

Levantine Arabic transcript:

سمر: بنجور, إسمي سمر كلاس. عمري 22 سنة. أنا بثالث سنه هون بالجامعة اللبنانية عم بعمل سوسولوجي. هيكأ فانت عملت سوسولوجي لأنو ما لحقت ولا core course بولا جامعة. هون بنفوت بلا core. أصلا أنا بحب medicine بس ما عندي جلادة كثير ادرس لانو ال medicine بدها دراسة كثير وكثير سنين وهيك. وقتت لهوني, ولا مرة سقطت, الحمد لله نجحت, ..
زينه: أنتي أيده صرلك؟ ثلاث سنين؟

سمر: أيه ثلاث سنين. هيدي السنة بوخد ليسانس. والسنة الجاي (...). بس أنا مفكره بس خلص ليسانس اعمل سنة بال USG بعدلولي اياها بوخد لسانس بال social assistant. بتخيل هيك, بس بستفسر عن الموضوع اكثر, وما بعرف, بلكي اذا بخلي السوسولوجي بفكر اعمل شي ثاني لأنو هلا عصر علم وهيك فلو واحد ما بحب يتعلم وبحب يدرس مضطر لانو ما في غير العلم في (...). بها الأيام. والجامعة هوني on principle انو منيحة, فيها نظام, وكثير مرتبة, وكثير نظيفة بالنسبة للجامعات اللبنانية. يعني من صفوف لطبويات لطاولات ل toilets لكل شي. جوها ما كثير بحبو لانو ما بحس Intimité بين التلاميذ بالصف, يعني بحس انو في groups groups مش كلن بيحكوا مع بعضهن. يعني ما بحسن كثير بحبو بعض, حتى ما بحسن كثير بساعدوا بعض, يعني اذا شي نهار حدا غاب, كثير بدو ينيش على حدا تا يلاقي حدا يعطي core. فما بعرف هالشغلة انا ما بحبها يعني.

زينه: ويعني أنتي بتحسي انو لاقيتي أصحاب هوني؟

سمر: ça va, أيه في. بس زي ما قلناك انو مثلا ما في.. مش كل الصف أصحاب مع بعض, انو في groups groups.

زينه: (...). مع بعض؟

سمر: لأ. في عندي انا نتين او ثلاث هوني بس مش كثير ب(...).

زينه: شو بتعملي لتتسلي مثلا.

سمر: بروح مع اصحابي برات الجامعة.

زينه: هدول أصحاب المدرسة.

سمر: أيه, في منهن اصحاب المدرسة, في منهن رفات كبار تعرفت عليهم هون بالجامعة او يرجع بعرفهن من قبل.. او حسب.

زينه: وأنتي بتشتغلي بنفس الوقت عم بتدرسي؟

سمر: لأ, ولا مرة اشتغلت.

زينه: انتي شو رايك بجو الشغل, والشباب والبنات, كثير بقلوا ناس بدهن يسافروا..

سمر: الشغل بحس مرحلة كثير مهمة. وقت ما الواحد ييلش شغل بحس فات بجو كثير كثير جديد, وشئ كثير جديد انو بتعرف على شي كثير جديد ويتعلم كثير اشيا وخبرة, وكثير مهم أنا بالنسبة لا إلى الشغل كثير مهم.

زينه: بس بتحسي حتقدي تلاقى شغل, يعني عندك امل أكيد؟

سمر: أنو لأيه, أنو هون بحس بلبنان وسايط, إذا عندك واسطة بتشتغلي. لو ممعكش هذا, انا بعرف عندي أصحاب نتين مخلصين terminal صرلهون (...). عم بيشتغلوا ببنك, وعندي صاحبتني إليها (...). مخلصه (...). بتشتغل بمكتبه. انو هيدك (...). عرفت. فكل واحد عندو واسطة في يشتغل وباللي ما عندو واسطة بيقتد بيتتوا. أنو أنا (...). لو بنت, ما بحب إنكل على حدا, يعني إذا هون الشب بلبنان هو بدو يأمن مستقبل ويجيب بيت وهيك, أنا لو بنت بفكر انا أنو جيب بيت مثلا لا إلي, لو ما بدو يكون هذا البيت ياللي بدي عيش فيه أنا و جوزي أو شي, أنو بفكر بحب أعمل شي لحالي بلكي بجيب سيارة انا مني لحالي او جيب بيت او حيايالله شي, ويفكر سافر اذا اجاني offer سافر لبره أيه كثير وارده الفكرة, انو انا بنت بفكر هيك, يعني أكيد الشباب بفكروا هيك, لانو مسؤوليتهن أكبر.

زينه: بتحسي انتي كبتت بلبنان. شو بنتظروا منك أهلك. والجو العام للبنات, انو احسن يشتغلوا ولا يضلوا بالبيت او النتين لازم هلا بتعملي كل شي كبتت كمرأه.

سمر: لأ هلا كثير مش حلو أنو المرأه تقعد بيتتها, مفروض اكيد تشتغل, تكون أول شي معلمة وتشتغل أنو مش حيايالله شي, أنو.. عرفت.. انو هادا رايب, يعني بحس انو مره بالبيت صارت كثير بشعة.

زينه: بس بتحسي أنو في Pression بتجوزي ولا ما في حدا بحكي عنها؟
سمر: لأ لأ أنا أصلاً ما بحب أجوز، يعني انا قبل ما أخلص جامعتي وأبلش شغل ما بفكر أجوز ابدأ، ولا Pression بالبيت وهيكل لأ انا كثير انو ما عندي Pression انو اهلي لأ بدك تجوزي وكذا كثير على راحتني بالنهاية هادي حياتي وأنا بنقيها يعني أنو انا بختار، يمكن هني انو بيعطوني وجهة نظرهن او رايهن او بوجهوني، بس مش هم بقرروا عني، بتخيل أنو Vingt deux ans بعرف اوخذ قراقات واحمل مسؤوليات ونقي شو انا بدي.

English translation:

Studying and Working

Samar: Hello, my name is Samar Kellas. I'm 22 years old. I'm in my third year at the Lebanese University, and I'm studying sociology.¹ I'm doing sociology because I couldn't keep up with any of the other core² classes³ in any university, and here there are no core classes. I like medicine,⁴ but I don't have a lot of motivation to study, and medicine needs a lot of studying, and a lot of years and all that. I started here, and I haven't failed anything, *alhamdullilah*⁵ ... I've passed.

Q: And you've been here for three years?

A: Yes, three years. This year I get the Licence,⁶ and next year I'm planning to get a Maîtrise,⁷ but after I finish the Licence I'm thinking about doing a year at USG and having it count towards a social work⁸ Licence. That's what I'm thinking about, but I have to find out more about it. I don't know. Maybe if I quit Sociology I'll do something else, because right now is the "information age," and, even if you don't like to learn and to study, you have to because there's nothing else to help us get by these days. And the University here is good in principle.⁹ It's organized, and it's very neat and clean with regards to Lebanese universities. The classrooms, the blackboards,¹⁰ the toilets,¹¹ everything. I don't really like the atmosphere, because I don't feel as if there is a lot of intimacy¹² between students in a class. I feel as if there are cliques¹³ and not all of them talk to each other. I don't feel as if they like each other, and I don't feel as if they help each other, either. For example, if you're absent one morning, you have to look around a lot to find someone to get the notes¹⁴ from. I don't know. I don't really like this, though.

¹ Sociologie (Fr.).

² Core (En.).

³ Cours (Fr.).

⁴ Domaine (Fr.) il-Medecine (Arabized French).

⁵ *Alhamdullilah* – lit. Thanks be to God, used to express thankfulness.

⁶ Licence – French equivalent to BA.

⁷ Maîtrise – French equivalent to Master's degree.

⁸ Assistance Sociale (Fr.).

⁹ En principe (Fr.).

¹⁰ Tableaumat – Arabized French (Tableau – Fr. board + "yat" masculine plural Arabic ending).

¹¹ Toiletat – Arabized French (Toilette – Fr. Toilet + "tat" feminine plural Arabic ending).

¹² Intimité (Fr.).

¹³ Groupat – Arabized French (Groupe – Fr. Group + "at" plural Arabic ending).

¹⁴ Cours – Fr. class; here it refers to class notes.

Q: Have you made friends here?

A: Yes, ça va,¹⁵ I have friends here, but it's like I'm telling you, it's not the whole class that is friends with each other -- there are little groups.

Q: Do you hang out with your friends from here a lot?

A: No. I have two or three friends, but we don't hang out that much.

Q: So what do you do for fun?

A: I hang out with my friends from outside the university.

Q: High school friends or ... ?

A: Yeah, some of them are high school friends. Some of them are older, and I met them here at the University, or I already¹⁶ knew them from before. It depends.

Q: Do you work and study at the same time?

A: No. I've never worked.

Q: What do you think about the work situation for young people in Lebanon? A lot of people say they want to leave.

A: I think work is a really important step. When you start working, you enter a completely new atmosphere, and you learn something really new. You learn a lot, and you gain expertise, and it's really important. For me, work is really important.

Q: Do you feel like you're going to be able to find work? You have hope.

A: Yes. Here in Lebanon it's connections. If you have connections, you work, even if you don't have a diploma. I have two friends who finished high school,¹⁷ and they've been working in a bank¹⁸ for two years.¹⁹ And I have a friend who finished a law²⁰ degree two years²¹ ago and she works in an office. That's the imbalance.²² So, everyone with connections can work, and people without connections stay at home. Even though I'm a girl, I don't like to have to be dependent on anyone. If here in Lebanon the young man is the one who is responsible for securing the future and for getting a house and things like that, even if I'm a girl I think about buying a house for myself ... even if it's

¹⁵ Ça va – Fr, “It’s going”; “It’s okay.”

¹⁶ Déjà – Fr.

¹⁷ Terminale – Last year of French lycée (high school).

¹⁸ Banque (Fr).

¹⁹ Deux ans (Fr).

²⁰ Droit (Fr).

²¹ Deux ans (Fr).

²² Décalage (Fr) – Shift, split, difference, gap.

not the house that my husband and I will live in. I'd like to do something for myself like buy a car or a house or whatever. I'm thinking about traveling. If I get a travel offer,²³ the idea is very appealing. I'm a girl and I think this way, so the young guys have to think this way because they have more responsibilities.

Q: As a girl in Lebanon, what is your family expecting from you? What is the general opinion about girls Is it better for them to work, to stay at home, or both?

A: Now it's really not good for a woman to sit at home. She should work and be educated. That's my opinion. I feel like a woman sitting at home has become really "ugly."

Q: Do you feel like you're under pressure²⁴ to get married?

A: No, no, no. I don't want to get married. Before I finish school and start working, I'm not thinking about getting married at all. I'm not under pressure²⁵ at home. My family doesn't tell me that I have to get married. It's up to me. In the end, this is my life and I choose. My family might give me their point of view or opinions but they don't decide. I'm already²⁶ 22 years²⁷ old, and I know how to make decisions and have responsibilities and choose what I want.

Q: Thank you, Samar.

A: Thank you.

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.

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²³ Offer (En).

²⁴ Pression (Fr).

²⁵ Pression (Fr).

²⁶ Déjà (Fr).

²⁷ Vingt deux ans (Fr).