Levantine Arabic transcript:

مشهد الشارع: بيروت

الأم: إحنا على طريق الكورنيش حد البحر. البحر على الشمال. ما في كتير عجئة سير. عادة الساعة أربعة، بس يطلعوا المدارس، ال (the ACS،IC)) بكون في كتير عجئة سير. بس هلأ، الساعة وحده، ما في كتير عجئة سير، بس ما فينا نروّج. هلأ أنا بسوق على مهلي على اليمين، إزا بدي أسرع بروح على الشمال. بس هلأ ما فيني إسرع لأنو الشمال مليان سيارات. ببيروت، هالنوع من السير، يعني (traffic) وسط، مش قليل، ولا كتير.

هلأ نحنا عم بنكوع شوي، الطريق بتكوع. بنمرق قدام ماكدونلد. هلأ عجأ السير شوي، والموتوسيكلات ببيروت بيمشوا بدون نظام، مع السير، ضد السير، عكس السير، بيقفوا مطرح ما بدّ، ونص ال(accidents)..هدا بوليس السير، هدا بوليس السير، سمعت زمّوروا. عم بيحاول يمشي السير لأنو وقف السير هون، عم بيحاول يمشيه، بس ما حدن بيسمعلوا. سامعه كيف عم بيصوفر ليمشي السير. اوكي.

هلأ في ناس بدهن يقطعوا الطريق هونيك، ما فيه ضو ليقطعوا الطريق، بينجبروا يقطعوا بين السيارات، ليك في خطر على حياتهن. هدا على اليمين (parking)... (parking) يعني موقف سيارات، بالعربي بنقول (parking) بس هوا موقف سيارات، مكتوب موقف سيارات. بعدين هون الناس بس يسوقوا بيحكوا على التلفون، بيحكوا على التلفون، بيحكوا على (cellular) وهن عم بيسوقوا. بالأول منعوا هالشي، وكانوا يعطوا زبط، زبط يعني...شو إسموا...كونتر افيرسيون. بس هلأ على طول بيحوا على التلفون، ما عاد البوليس يعطي زبط، بس بيعملهن إشاره إنو ما تحكوا. هلأ على طول بيحوا على التلفون، ما عاد البوليس يعطي زبط، بس بيعملهن إشاره إنو ما تحكوا. على الإشارة على الشمال. بتزكر حتى، بس مش دايما بتزكر، في ناس بيفرقوا بدون إشاره. رح لف على الشمال...شفتي هدا عم بيزمر. رح لف على الشمال لأوصل للمحل إلي رايحين عليه.

English translation:

"Street Scenes: Beirut"

Mom: We're on the road to the Corniche next to the sea. The sea is on the left. There isn't much traffic. Usually around four o'clock when schools get out (the IC, the ACS) there is a lot of traffic. But right now it's one o'clock and there's not much traffic, but we can't drive however we want. I'm driving at my own comfortable pace, on the right. If I want to speed up, I go to the left. But right now I can't speed up because the left is full of cars. In Beirut this kind of traffic is medium. It's not a lot or a little.

Now we're turning, the road curves a little. We pass in front of McDonald's. Now the traffic has jammed a little, and the motorcycles in Beirut drive without order. With traffic, against traffic, opposite to traffic – they stop wherever they want, and half of all accidents – That's the traffic cop. That's the traffic cop, did you hear his siren? He's trying to get traffic moving because it stopped here. He's trying, but nobody's paying attention to him. Hear what he's doing to get traffic to move? Okay.

Now there are people who want to cross the street over there. There's no light for them to cross the street. They have to cross between cars. Their lives are in danger. On the right - that's parking. In Arabic we say 'parking' but it's "maw'af"; it's written "maw'af seeyarat." And here when people drive they talk on the phone while they're driving. In the beginning they banned that, and they used to give tickets. But now they talk on the phone because the police haven't been able to give tickets. He just gives them a sign – "Don't talk." Now traffic has practically stopped. Today the weather is really nice - there's sun; the sky is blue. Now I'm going to turn on my left turn signal. I remember -- but I don't always remember. A lot of people turn without a signal. I'm going to turn left (that guy's honking). I'm going to turn left to get to the place we're going to.

About CultureTalk: CultureTalk is produced by the Five College Center for the Study of World Languages and housed on the LangMedia Website. The project provides students of language and culture with samples of people talking about their lives in the languages they use everyday. The participants in CultureTalk interviews and discussions are of many different ages and walks of life. They are free to express themselves as they wish. The ideas and opinions presented here are those of the participants. Inclusion in CultureTalk does not represent endorsement of these ideas or opinions by the Five College Center for the Study of World Languages, Five Colleges, Incorporated, or any of its member institutions: Amherst College, Hampshire College, Mount Holyoke College, Smith College and the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

© 2003-2010 Five College Center for the Study of World Languages and Five Colleges, Incorporated