (cf. § 3.2.4). This idea prompts a re-evaluation of the position of Judeo-Spanish within the Turkish Sephardic context. Instead of limiting the analysis to theorising the relationship between language and identity through the perspective of static core values

[157] These insights into the perception and role of fluid boundaries among Turkish Sephardim are based on a broader body of empirical evidence not covered in this thesis, which will be the focus of a future article.

of Jewish identity, it is essential to recognise the bi- and multilingualism, the bi- and multiculturalism, and the re-territorialisation[158] of the Sephardi nation as the basis for interpreting the multiple and overlapping social and linguistic identities of the Sephardim.

Throughout history, these attributes have empowered individuals to navigate complex socio-cultural, historical, political, ideological, and economic landscapes. The Sephardim's *habitus* of navigating the social space and periodically shifting to different sets of core values (with ancestry/religion as the central values) and languages across different historical contexts does not indicate a weakened connection between their vernacular and their identity. Rather, it reflects the foundation for navigation, whether conscious or unconscious, among multiple and often contradictory identities in interaction with diverse others in a particular historical context. Here, *habitus* plays a crucial role in navigating shifting contexts while maintaining a core as a lode star and guiding principle. This ensures what David & Bar-Tal (2009: 365) identified as the sixth generic feature of macro-level identity: *continuity and consecutiveness in the dimension of time* despite acculturation processes of *conglomeration* (cf. § 3.4), in which only certain features and core values that define the ethnic group are involved in a *fusion* process (Haarmann 1986: 45). This understanding changes the discourse of seeing language in the Sephardic identity as static attribute of Sephardi individuals or of the Sephardim as an ethnic group. Instead, it sees expression of Sephardic identity through language as an attribute of situations that are inherent in the group's situated social actions and not in the people themselves (in line with Bucholtz & Hall: 2004).

Through ongoing situated and strategic social actions, Sephardic individuals become agents in the linguistic construction of selfhood. Historically, when Judeo-Spanish was seen as a barrier to successful identity negotiation within the Muslim majority, it was strategically downplayed within the community's value hierarchy. Today, however, as linguistic distinctiveness gains prominence in international discourse and as past traumatic language experiences seem to dissipate, Judeo-Spanish is resurfacing as "a revered cultural object" (cf. Myhill 2004: 114) in identity negotiation, despite or perhaps because of language shift. This resurgence, however, reflects a strategic organisation of linguistic continuity that aligns with shifting ideologies while simultaneously satisfying the Sephardic community's need for distinctiveness. In the digital age, this has been further facilitated by the re-territorialisation of the Sephardic

[158] In the sense of "repetitious nature of articulating a territory" (Yebra López 2021).

homeland in digital spaces, such as “Digital Home-Lands” [159] or “Ladinoland” [160] where the dispersed Sephardic communities articulate their identities around Judeo-Spanish in new, innovative ways.

As a postvernacular language, Judeo-Spanish has undergone a transformation that offers it a renewed existence, enhancing communal bonds and allowing for a re-negotiation of its symbolic significance as a heritage language. In this second, postvernacular life, Judeo-Spanish, although no longer central to daily communication, remains deeply embedded in the cultural fabric of the Turkish Sephardic community. Even after the language has been largely abandoned or, metaphorically speaking, ‘buried alive’, it persists as a powerful symbol and instrument of Sephardic identity, a cherished object of heritage and a *rhetorical legacy zone* where individuals feel at home, irrespective of geography and fluency in the language. This transvaluation highlights the ongoing relevance of Judeo-Spanish, not merely as a linguistic relic but as a vital element of cultural continuity and collective memory. The question of whether and how Sephardic identity will persist beyond postvernacularity, once the symbolic role of the language has faded, remains an area for future scholarship to investigate.

[159] In line with Held (2010) and Yebra López (2021).
[160] In line with Brink-Danan (2011b).

Appendices

1 Study consultants' profiles and citation codes

1.1 Individual consultants not part of any family cluster

	Pseudonym	Consultant Profiles	Citation Codes
1	Jojo	[15(1-3)-lad-1st-m-92-H-fluent-ind]	[1st-m-92-fluent-ind]
2	Murat	[15(1)-lad-1st-m-82-S-fluent-ind]	[1st-m-82-fluent-ind]
3	Henri	[16(23-31)-lad-1st-m-81-S-fluent-ind]	[1st-m-81-fluent-ind]
4	Selim	[16(1-4)-lad-1st-m-78-S-fluent-ind]	[1st-m-78-fluent-ind]
5	Sara	[16(1-12)-lad-1st-f-75-S-fluent-ind]	[1st-f-75-fluent-ind]
6	Habib	[16(9-24)-lad-1st-m-73-H-fluent-ind]	[1st-m-73-fluent-ind]
7	David	[16(5-17)-lad-1st-m-72-S-fluent-ind]	[1st-m-72-fluent-ind]
8	Mendi	[15(4-6)-lad-1st-m-70-H-fluent-ind]	[1st-m-70-fluent-ind]
9	Natan	[16(1-4)-lad-1st-m-69-S-fluent-ind]	[1st-m-69-fluent-ind]
10	Roza	[16(1-13)-lad-1st-f-68-S-fluent-ind]	[1st-f-68-fluent-ind]
11	Yusuf	[15(1-3)-lad-2nd-m-65-H-passive-ind]	[2nd-m-65-passive-ind]
12	Isak	[15(1-2)-lad-2nd-m-65-S-fluent-ind]	[2nd-m-65-fluent-ind]
13	Ester	[16(1-3)-lad-1st-f-62-S-neo-ind]	[1st-f-62-neo-ind]
14	Nina	[17(3-8)-lad-2nd-f-62-H-fluent-ind]	[2nd-f-62-fluent-ind]
15	Bensyon	[15(3-6)-lad-2nd-m-61-S-fluent-ind]	[2nd-m-61-fluent-ind]
16	Lola	[16(9-15)-lad-2nd-f-61-S-fluent-ind]	[2nd-f-61-fluent-ind]
17	Robert	[16(23-29)-lad-2nd-m-61-H-fluent-ind]	[2nd-m-61-fluent-ind]
18	Beki	[15(1-2)-lad-2nd-f-57-H-fluent-ind]	[2nd-f-57-fluent-ind]
19	Luna	[15(1-3)-lad-2nd-f-55-H-fluent-ind]	[2nd-f-55-fluent-ind]
20	Salamon	[16(1-9)-lad-3rd-m-43-H-fluent-ind]	[3rd-m-43-fluent-ind]
21	Milen	[16(1-8)-lad-3rd-f-38-H-neo-ind]	[3rd-f-38-neo-ind]
22	Albert	[16(13-24)-lad-3rd-m-35-H-passive-ind]	[3rd-m-35-passive-ind]
23	Metin	[16(1-5)-lad-3rd-m-30-S-Spanish-ind]	[3rd-m-30-Spanish-ind]
24	Berk	[15(4-10)-lad-3rd-m-30-H-heritage-ind]	[3rd-m-30-heritage-ind]
25	Reysi	[17(1-12)-lad-3rd-f-25-H-heritage-ind]	[3rd-f-25-heritage-ind]
26	Beti	[16(2-4)-lad-3rd-f-21-H-Spanish-ind]	[3rd-f-21-Spanish-ind]

Figure 1. Appendix: *Consultants not part of any family cluster*

1.2 Consultants from two-generation family clusters

	Pseudonym	Long Code	Short Code
1	Meri	[15(1-14)-lad-1st-f-88-S-fluent-fam4]	[1st-f-88-fluent-fam4]
2	Emel	[17(1-6)-lad-2nd-f-64-H-fluent-fam4]	[2nd-f-64-fluent-fam4]
3	Berta	[15(1)-lad-1st-f-76-E-fluent-fam7]	[1st-f-76-fluent-fam7]
4	Moshe	[16(1-8)-lad-2nd-m-42-H-semi-fam7]	[2nd-m-42-semi-fam7]
5	Jak	[15(1-6)-lad-1st-m-75-H-fluent-fam8]	[1st-m-75-fluent-fam8]
6	Meyir	[15(1-6)-lad-2nd-m-45-H-semi-fam8]	[2nd-m-45-semi-fam8]
7	Edna	[16(1-12)-lad-2nd-f-60-S-fluent-fam9]	[2nd-f-60-fluent-fam9]
8	Fani	[16(12-14)-lad-3rd-f-27-H-Spanish-fam9]	[3rd-f-27-Spanish-fam9]
9	Beri	[16(1-15)-lad-1st-m-88-S-fluent-fam10]	[1st-m-88-fluent-fam10]
10	Viki	[16(1-7)-lad-2nd-f-63-S-fluent-fam10]	[2nd-f-63-fluent-fam10]
11	Tal	[17(9-16)-lad-2nd-m-68-H-semi-fam11]	[2nd-m-68-semi-fam11]
12	Treysi	[17(1-3)-lad-3rd-f-40-H-passive-fam11]	[3rd-f-40-passive-fam11]
13	Rika	[17(1)-lad-1st-f-68-H-fluent-fam12]	[1st-f-68-fluent-fam12]
14	Naftali	[17(10-20)-lad-2nd-m-45-H-fluent-fam12]	[2nd-m-45-fluent-fam12]
15	Zelda	[17(9-10)-lad-2nd-f-53-S-semi-fam13]	[2nd-f-53-semi-fam13]
16	Yıldız	[17(11-15)-lad-3rd-f-30-H-Spanish-fam13]	[3rd-f-30-Spanish-fam13]

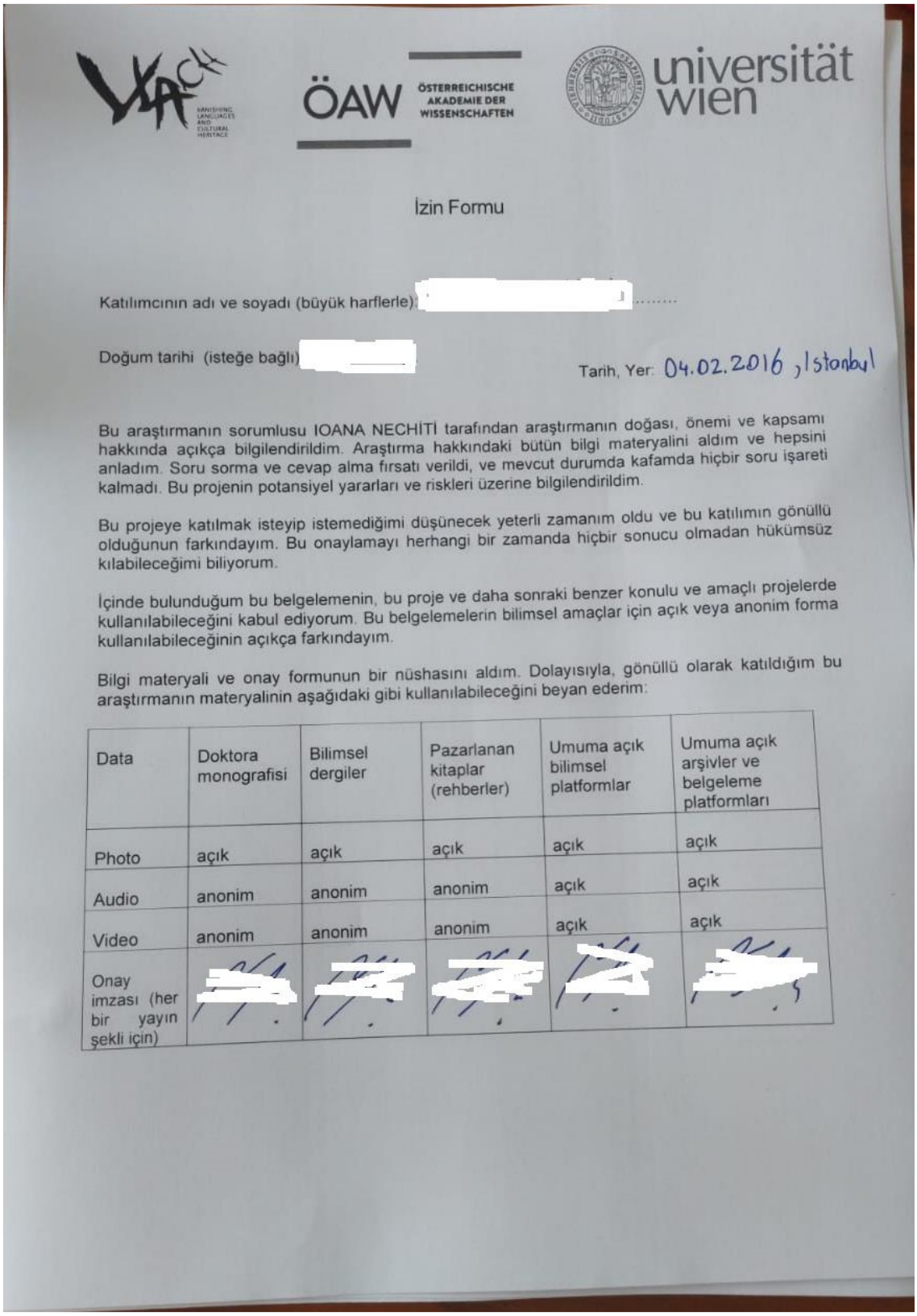
Figure 2. Appendix: *Consultants from two-generation family*

1.3 Consultants from three-generation family clusters

	Pseudonym	Long Code	Short Code
1	Perla	[15(7-9)-lad-1st-f-88-S-fluent-fam1]	[1st-f-88-fluent-fam1]
2	Mordo	[15(1)-lad-2nd-m-59-H-passive-fam1]	[2nd-m-59-passive-fam1]
3	Suzan	[15(7-9)-lad-3rd-f-22-H-Spanish-fam1]	[3rd-f-22-Spanish-fam1]
4	Lusi	[15(14-20)-lad-1st-f-73-S-fluent-fam2]	[1st-f-73-fluent-fam2]
5	Ezra	[15(7-10)-lad-2nd-f-53-H-passive-fam2]	[2nd-f-53-passive-fam2]
6	Elias	[15(7-12)-lad-3rd-m-26-H-heritage-fam2]	[3rd-m-26-heritage-fam2]
7	Lili	[15(3-12)-lad-1st-f-87-E-fluent-fam3]	[1st-f-87-fluent-fam3]
8	Moris	[15(8-13)-lad-1st-m-81-E-fluent-fam3]	[1st-m-81-fluent-fam3]
9	Sandy	[15(5-7)-lad-1st-f-78-S-fluent-fam3]	[1st-f-78-fluent-fam3]
10	Neama	[17(5-8)-lad-2nd-f-49-H-semi-fam3]	[2nd-f-49-semi-fam3]
11	Rafi	[16(1-6)-lad-3rd-m-22-H-neo-fam3]	[3rd-m-22-neo-fam3]
12	Rita	[17(11-17)-lad-1st-f-79-S-fluent-fam5]	[1st-f-79-fluent-fam5]
13	Michael	[17(13-21)-lad-2nd-m-67-S-fluent-fam5]	[2nd-m-67-fluent-fam5]
14	Binyamin	[16(1-7)-lad-3rd-m-22-H-heritage-fam5]	[3rd-m-22-heritage-fam5]
15	Jüdit	[17(17-22)-lad-1st-f-83-S-fluent-fam6]	[1st-f-83-fluent-fam6]
16	Gözcü	[17(30-31)-lad-2nd-m-65-H-fluent-fam6]	[2nd-m-65-fluent-fam6]
17	Solita	[17(24-27)-lad-2nd-f-63-H-semi-fam6]	[2nd-f-63-semi-fam6]
18	Kaden	[17(28-29)-lad-3rd-f-33-H-Spanish-fam6]	[3rd-f-33-Spanish-fam6]

Figure 3. Appendix: *Consultants from three-generation family clusters*

2 Consent Form



İzin Formu

Katılımcının adı ve soyadı (büyük harflerle): [redacted] .....

Doğum tarihi (isteğe bağlı) [redacted]

Tarih, Yer: 04.02.2016, Istanbul

Bu araştırmanın sorumlusu IOANA NECHİTİ tarafından araştırmanın doğası, önemi ve kapsamı hakkında açıkça bilgilendirildim. Araştırma hakkındaki bütün bilgi materyalini aldım ve hepsini anladım. Soru sorma ve cevap alma fırsatı verildi, ve mevcut durumda kafamda hiçbir soru işareti kalmadı. Bu projenin potansiyel yararları ve riskleri üzerine bilgilendirildim.

Bu projeye katılmak isteyip istemediğimi düşünecek yeterli zamanım oldu ve bu katılımın gönüllü olduğunun farkındayım. Bu onaylamayı herhangi bir zamanda hiçbir sonucu olmadan hükümsüz kılabileceğimi biliyorum.

İçinde bulunduğum bu belgelemenin, bu proje ve daha sonraki benzer konulu ve amaçlı projelerde kullanılabileceğini kabul ediyorum. Bu belgelemelerin bilimsel amaçlar için açık veya anonim forma kullanılabileceğinin açıkça farkındayım.

Bilgi materyali ve onay formunun bir nüshasını aldım. Dolayısıyla, gönüllü olarak katıldığım bu araştırmanın materyalinin aşağıdaki gibi kullanılabileceğini beyan ederim:

Data	Doktora monografisi	Bilimsel dergiler	Pazarlanan kitaplar (rehberler)	Umuma açık bilimsel platformlar	Umuma açık arşivler ve belgeleme platformları
Photo	açık	açık	açık	açık	açık
Audio	anonim	anonim	anonim	açık	açık
Video	anonim	anonim	anonim	açık	açık
Onay imzası (her bir yayın şekli için)	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]

Figure 4. Appendix: *Signed consent form in Turkish*

Consent Form

Name participant (block letters):.....

Date of birth (optional):.....

Place, date:

I was expressly informed by the person responsible for this research project IOANA NECHITI about the nature, importance and scope of the research project. I have received and read the information material, which I wholly understood. I had the opportunity to ask questions to get the answers, and I currently have no further questions. I have been informed about the potential benefits and risks of this project.

I had plenty of time to decide whether I want to participate in this research project and I am aware that the participation is voluntary. I know that I may revoke this consent at any time, without any consequence for me.

I agree to the use of the data which include my person in this research project and following projects with a similar thematic, purpose and goal. I am well aware of the fact that this data can be used for scientific purposes in an anonymous form or in an open form.

I have received a copy of the information material and of the consent form. Consequently, I hereby declare my voluntary participation in this research project and to the use of data as specified in the table below:

Data	PhD monography	scientific journals	marketed books (manuals)	scientific platforms with open access	Archives and documentation platforms with open access
Photo	open	open	open	open	open
Audio	anonymous	anonymous	anonymous	open	open
Video	anonymous	anonymous	anonymous	open	open
Consent by signature in each field					

Figure 5. Appendix: *Consent form in English*

3 Questionnaire for the in-depth interview

	1. Profile Outline
1	family name
2	birth name if different
3	given name
4	additional given names
5	names in Turkish if different
6	pseudonym
7	sex (M – F – O)
8	year of birth
9	ethnic/we group
10	religion
11	mother tongue
12	additional languages
13	education
14	member of ensemble
15	profession
16	special knowledge
17	born in (city / district)
18	grew up in (city /district)
19	origin of parents (city /district)
20	origin of grandparents (city /district)
21	family status
22	location(s) where living
23	contact data
	2. Language biography & transmission
24	How many languages were spoken at home?
25	Were you exposed to Ladino at home, in the neighbourhood, or in other contexts?
26	Did your parents or grandparents speak Ladino? In which situations and with whom?
27	What language was transmitted to your parents, to you?
28	What language would your parents speak among themselves? With grandparents?
29	What language would your grandparents speak among themselves? And with your parents? And with you?
30	Was there a code language? In which situations was it spoken?
31	Would you have liked to have been taught Ladino at home?
32	Why do you think your parents did not teach you Ladino?
33	To what language do you wish you had been exposed at home?
34	At home, what language should Sephardic individuals learn first?
35	Are there valid reasons for speaking Ladino as the sole language at home?
36	What language did you transmit to your children/ plan to transmit to your children?
	3. Language knowledge & practices
37	Are there valid reasons for speaking Turkish as the sole language in public?
38	Is there any situation in which you use Ladino in public? When?
39	Have you ever participated in activities related to Ladino?
40	Do any of your friends speak Ladino?

41	Have you ever attempted to learn/improve/maintain your Judeo-Spanish?
42	What foreign language was available in school?
43	What language should Sephardic students learn in primary school?
44	What language should Sephardic students choose at the university level?
45	Should every Sephardic pupil have the chance to study Ladino in school?
46	What foreign language would you like your children to learn?
47	How could knowledge of Ladino be helpful?
48	Do you have experiences in which Ladino helped you when travelling?
49	Should students learn "Modern" Spanish in school/high school/university? Why?
50	Should students learn Hebrew in school/high school/university? Why?
51	Do you ever employ any Ladino words with your Turkish Muslim friends?
52	Do you read newspapers, listen to the radio, or watch any materials in Ladino?
53	Do you know any jokes or funny expressions in Ladino?
54	Have you ever come across any audiovisual materials for learning Ladino?
55	In which language were you taught to pray?
56	In which language do you pray? In which language do you speak with God?
57	What kind of knowledge in Ladino do you possess?
58	How much can you actively speak Ladino, as a percentage?
59	How much do you actually speak Ladino, if at all?
60	How much can/do your parents/grandparents speak Ladino, as a percentage?
61	How well can your parents speak Turkish, as a percentage?
62	How well can your grandparents/grandparents speak Turkish, as a percentage?
63	Do you/your parents/grandparents have a “Sephardic accent” when speaking Turkish?
64	Do people say that you have “Sephardic accent” when speaking Turkish?
65	Do the majority of Turkish Sephardim have a “Sephardic accent” in Turkish?
66	Has the presence of a “Sephardic accent” ever disturbed you?
67	Which domains are reserved for Ladino today? Among your peers, among the generation of your parents/grandparents?
68	Which spheres of your life are related to the Ladino language?
4. Attitudes surrounding Judeo-Spanish	
69	At which stage do you think Ladino is nowadays?
70	How does this situation affect you?
71	What do your parents think about today’s situation?
72	What do you think about this situation?
73	Does the fact that you do not speak Ladino affect you in any way?
74	Are there any situations in daily life in which you feel excluded by not knowing Ladino?
75	Which factors do you think most contributed to the loss of Ladino?
76	Which languages sound more beautiful to you: Turkish, Ladino, Hebrew, French, “modern” Spanish, Italian, English, any others?
77	If you had to choose only one language to learn/speak out of all the languages in the world, which one would you choose? Why?
78	If you could choose several languages to learn/speak, which ones would you choose?
79	What do you think about humour in Ladino?
80	Do you know any jokes in Ladino?
81	Which words/expressions do you know/use in Ladino?
82	How would you summarise the attitudes towards Ladino in your social network?
83	Have your/your parents'/your grandparents' attitudes towards Ladino changed?

84	Do you perceive any changes in attitudes towards Ladino in general (theatre, public events, Ladino Day, online courses)?
85	What is your attitude towards Ladino language preservation?
86	Are you in any way committed to Ladino language preservation?
87	Would you like to be involved in any way in Ladino language preservation?
	5. Judeo-Spanish in a value system
88	What kind of language is Ladino to you?
89	To which other language(s) is Ladino similar?
90	What do you think is the difference between Ladino and Spanish?
91	Do you understand "modern" Spanish?
92	Do you speak/understand any other Romance language (French, Italian, Spanish?)
93	How much do you think modern Spanish and Ladino are related?
94	What do you think about "modern" Spanish?
95	Have you ever thought of learning "modern" Spanish?
96	Does Ladino play any role in the definition of the Turkish Sephardim as a group?
97	Does Turkish play any role in the definition of the Turkish Sephardim as a group?
98	Does Spanish play any role in the definition of the Turkish Sephardim as a group?
99	Does French play any role in the definition of the Turkish Sephardim as a group?
100	Does Hebrew play any role in the definition of the Turkish Sephardim as a group?
101	Which language most closely defines the Turkish Sephardim?
	6. Social identity
102	Which, of all values/elements, most closely defines the Turkish Sephardim?
103	What role does Judaism play in the definition of the Turkish Sephardim?
104	How would you define yourself (identity) if we met in Paris and I was Romanian/ Turkish person?
105	How would you define yourself (identity) if we met in Istanbul and I was a Romanian/ Turkish person?
106	How would you define yourself (identity) if we met in Ankara and I was a Romanian/ Turkish person?
107	How would you describe yourself in terms of your own identity?
108	Which ethnic group do you feel closest/most similar to in terms of belonging?
109	Which ethnic group do you feel farthest from/ the least similar to?
110	What makes you a Jew?
111	What makes you a Turkish Sephardic Jew?
112	What will change in the Turkish Jewish community in case of complete language loss?
113	Do you feel at home in Turkey? What about Spain, Israel?
114	Do you plan to continue living in Turkey?
115	If you were to emigrate, which country would you choose, if you could choose?

Figure 6. Appendix: *Questions for the in-depth interview*

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Abstract

This dissertation examines the interplay of language ideologies, attitudes, and practices in shaping the role of postvernacular Judeo-Spanish. Using a semiotic framework, this study investigates how and why practice, performance, indexicality, and ideology interrelate to shape Sephardic identity through language.

The dissertation investigates the impact of ideological shifts following the creation of the Turkish Republic — such as anti-minority rhetoric, antisemitism, anti-Zionism, and the symbolic minority status of Turkey since 1990 — on the evolving status and role of Judeo-Spanish within the community. Two key ideological trends are shown to have been instrumental in this change: the rhetoric of language purism and the culture of fear. Fear is identified as a 'connecting' element across generations, rooted in both the historical trauma of expulsion and the periodic resurgence of antisemitic and anti-minority sentiment. The culture of fear provides a compelling lens through which the evolution of Judeo-Spanish can be understood, enabling the development of a causal model that interlinks ideology, attitudes, and practices.

The study uses a multi-dimensional methodological framework, combining *Grounded Theory Methodology* (GTM) on the descriptive level and *Language and Identity* research on the interpretative level. It draws on qualitative data from 60 interviews with members of three generations of Sephardim with varying language profiles conducted between 2013 and 2017.

The findings emphasize the enduring influence of traumatic language experiences on attitudes and practices, demonstrating how different generations use distinct 'tactics of intersubjectivity' to navigate inherited traumas and societal shifts. Additionally, they highlight the pivotal role of postvernacular Judeo-Spanish in preserving Sephardic distinctiveness across generations. Multilingualism is identified as a core value, reflecting the community's adaptability and evolving language practices across different historical contexts.

Ultimately, this research contributes to a broader understanding of the relationship between language shift and identification processes in a postvernacular context. It demonstrates that while Judeo-Spanish may no longer be a daily vernacular, it remains a crucial cultural symbol and tool for negotiating identity across generations. Moreover, postvernacular Judeo-Spanish ensures a sense of intergenerational connection through *rhetorical legacy zones* in which individuals feel rooted in the process of transitioning to new linguistic practices.

Zusammenfassung

Diese Dissertation untersucht das Zusammenspiel von Sprachideologien, Einstellungen und Sprachpraktiken in der Gestaltung der Rolle des postvernakulären Judenspanisch unter den Sepharden in Istanbul. Die Dissertation beleuchtet den Einfluss ideologischer Umbrüche seit der Gründung der Türkischen Republik, wie antiminoritäre Rhetorik, Antisemitismus, Antizionismus und den symbolischen Status der Sepharden als repräsentative Minderheit seit den 1990er Jahren. Zwei zentrale ideologische Strömungen – die *Rhetorik des Sprachpurismus* und die *Kultur der Angst* – erweisen sich dabei als besonders prägend. Angst wird als generationsübergreifendes Bindeglied identifiziert, das auf das historische Trauma der Vertreibung und die wiederkehrende antisemitische sowie antiminoritäre Stimmung zurückgeht. Diese *Kultur der Angst* liefert eine aufschlussreiche Perspektive in der Interpretation der Entwicklung des Judenspanischen unten den Sepharden in Istanbul und ermöglicht die Formulierung eines Modells, das Ideologie, Einstellungen und Sprachpraktiken kausal miteinander verknüpft.

Die Studie basiert auf einem multidimensionalen methodologischen Ansatz, der die *Grounded Theory Methodology* (GTM) auf der deskriptiven Ebene mit Ansätzen der *Sprach- und Identitätsforschung* auf der interpretativen Ebene verknüpft. Im Zeitraum von 2013 bis 2017 wurden qualitative Daten aus 60 Interviews mit drei Generationen unterschiedlicher Sprachprofile in Istanbul erhoben. Mittels eines semiotischen Modells wurde analysiert, wie und warum *Praxis, Performance, Indexikalität* und *Ideologie* in der Gestaltung sefardischer Identität durch Sprache interagieren.

Die Ergebnisse zeigen den nachhaltigen Einfluss traumatischer Spracherfahrungen auf Einstellungen und Praktiken. Die Generationen nutzen unterschiedliche „Taktiken der Intersubjektivität“, um mit vererbten Traumata und gesellschaftlichem Wandel umzugehen. Mehrsprachigkeit wird als zentraler Element identifiziert, der die Anpassungsfähigkeit der Gemeinschaft und die sich wandelnden Sprachpraktiken im historischen Kontext widerspiegelt.

Diese Forschung liefert wertvolle Einblicke in das Verhältnis von Sprachwandel und Identifikationsprozessen im postvernakulären Kontext. Sie zeigt, dass Judenspanisch, obwohl es nicht mehr als Alltagssprache fungiert, weiterhin ein bedeutendes kulturelles Symbol und ein Instrument zur Identitätsaushandlung unterschiedlicher Generationen bleibt. Über *rhetorische Erbzonen* werden intergenerationale Verbindungen geschaffen, die ein Gefühl der Verwurzelung im Übergang zu neuen sprachlichen Praktiken ermöglichen.