Language Loyalty And Language Shift Among Early (1890's-1930's) Arabic-Speaking Immigrants In The United States Of America

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Abstract

This paper explores the history of Arabic among early Arabic-speaking immigrants in the United States. The focus is on four institutions in which Arabic was used by these immigrants. These institutions include: (1) the periodic press; (2) places of worship; (3) community ethnic schools; and (4) organizational societies. Several factors that precipitated the shift from Arabic monolingualism to bilingualism, and finally to English monolingualism are discussed.

The thesis of this paper is that each of these four Arabic-using institutions had operated in a similar pattern: initially Arabic was the predominant language, then a gradual shift to English and Arabic bilingualism occurred, and finally English prevailed at the expense of Arabic.

This discussion is based on scant data produced by and about Arabic-speaking communities in the United States.

Arab Immigration to America:
A Brief Historical Sketch:

Arabs started to emigrate in large groups to North America at the turn of the nineteenth century. The majority of these immigrants were mainly from what was known at that time as Greater Syria (which included Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and Jordan), but in reality the bulk of immigrants, came from modern day Syria and Lebanon. The reasons that prompted migration are many. Some of these reasons are controversial. However, many scholars agree that the economic stagnation in Syria and Lebanon at that time and the lure of the financial successes in the new world motivated many to seek new opportunities in north America. Additionally, the political insecurity under the Ottoman rule, especially for minorities such as Arabic-speaking Christians, and the desire by many to evade the universal military conscription instituted in 1908 were factors in immigration to America. Moreover, the sectarian conflict between the Duruz and the Maronites in 1860 encouraged many, especially Christians, to seek safer refuges in North America.

The conflict in Palestine between indigenous Arabs and European Jewish immigrants starting in the 1930's and continuing until the creation of Israel in 1948 caused many Palestinian Arabs to emigrate to the United States. The 1950's and 1960's brought to the United States an estimated figure of fifty thousand Arab Moslem professionals, 73 per cent of whom had received higher education in Europe and the United States (Elkholy 1969: 15).

The estimated figures of Arabs in the United States today vary and there is not a definite agreement among scholars on the exact number. However, the rough figure of two million is generally cited (Abraham and Abraham 1983: 9). According to Naff (1980, and 1983: 9) 90 per cent of Arabic-speaking immigrants are Christian and 10 per cent are Moslem.

Objectives:

The purpose of this article is to examine the use of Arabic among early Arabic-speaking immigrants in the United States of America. The time reference here is roughly from 1892, the year in which **kawkab' amriika** (The Star of America) the first Arabic language newspaper started publication in New York, until the middle of 1930 when Arabic-speaking publications started to shift to English.

My focus will be mainly on the institutions in which Arabic was used by these immigrants, and on factors that precipitated the gradual shift from predominantly Arabic monolingualism to bilingualism, and finally to monolingualism in English, the language of the new society. Specifically, these institutions include (1) the periodical press, (2) places of worship such as churches, and possibly mosques, (3) ethnic schools

using Arabic, and (4) organizational societies of these communities. I shall examine the extent to which Arabic was used in these institutions, and offer an explanation of the abandonment of Arabic by these immigrants.

In this article I maintain that each of these four Arabic-using institutions had operated in a similar pattern. Initially, Arabic was largely the predominant language, then there was a gradual shift toward a bilingual situation where both Arabic and English were used, and finally English prevailed at the expense of Arabic as these institutions became monolingual in the span of roughly one generation.

The treatment of this topic is based on data collected from the scant body of literature produced about Arabic-speaking communities in the United States. It is regrettable that research on the linguistic composition of these immigrant groups has been neglected. The communities that are discussed here are largely those that constitute the largest concentrations in cities like New York, Boston, Detroit and other urban centers, where Arabic-speaking immigrants tended to settle. An examination of each of the aforementioned four Arabic-using institutions is presented below. The discussion section delineates factors at play in language contact situations and offers explanations to the abandonment of Arabic among early Arabic-speaking immigrants in the United States in the time period delimited in this article.

1. The Periodical Press

Ever since their settlement, Arabic-speaking immigrants took interest in establishing periodical publications to serve as a link between the old country and the immigrants in their new environment. The first Arabic newspaper in the U.S. was **kawkab' amriika**, a weekly founded by Dr. Yusuf Arbeely's[1] two sons, Ibrahim and Najib. With the increasing number of immigrants and their different religious denominations, more newspapers and periodicals were founded. **al-' ayyaam** (The Days) was founded in 1897 by Joseph Malouf. The Mokarzel brothers, Nahum and Salloum, established **al-huda** (The Guidance) in 1898. It was first published twice weekly, increased to five times weekly and then decreased to three time a week. **mir'aat al-gharb** (The Mirror of the West) also known as **al-mir'aat,** for short, was founded by Najib Diab in New York City in 1899. Suleiman Baddour founded **al-bayaan** (The Declaration) in New York in 1910. In the same year the twice weekly paper **as-saayiH** (The Traveller) was founded by Nadra and Abdul-Mesih Haddad. Later on in 1921 **as-saayiH** became the organ of "ar-raabiTa al-qalamiyyah" (The Pen League) led by Jubran Khalil Jubran.

Arabic periodicals were not limited to newspapers. Weekly magazines were founded such as **al-muhaajir** (The Immigrant), founded by Amin Ghoryyib, Monthlies were also established. These included **al-jaamiᶜa** (The League) which Farah Antoun moved from Cairo to New York City; Nassib Arida and Nazmi Nasseem founded **al-funuun** (The Arts) in 1911.

Hitti wrote that "a census taken in 1929 lists 102 periodicals and papers which saw the light in the U.S.A." (Mehdi, 1978: 17 and 129) Hitti interprets this large number of Arabic periodicals as evidence of eagerness for news and light reading matter. It must be borne in mind that the lion's share of Arabic-language publications appeared in New York. This should not be surprising since at that time the largest Arabic-speaking community in the United States was located in New York. Some cities such as Boston and Lawrence, Massachusetts had two publications each, and Detroit had one. Park (1922: 56) alludes to the fact that the Arabic-speaking population would not have been able to support the Arabic press had it not been "for the circulation of these paper abroad, particularly in Turkey". **al-huda,** according to Park (1922: 345) had a wide circulation outside the United States.

It must be pointed out that early immigrants emphasized loyalty to Arabic in their writings and in their attitudes toward it. Hitti (1924: 100-101) confirms this situation by providing a description of these immigrants' attitudes toward their mother tongue. Many a writer emphasized the importance of maintaining Arabic among the new generations of immigrants' offspring and called for teaching it to them.

The content of these publications ranged from social and political news from the old countries from which immigrants originated to news of the new communities in **al-mahjar,** the host country. In addition, we notice the inclusion of news about business opportunities.

The language used in these periodicals was **al-fuSHa** (the classical Arabic) and adherence to this variety was observed. We do not observe any tendencies toward the use of colloquials in these publications. However, it must be mentioned that new ideas and objects in the new world unexperienced previously by these immigrants prompted, at times, the coining of new vocabulary items that were not in use in the Arab East.

It is important to note that publications like these played a role in tying immigrants together in the New World by providing news from their home countries as well as news from their new society[2]. Moreover, many of these writers were innovative in their styles and themes, thereby having an impact not only on Arabic in the New World, but also on style and literary themes in the Arabic-speaking countries.

As the offspring of these immigrants established roots in this country, their knowledge of Arabic began to weaken. Hitti (1924: 100-101) describes this situation by stating that "the old generation of Syrians still [at that point in time] hold the Arabic almost sacred regard. They throng

to hear a speaker in this rich and musical mother tongue. The reverse is true of the native born generation". This could be interpreted to mean that a linguistic shift developed toward bilingualism in the Arabic-speaking communities in the United States, with Arabic gradully losing ground among later generations. In any event there was an increase in the publishing of either (1) bilingual publications as we see in **The Syrian American Directory Almanac** (1930), which consisted of 232 pages in English and 283 pages in Arabic, or (2) all English periodicals such as the monthly magazine **The Syrian World** (1926). We could see that the plethora of Arabic-using publications that Hitti talked about in 1924 had largely disappeared. Many factors could have brought this about. The new native generation lost interest in Arabic as a functional tool of communication; quota restrictions in 1921 permitted fewer immigrants from Arab countries into this country; second and third generation Arabs were under increasing pressure to assimilate; the communities lacked sense of nationality and leadership, etc. All these reasons, and others, could have contributed to the demise of the Arabic press.

11. Places of Worship

The majority of Arabic-speaking immigrants to the United States were Christians of different denominations. The migration of Moslems did not occur until later (Salih, 1981; 56-67 and Naff, 1983). Some of these immigrants had received some schooling in the old countries. Some even studied English at missionary schools. The majority, however, were not equipped linguistically to proceed on their own in the new American environment. This of course involved the immigrants' religious practices.

There was a desire among the christian Arabic-speaking immigrants (from the early stages of their settlement) to build Eastern-rite churches using Arabic or Syriac. The few who knew English attended American churches. The vast majority, however, did not know English well enough to take part in the services.

The problem of providing religious services in Arabic was compounded by a lack of trained ministers capable of serving the communities in their own language. Kayal and Kayal (1975: 153) state that at times extremely different denominations "would often accept any Arabic priest" because of dire linguistic need. The passage of time created new realities and changes became inevitable. Thus, the need for religious leadership may have hastened the acceptance of English by these immigrants. Tannous (1943) reported that a compromise had been reached in the community he studied to the effect that services in their church were conducted partly in Arabic and partly in English. The movement toward English was rapid; he predicted that before too long English would be the only language used. One could generalize this situation to many of the Arabic-speaking communities at that time.

Religion has been viewed by Hofman (1966)[3] and Dweik (1980) as a factor in maintaining native languages by immigrant groups. Dweik (1980) has shown that Moslem Yemenites in Lackawanna near Buffalo, are more retentive of Arabic than Christian Lebanese in the same community. With regard to early Arabic-speaking immigrants, I submit that religion did not play a role in maintaining Arabic among Moslem immigrants. This is contradictory to Dweik's findings. We must bear in mind, however, that the Yemenite immigration in Dweik's study occured much later than the period under consideration in this article and because of different circumstances. The contradiction between Dweik's findings and my position here could be explained by the timing of these migration waves, attitudes of immigrants during different periods and the causes of immigration.

Immigration of Moslems to the United States happened at later dates than the immigration of Christians (Salih, 1981: 56-67 and Naff, 1983). Demographically, Arabic-speaking Christians and Moslems shared many facets of the Arab culture in the old countries; the difficulties of setting up new communities in the United States were undoubtedly shared equally by both groups.

Houghton (1911: 966) reported the existence of at least nine Moslem, three Druse (Duruz) and one Metauley religious 'bodies'.[4] Hitti (1924: 108) estimated the number of Moslems in the United States to be eight thousand, and he mentioned the existence of mosques in Gary, Indiana and Detroit as well as places of worship in New York, Cleveland and Akron, ohio.

The **Cedar Rapids Gazette** of January 12, 1936 published a story concerning two Cedar Rapids boys who mastered the reading of the Koran in Arabic (Mehdi, 1978: 93). From this story one can conclude the existence of a Moslem congregation, and a Moslem worship place since it also mentions classes conducted at the mosque. This situation can be juxtaposed to a less positive one about a Moslem community in Ross, North Dakota. Naff (1980: 132) reported the existence at one time of a Moslem group in Ross that organized communal prayer in private homes. This group eventually built a mosque in 1920, but later integrated into the community, its members marrying Christians and adopting Christian names.

The relevant point for our purpose here is the use of Arabic in religious services among these Arabic-speaking Moslems. Their fate regarding assimilation, and consequently the shift from Arabic to English can only be compared to their Christian compatriots.

If the preceding case can typify other Moslem communities in other parts of the country, one cannot fail but notice that the fate of Arabic among Moslem immigrants took a parallel line to its fate among Christian groups. Initially, both religious groups tried to build their own wor-

ship places, used their native language in their religious practices, but gradually both groups started to integrate into the surrounding community. These tendencies toward Americanization hastened the process of assimilation, and consequently resulted in the adoption of English at the expense of Arabic.

To sum up this section, I would like to draw the reader's attention to the shift from Arabic monolingualism, to the eventual monolingualism in English via a transitory stage of bilingualism. This situation parallels that of Arabic use in the periodical press detailed in the previous section.

The reasons prompting the discontinuance of the use of the mother tongue could be attributed to any or a combination of the following: native clergy were scarce; the ethnic composition changed; people felt that religion could be taught in any language; old immigrants died out; American born preferred a language shift to English; the native language was not used in the United States and therefore it became of no value; and some immigrants' attitudes toward the adoption of English changed (for example they felt that children should master English), etc.

III. Ethnic Schools

Fishman and Nahirny (1966) state that the ethnic group school in the United States faces the dilemma of immigrants regarding "the retention or denial of their original identity and its associated cultural forms". This situation is applicable to the situation of Arabic-speaking immigrants with respect to educational institutions founded by them. Hitti (1924: 90) stated that "the educational forces in operation among the Syrians in this country are lamentably meager and ineffective."

This educational situation becomes a curious matter when we bear in mind that 114 professional teachers had entered the United States by 1911 according to (Houghton, 1966, part II, XXVI, N.19: 655). However, many of these teachers went into business because of the lack of teaching opportunities for them in the United States, coupled with the difficult requirements of the American public school system (Houghton, 1966, part II, No: 19: 655). Nonetheless, some of them did teach at Arabic schools for small children of Arabic-speaking backgrounds (Houghton, 1966, 655). Others were employed in night schools; and some women teachers set up private school for children whose parents wanted them to keep up Arabic (Houghton, 1966: 655).

Churches also involved themselves in teaching Arabic to youngsters. Some Syrian priests, according to Hitti (1924: 91), organized schools adjunct to their churches in which they taught Arabic and church ritual. Houghton (1911) reported that some wealthy Syrians were "planning to found a high-grade Arabic school, that the treasures of their national literature may not be lost to American-born children" (Houghton, 1911, XXVI, No 22). We do not know if this plan was carried out.

Despite these efforts to provide Arabic education to the American born generations the force of Americanization, and consequently assimilation was in full swing. Because English was the language of the larger society that shaped the lives of people, and because English was used for commerce or education or science, the overwhelming tendency among some Arabic-speaking immigrants was to send their children to public schools for a standard American education. The shortage of ethnic schools to preserve Arabic among the native generation created a situation in which children had a command of the more functional language, English, as well as some command of Arabic, the language specialized for communication at home and in other limited social domains. This cross-generational bilingualism, where English was largely the dominant language for the young marked the process of shift toward English away from Arabic; despite the immigrants' efforts to preserve Arabic among their children.

In a paper about the Arabic-speaking communities in Rhode Island, (Smith, 1981: 141-176) reports a pioneering effort by a Syrian Melchite priest, Father Jock of St. Basil's, who established the first Melchite school in the United States in 1921. The school had a life of 13 years and its peak enrollment at one time was 156 students who learned Arabic for two hours each day. The 1934 Great Depression put an end to this Arabic school.

In addition to economic impediments, legal actions at times contributed to the attrition of foreign language instruction in the early part of this century. Hitti (1924: 91) reported the case of the only Syrian pastor in Iowa and three neighboring states. This priest, according to Hitti, lamented the fact that a state law was enacted to prohibit teaching in foreign tongue under the exigencies of war. While this may be an isolated case, it is safe to say that Arabic, as well as many foreign languages, did not enjoy the benefit of education or other organizational institutions of the society. The inevitable result in this situation, of course, was the abandonment of Arabic and the shift toward English.

IV. Ethnic Societies and Organization

Kloss (1966) isolated six factors contributing to the maintenance of German in the United states. Three of Kloss' factors will help us explore the Arabic language situation in the United States. These factors include religio-societal insulation, existence of language islands; and pre-immigration experience with language maintenance efforts.

Arabic-speaking immigrants tended to cluster in American cities on the basis of the original town or village they came from, familial relationship, and religion (Kayal and Kayal, 1975: 82; and passim). By so doing they created "little Syrias" in many American cities, many times with their own churches. This pattern of settlement theoretically created the

proper opportunity for the religious-societal insular environment that could help, maintain language islands. We can reasonably speculate that the immigrant generation was loyal to many of their Arab traditions, including language. This might have been the case on Washington Street in New York and whatever "little Syrias" created by these immigrants. It is reasonable also to speculate that this situation did not last long. Immigrants soon acquired relative mobility and this resulted in more scattering and less concentration of these ethnic groups than was the case at the early stages of their immigration in the urban and industrial metropolises. This mobility and dispersion accelerated their Americanization and assimilation. One result, consequently, was the abandonment of Arabic.

The establishment of churches, according to Kayal and Kayal (1975: 84-), facilitated "the emergence of a strong ethnic identity." Because these immigrants were not united by notions of national identity, one can see that the failure to establish a church would result in impeding the ethnic continuity of the Arabic-speaking communities. The result naturally would be in the dispersal of immigrants, and consequently the diffusion of the language component. The "little Syrias" could be better understood if we compare them with the Pennsylvania Dutch communities, for example. The migration of the latter group was precipitated by religious reasons, similar to some Arabic-speaking immigrants. Because of the rural settlements of the Pennsylvania Dutch and the religio-societal insulation they voluntarily chose, (unlike the Arabic-speaking immigrants who tended to settle in cities) the Pennsylvania Dutch were more successful than the Syrians in maintaining their language.

Regarding pre-immigration experience with language maintenance efforts, we must bear in mind that a good number of these early immigrants were illiterate. Not unexpectedly, this hindered the transmission of the written language to the schooled native generation, despite the efforts of some churches. In addition, restricting the language to primary grades in week-end, summer, evening or any special classes attached to churches could not prevent the erosion of the language. Therefore, when Arabic ceased to function for different skills and occupational interests among early immigrants in the United States, it eventually lost ground to the more dynamic, prestigious medium, English. Such was the fate of Arabic by mid 1920's or thereabouts.

Benefit and charity organization, association, and societies, some denominational, were formed at the turn of the century (Houghton, 1911, part III, XXVI, No: 22). The functions of these societies varied, but mainly centered around extending help to people from the old countries who were settling in the United States, as well as extending material help to the towns and villages from which these immigrants came. According to Younis (1961) the early founders emphasized cultural unity,

especially among the new generation born in the United States. Younis also mentioned that, due to racial prejudice against the syrians in and around the depression period some organizations were formed to defend the Syrians and to analyze their role in the new society. One result of these organizations was the educating of rising Arab-American generations in the history of their origin and culture. This is what Younis referred to as 'identification-ists' with Arab history and Arabs' contribution to world civilization.(5) An example of the 'identificationists' was the Southern Federation of Syrian Lebanese American Clubs. Among its many functions and activities was the attempt to provide "a forum in which Arabic-speaking people can foster their customs, music, **language,** folklore, hospitality and devotion to heritage" (Mehdi, 1978: 20).

Due to the paucity of literature about these organizations, one can speculate that people belonging to these organizations were aware of the problems of maintaining the language among the growing generation. It is also reasonable to speculate that the native generation shifted to English especially in light of their propensity toward assimilation and the dispersal of the communities.

Discussion:

Weinreich (1968: 99-) provides a definition for language loyalty "as a principle" around which (language) speakers rally to resist changes at all levels of language structure, vocabulary, or function. He adds that language contact situations develop a consciousness of "group integrity" represented by language. If in a language contact situation a certain group of speakers of language A, for example, split "on the point of loyalty" to their language, the more loyal group "will resort to self-pity and exhortation of the less loyal". Occasionally, organized efforts by insightful leaders to enhance the language loyalty among their fellow speakers may be the outcome.

Fishman (1980) in discussing language maintenance and language shift in situations where two or more languages come in contact posits three possibilities: (1) the co-existence of both languages simultaneously; (2) the displacement of language B by language A; and (3) the displacement of language A by language B.

In his study of the German language situation among German immigrants in the United States, Kloss (1966: 207-212) divides factors that influence language maintenance efforts into two categories: favorable factors and "ambivalent" factors. The first category includes, according to Kloss, the following factors: religio-societal insulation; time of emigration; existence of language islands (Sprachinseln); affiliation with denominations fostering parochial schools; pre-immigration experience with language maintenance efforts, and use of the language prior to immigration (i.e, whether the only official tongue).

The "ambivalent" factors that Kloss suggests in his study include the

educational level of immigrants and size of the group; cultural and /or linguistic similarity to, or dissimilarity between the migrating group and the host society; suppression of minority language (s); the attitudes of the majority group toward the minority; and finally the socio-cultural characteristics of the minority group in question.

Weinreich (1968: 3-5) views linguistic interference between two (or more) languages as interplay of structural (i.e, the linguistic system) and non-structural factors. The latter include the impact of the outer world, the individual's familiarity with the linguistic system and the symbolic value which the linguistic system is capable of acquiring and emotions it can evoke. In a language contact situation, some of the non-structural factors in this interface are inherent in the bilingual individual's relation to the languages in contact. These include relative proficience in each language, specialization in the use of each language by topics and interlocutors, positive or negative attitudes toward each language, size of the bilingual group and its socio-cultural homogeneity or differentiation and attitude toward the culture of each language community etc.

Some anthropologists consider language contact as an aspect of culture contact. To these, language interference is a facet of cultural diffusion and acculturation. Linton (1940: 469) views culture change not only the addition of a new element or element to the culture, but also the elimination of some previously existing elements and the modification and reorganization of others. In view of this, language shift is hardly ever so abrupt and is invariably preceded by widespread bilingualism.

Fishman and Hofman (1966: 34) mention that in 1930 12.8 per cent of the American population was foreign born. The mid 1930's witnessed the marked passing from the scene of "old timers" of immigrants who helped in laying down the foundations for the institutions of mother tongue maintenance. This is a reason for the decline in numbers of foreign language claimants since 1930.

The intensity of immigration to the United States from Arabic speaking countries in 1910's manifested itself in the fairly large number of Arabic-using institutions. This is reflected most noticeably in the large number of Arabic periodicals. The 1920's witnessed the cessation of mass immigration, and more restrictive and discriminatory immigration policy, and the departure and/or death of more foreign-born individuals. Halaby (1985) reports that between 1921-1926 31, 905 Arabic-speaking immigrants returned to their points of origin. This, according to Halaby, represents almost 58 per cent of the total Arab emigrant population for the five years between 1921-1926.

The Arabic language case in the United States is comparable to the many languages that were brought to the newly adopted "home" by various immigrant groups from various parts of the world. Paradigmatically, the first generation guarded carefully to protect the

mother tongue through organized efforts by way of establishing institutions such as periodicals, ethnic community schools, places of worship, and ethnic societies and organizations. The emotional tie with the language tended to be strong, and found expression in the ways illustrated above. The second generation was born and raised in a linguistic environment different from that of their parents, and with a weaker bond with the parents' language (s). This second generation was under constant pressure to identify with the values of the new society, and to adopt its language. Gradually and slowly Arabic, in this case, began to give way to English.

Those various factors which eventually caused Arabic speakers to relinquish their loyalty to Arabic and to adopt English include (1) the size of the Arabic-speaking population; (2) the social power associated with users of English; (3) the societal pressures toward Americanization and assimilation; (4) the lack of national identity among those early immigrants and (5) the absence of (ethnic) leaders to enhance loyalty among immigrants.

Summary and Concluding remarks

In this paper I have attempted to explore the language component of the early Arabic-speaking immigrant groups. The data about this facet of their lives are scant. I have suggested a pattern whereby immigrants shifted from largely Arabic monolingualism to bilingualism as a transitory stage shared largely by the first native generation, and finally to an English monolingual situation. Four Arabic-using institutions were discussed. The language shift suggested above seems to have happened in all these institutions including the periodical press, places of worship, ethnic schools and finally ethnic organizational societies.

Hitti (1924: 101) stressed the loyalty of the old generation of Syrians to Arabic. He suggested that the same thing was not true of the native born generation. This process of change of attitudes, and subsequently the shift in loyalty to the language, could be attributed to the lack of "a strong sense of national pride" (Hitti: 1924: 101). The new generation considered themselves American, not Syrian. Their names were Anglicized. Ethnicity to them was equal to foreigness, and both were valueless and things to forget.

These signs of difficulties born out of a generational shift coupled with social and economic prejudice against things foreign, resulted in a shift from all-mother-tongue to bilingual to all-English institutions. The publishing of the **Syrian World** in 1926 all in English is just one evidence of this. Other evidence of the erosion of Arabic is reflected in the continued shift from more to fewer Arabic-using institutions, and the continued shift from more frequent to less frequent publications.

NOTES:

The following phonetic symbols were used in this paper: ' = glottal stop; gh = voiced velar fricative; q = voiceless uvular stop; ᶜ = voiced pharyngeal fricative; H = voiceless pharyngeal fricative; T = voiceless emphatic dental stop; S = voiceless emphatic dental spirant. Vowel length is indicated by doubling the vowel.

1. The Arbeely's family, originally from Damascus, were the first Arabic - speaking family to enter the United States in 1878, according to Hitti.
2. In this regard, the Arabic press in the United States could be viewed by some as a force against assimilation. Some indeed were troubled by this predicament, weighing arguments for and against assimilation. However, some of these periodicals such as **al-wafaa'** of Lawrence, Massachusetts (1907-1910) strongly encouraged the Americanization of their readership. The rationale of this argument, according to **al-wafaa'** was the possibility of getting ahead in the American society and the achievement of material wealth.
3. See John Hofman's "Mother Tongue Retentiveness in Ethnic Parishes" in Fishman et al, 1966 **Language Loyalty in the United States.**
4. We are not certain what Hougton meant by 'bodies', nor did she specify their locations.
5. This group is to be contrasted with the "assimilationists". those who wanted to avoid reference to terms such as "syrian", "Arabic" and any association with the old countries.

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