

Heritage Language Maintenance for Diasporan Armenians: Significance and
Reasons

by

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Abstract

This research concentrates on the significance of heritage language maintenance for Diasporan Armenians living in the US. It analyzes the cultural attitudes of Diasporan Armenians and the core reasons they find it important to preserve their heritage language. It also discusses the role of remote learning, family language policies, connection to the homeland, and other factors that may be influential. The research aims to understand what methods they use to learn Armenian, how they connect it with identity maintenance, and how the next generation perceives the Armenian language. Therefore, it is necessary to dig deeper into the educational tools they apply, routine activities and customs, and find out connections between language and cultural aspects.

Keywords: Diaspora, Armenian language, identity, heritage language, family language policy, culture, homeland, education.

Heritage Language Maintenance for Diasporan Armenians: Significance and Reasons

I was 8 when I first won the local chess tournament for youth in Artsakh and came to Yerevan to participate in Armenia's Chess Championship under ten age group. I was holding my mom's hand and silently looking at children of different ages talking and playing around. I was listening attentively to the language they were speaking: it was not the Armenian language I learned at school.

When I got acquainted with some of the tournament participants later that day, they asked me to say some words in my dialect. They were overjoyed to hear every word I said and repeated them as if these words were something extraordinary. Yet, I didn't speak to them in my dialect. I used a very formal Eastern Armenian instead that included no jargon or dialect words. Probably, that was the reason some of them looked at me weirdly and giggled.

Everything became clear to me when I met the mother of one of the participants.

"Did you win today?" she asked.

"Այո՛ [ayo] / I did, indeed!" I said.

My "այո [ayo]" contained the exclamation mark and everything else we learned during the Armenian language class at school - intonation, correct grammatical inflections, and precise language rules. That is why it sounded too formal; "I did, indeed!"

The woman started laughing her heart out and repeated the phrase after me. At that moment, I realized the language I thought was the one I should have spoken to them was very different from the one that they actually spoke.

Heritage language and identity maintenance have been relevant for Diasporas of an array of countries including Armenia. Language plays a huge role in identity maintenance since it involves not only the knowledge of an additional language but also heritage culture, and mentality, and is perceived as such. Most Armenian families in Diaspora tend to preserve their heritage language and transfer it to generations as a powerful tool for maintaining the Armenian identity. There are various reasons that contribute to the formation of language ideologies and why Armenians give importance to it. Some of the factors are political and socioeconomic status, cultural attitudes, family language policy, and so on.

Apart from that, it has become more accessible to acquire the language and culture in the 21st-century classroom and also via online distance learning. If we compare the old style of language learning and the new style, the technological opportunities are differentiated since before the Internet, Armenians in Diaspora used to learn the language from their parents, Armenian schools and camps, or even additional courses. However, they would not learn the language directly from Armenia, or, the other aspect is that it was not always very convenient to attend extracurricular offline courses. Nowadays remote distance learning is convenient in such aspects as saving time, or not having to commute, for example. There are many online platforms available that give an opportunity to learn the language through culture, thereby providing knowledge and interest to the individual who wants to learn more about the country their roots come from.

Key terms and definitions

Family Language Policy (FLP) - an intentional effort to promote a specific language use pattern and specific literacy practices among family members (Curd-Christian, 2009, p. 352).

Literature Review

My sister Yeva is six years old. She came to Yerevan with me in September 2020 for the first time, when the war in Artsakh started. She was three then. My mom had to stay in Artsakh since she could not leave my brother and father alone. In Yerevan, it was quite hard to look after a toddler, work, and keep up with university classes at the same time. I found a kid center where they would take care of her for two hours a day so that meanwhile I manage to do a few things. Three days later, when we were already at home after I picked her up from the kid entertainment center, she was making origami while I was cooking. I called her.

“Ելա, լվացվե, եկ: Հագրիք օրոնւ էսս / Yeva, wash your hands and come! We are going to eat soon.” [I say in dialect]

“Գամեմ [gamem]” she said. She merged the word in Armenian and also the way we speak in Stepanakert and got a completely new way of saying “I’m coming.”

I started laughing. Yeva was looking at me and did not understand what was happening. She only spent six hours overall with other Armenian kids, and instead of saying “կամում [kiamoom]” in the way we speak in Stepanakert, she said “գամեմ [gamem]” which was actually her creative and interpretive combination of the Eastern Armenian “գալիս եմ” [galees em] and the Artsakh “կամում” [kiamoom].

Heritage Language Maintenance

Firstly, to understand the formation of language ideologies, it is important to look at the research done for Diasporas of other countries and see how the mentality of identity works for them. Hatoss's (2003) text about identity formation, cross-cultural attitudes and language maintenance in the Hungarian Diaspora connects the cultural and language maintenance factors and discusses how influential they are. In brief, it talks about a few elements that affect language maintenance, like cross-cultural attitudes, identity formation, and family language policies. Importantly, the author draws parallels between maintaining the Hungarian identity and the heritage language knowledge. Apart from that, Hatoss (2003) concentrates on the contemporary difficulties that can obstruct efforts to preserve cultural identity.

Lasagabaster's (2008) article is a similar research study that connects Diaspora and language maintenance with broader aspects that include morality, identity, religion, education, socialization, and gender relations, as well as schooling and law. In contrast to Hatoss, who also brings up the contemporary difficulties of language maintenance, Lasagabaster mentions the effective way of preserving it through the help of various institutions. Besides that, the educational aspect also plays a huge part in the study (Lasagabaster, 2008).

Palotai, Wetzl, and Jarjabka's (2019) article about identity preservation and Hungarian language education distinguishes the parallels and differences between teaching strategies based on the standards established by the research group. By studying the literature on the subject, the writers conducted research into the actual issues of identity preservation with an emphasis on language acquisition and preservation and the contemporary situation of Hungarians living abroad. The authors suggest that all schools, institutes, and organizations that offer education in

Hungarian culture should be placed in a cultural cluster in order to promote information sharing among these institutions (Palotai, Wetzl, & Jarjabka, 2019). Both the authors of this paper and Hatoss (2003) promote and share the ways of identity maintenance through the language factor for the Hungarian communities in Diaspora. Hence, similarly to Armenians, Hungarians in Diaspora are also highly eager for language and identity maintenance.

Environment Influence

Whereas previously mentioned studies mainly focus on identity formation through culture, language, and education, Hua Zhu and Wei Li (2016) analyze the influence of new environments on transnational families while emphasizing the differentiation of bilingualism and multilingualism. However, while the other authors research identity maintenance, Hua and Wei (2016) suggest placing a significant emphasis on the linguistic challenges and experiences. Similarly, Hatoss (2003) also mentions the challenges, but in a way that they may become an obstacle to cultural identity maintenance.

Armenian Diaspora Influence

Cultural aspects transit to understanding Armenian Diaspora thereby giving a more distinct connection. Attarian's (2007) research study on the stories of Armenian children whose grandparents were genocide survivors firstly gives insights about such aspects as Diasporic context and language loss and erosion. Furthermore, the participant observation part gives room for parallel ideas of how these children perceive their identities, heritage language, and cultural moments throughout their "meaning-making" process.

Manaseryan's (2004) research describes in what ways Diaspora is considered a comparative advantage for Armenia. It touches upon such information as humanitarian assistance and other investment assets for Armenia along with numerical data. It mentions the higher sense

of commonality among Armenians all over the world, which includes language, values, history, experience, and solidarity. The views discussed in the research help to understand why Diasporan Armenians are keen on preserving the commonality and what historical and cultural values lay beneath (Manaseryan, 2004).

Family Language Policy

Family language policy is an interesting element that describes the language beliefs, management, and ideologies among different families. Notably, it is mainly applied to ones in Diaspora since they are the ones having challenges with language use. Curdt-Christiansen's (2009) article examines the formulation and implementation of family language policy in ten Chinese immigrant families in Quebec, Canada. It primarily focuses on the language instruction of children in Chinese, English, and French. Similar to Hua and Wei's (2016) article, the study places a strong emphasis on multilingualism and how it is perceived. According to the results, family language policies are significantly influenced by socio-political and economic factors. These factors give more room for the research and there may be parallels with Hatoss's (2003) research on cross-cultural attitudes. The study also takes into account the parents' experiences as immigrants, their educational background, and cultural aspects. It highlights the unequal power relations between minor and dominant languages which can be referred to Hua and Wei (2016) who suggest to rather focus on the challenges. The study frames parents' perspectives on linguistic ideology by contextualizing the language status and institutional policies' influence on multilingualism (Curdt-Christiansen, 2009).

Romanowski's (2021) article about deliberate language policy or a perceived lack of agency also touches upon language maintenance due to the family language policy. This is a similar study to the previously mentioned one that brings up sufficient data to understand how

family language policy works for yet another community and how it is directed with identity formation.

Nevertheless, Romanowski (2021) concludes that attitudes toward heritage language acquisition cannot ensure that children will continue to develop their heritage languages.

Technology and Education Today

Referring to the previous articles, Mandaville's (2001) article also mentions the importance of language maintenance in Islamic communities. Concisely, the main concentration here is on IT and how communication technologies may help in heritage language learning, similar to teaching culture in the 21st-century language classroom (Mandaville, 2001). As a connecting example, several digital tools provide the opportunity to learn Armenian and get acquainted with the culture and history, even if the person has never been to the country. Thus, through a statistical survey, it is possible to see how technologies contribute to the language and identity maintenance of Diaspora people and make up a significant and relevant part of it.

To understand how it is possible to get closer to a certain culture through language, or the opposite, Dema and Moeller (2012) present a few pedagogical techniques. These techniques, if used in a second language curriculum, might be very successful becoming a premise of teaching the language differently. This approach might boost student enthusiasm and dispel intercultural misconceptions. The authors show how different teachers were able to employ this methodology to foster an atmosphere where students may engage with digital data to learn the language and develop a unique understanding of the three "Ps of the target language (products, practices, and perspectives)" (Dema and Moellet, 2012, p. 76). The study can be a good supplement to Palotai, Wetzl, and Jarjabka's (2019) suggestion to replace the Hungarian language and culture with the culture cluster in educational institutions. If both are united, the interconnection of language and

culture will be stronger, thus it will be easier to learn both when also creating a bond for the heritage language, consequently.

Conclusion

The works discussed above guided me to make comparisons and draw parallels since there is no similar research found that is done for the Armenian Diaspora. Specifically, the first three articles helped to understand how different communities established in other countries face the challenges and why they were eager to preserve their heritage language and connect it to identity maintenance. Apart from that, family language policy articles help to understand how different families perceive language use and what actions they take according to their socioeconomic, political, and other states. I'm similarly exploring how the family language policy works for Armenians in Diaspora and bringing examples of different FLP-s influencing children and their identities. Additionally, articles that include the education methods for language learning are directed with similar examples of contemporary digital educational tools as well as their influence on effective language learning. The crucial part here is the connection with culture since the learning process is mainly implemented through learning the culture as well.

Thus, the literature review helped me to get acquainted with the overall statistics and sophistication of language maintenance mentalities from different parts of the world. It also helped me to create an overall image and therefore, it was possible to draw parallels between the Diaspora communities mentioned in the literature review and the Armenian Diaspora. Apart from that, the literature review gave me an opportunity to get acquainted with terms and

techniques that were quite necessary for implementing similar research for Armenian communities in Diaspora.

Research Questions

My research aims to discuss the following main question: *Why is it important to preserve the heritage language for Diasporan Armenians?* My study aims to explore how different aspects that influence heritage language acquisition may have an impact on identity. For instance, the ones who learn the Armenian language through the culture, and the opposite, are eager to preserve traditions and similar cultural attitudes.

Other questions are: *How is it possible to maintain the heritage language for Armenians in Diaspora? How may remote learning help to reach heritage language maintenance? How does learning the Armenian language influence the identities of Armenians in the Diaspora? What role does family language policy play in the preservation of the Armenian language for Diaspora Armenians?*

Methodology

Episodes like the following story happened every time I visited Yerevan for chess tournament reasons. Local participants were already aware I was from Artsakh, and the second question after “How are you doing?” was “Can you tell us some words in your dialect and we will guess what they are?”

“Okay, մոկոկմանդեղի, [mookoolmandeel]” I always tried to use the words that were impossible to understand.

“Wha-a-t? Մոկոկ, մոկոկմանդեղի, [mookoo, mookoomandee],” they would try to repeat the word.

“Մ-Ու-Կ-Ու-Լ-Մ-Ա-Ն-Դ-Ե-Ե-Լ, [M-OO-K-OO-L-M-A-N-D-EE-L]” I tried to pronounce the word letter by letter.

“Ok, I give up. What is that?”

“It’s a spider web!”

Everyone including me laughed wholeheartedly and I felt very good inside that I could make them laugh with my dialect. In fact, the way I spoke was considered very cool.

My research includes both qualitative and quantitative data since I needed to see both sides of the coin when implementing this project among Diasporan Armenians. Firstly, qualitative research provides lots of stories and different perspectives from the viewpoints of Armenian language and literature teachers living in Armenia that work with Diasporan Armenians. I assumed that online teachers from Armenia would also have their own interesting observations just like me since I also included myself in the interviews and mentioned personal experiences via stories. My own activity and involvement in teaching Armenian students from Diaspora is a separate participant observation part of the study.

In its turn, quantitative data gave room to focus on the cross-cultural attitudes of Diaspora Armenians and their heritage language maintenance ideologies. It explored Diasporan Armenian parents and their children’s fluency in the Armenian language, and at what level they apply to various Armenian activities and customs. The raw numerical data also demonstrated how a number of Armenians living in the US learn the language and thus, it created an overall image of cultural attitudes.

Since I have been working as a chess teacher in [Dasa2](#) for two years, I used the opportunity to reach the target audience both for my qualitative and quantitative data findings. [Dasa2](#) is an online platform that includes more than one thousand Armenian students from abroad, who are both from intercultural and multicultural families. The creators of this platform

are Samvel Hovhannisyan and Sonya Darbinyan, and their incentive was to make sure that people from different parts of the world can get a quality education (“Dasa2”, 2021).

Participant observation

The decision to use my own stories is based on understanding the root of my research and what my dialect means to me in a larger context. It slowly turned into the second layer of my capstone project since the experiences and connection to the way I speak are highly associated with my homeland and everything I lived through with it. Rooted deep in my heart, the way I speak depicts a lot from my life, thereby becoming an ID for me. Thus, the connection between the Armenian language and Diasporan Armenians is very common with my own example of a homesick Artsakhtsi based in Yerevan. As a result, I used this creative approach to tell my own stories along with the research sections in this paper. Other than that, I answered the same interview questions because my first observation and ideas about this project came to me throughout the experiences of my own classes, too.

Qualitative research

I interviewed Dasa2 Armenian language tutors who pay close attention to moments where they are teaching cultural heritage and not just language. I transcribed all the information and sorted out some similarities and differences to include in my research findings and analysis. I changed all the mentioned names from the teachers’ stories to pseudonyms to protect identities. Also, one of the teachers' names is changed to a pseudonym too since I didn’t receive consent to disclose their identity. All the gathered information about experiences working with Dasa2 students gives lots of insights into their acquisition of Armenian culture. My interviewees were Anahit Sargsyan, Lusine Abovyan, Anna Manukyan (pseudonym), Dayana Amirkhanyan.

Anahit is a 26-year-old MA in Philology from Gyumri. She works at Gyumri Academic College as a teacher of the Armenian Language and Literature. She also works as a radio host. She has been teaching Armenian language to children living abroad on the online platform Dasa2 for 3 years.

Lusine is a 22-year-old Armenian Language and Literature teacher from Vanadzor. At first, she worked as a tutor offline with students from Armenia. She has been teaching online for 2 years. She has been teaching online in Dasa2 for half a year.

Anna is from Stepanakert. She works as Armenian Language and Literature teacher in Stepanakert School N1 named after Khachatur Abovyan and has been teaching online in Dasa2 for 2 years. She's married and has 2 kids. (No information is disclosed about age and education).

Dayana is a 22-year-old student from Vanadzor studying at the American University of Armenia in the Department of English and Communications. She's been teaching in Dasa2 for 3 years and has experience in public speaking and communication.

Quantitative research

I conducted an online [Google Forms](#) survey for Diasporan Armenians, who were mostly parents of [Dasa2](#) students in the US, to understand some of their cross-cultural attitudes and differentiations between those, who were keen on language maintenance, and those that were not. I administered my survey and spread the link via social media messages, or contacted parents via phone calls and asked them to fill out the survey that I had sent them via e-mail messages. It helped me to understand how cross-cultural families and their traditions as well as Family Language Policies (FLP) are formed and how different factors may impact those formations. After collecting sufficient data, I analyzed the results and mentioned in what ways heritage language maintenance is significant for Diasporan Armenians and what other habits they

encounter on a daily basis to preserve their “Armenianness.” Interestingly, through the survey process, it became evident that all the participants were at least eager to speak Armenian since no one answered “never” to the question “How often do you speak Armenian at home?” This is one of the indicators of my project design shift from what I expected.

Research Findings and Analysis

I was eleven when I went to Arzni from Artsakh where the strongest chess coaches were training Armenia’s top junior players for an upcoming European Chess Championship. A therapist was also working with us to prepare for the games since in chess, psychology does half the job. One day, he decided to play piano for the participants. After he finished, I approached him and said, “լավ էք ածու՛մ, [lav ek atsoom],” which meant “you play the piano very well” in my dialect, and “you lay eggs very well” in standard Eastern Armenian.

“What am I doing you said?” he asked in astonishment.

“You lay eggs very well!” I repeated innocently.

Indeed, it was funny to hear something like that and I could see he was trying hard to hold his laughter.

“Ածել [atsel] means something else in Armenian, I think you wanted to say նվագել [nvagel]; the Armenian word for “playing” the piano,” he said.

“Yes, right! Նվագել [nvagel].”

“Զու՛ն հսկլերն է՛ն ածու՛մ / Chicken lay eggs!” And we both laughed out loud.

Both qualitative and quantitative data in my research study demonstrate three main aspects of why the Diasporan Armenians give importance to heritage language maintenance. First and foremost, parental involvement plays a significant role in my findings. In this part of the analysis, the thorough discussion of family language policy (FLP) is a crucial aspect as well. Apart from that, parental involvement is deeply interconnected with the following two elements that are extracurricular activities and connection to homeland/moral values, respectively. The reason is that the parent shapes the child, makes them attend extracurricular activities, and influences their overall worldview, thereby transferring a set of values. However, the environment where children grow and its cultural aspect are derivatives that are reflected in children's speech, behavior, and viewpoints as well. Other than that, in the part of researching the extracurricular activities, the analysis puts the main emphasis on the opportunity of remote learning and in what ways the 21st-century classroom is so effective. Due to remote learning, Armenians from Diaspora get to see and get acquainted with teachers from Armenia, which, in its turn, is also connected to the final part of the analysis. Thus, the interconnectedness of different aspects of analysis results in giving a well-established answer to the main research question.

Parental Involvement

Parents shape children's world outlook by creating certain ideologies as their default settings. One of the crucial parts that directly affect children's further development is the language and so-called language ideologies and policies established due to parental involvement. The most significant and frequently difficult duty for "first-generation migrants" is acquiring the languages of their new country where they are residents, whereas their kids struggle to preserve

their heritage language (Hua and Wei, 2016, p. 2). For the language education of their children, “parental language ideologies serve as both visible and invisible language planning” (Curdt-Christiansen, 2009, p. 352).

Thus, to understand why parents give importance to language ideologies, it is important to look into “FLP (Family Language Policy)” (Curdt-Christiansen, 2009, p. 352). FLP is formed by what the family thinks will improve the family's social position and fulfill the individual interests of the family members (Curdt-Christiansen, 2009, p. 352).

Often, Diasporan Armenian parents make their children learn the language because they are keen on heritage language maintenance, which in its turn is a matter of being far from the homeland, values, and cultural and historical interconnectedness. One of my interviewees Anahit Sargsyan said,

Perhaps, the person who lives far away from their homeland feels this duty or this fear... Maybe they want to create an atmosphere and aura at home where everyone speaks Armenian... Perhaps, they are afraid of the period when only a few people will speak Armenian in their environment. Other than that, perhaps they want to keep their children close to their origins, they want to keep the Armenian identity (personal interview, February 21, 2023).

According to the numerical statistics (Appendix E), most of the Diasporan Armenian parents and children understand the Armenian language fluently. Other than that, none of the participants answered that they never speak Armenian at home. Thus, the family language policy is very similar for most of the Diasporan Armenian families; they often speak Armenian at home.

Overall findings suggest that parents also intervened in making children attend online or offline language classes, extracurricular activities, Armenian Saturday or Sunday schools, and

Armenian camps where children will mostly speak Armenian and will get acquainted with Armenian culture and history.

Extracurricular Activities

Extracurricular activities make up an essential part of children's language learning process and development. As mentioned previously, children of Diasporan Armenian families tend to attend Armenian schools on Saturday or Sunday and participate in various activities and events like camps, and online or offline language, chess, and other classes with Armenian tutors.

Attending extracurricular activities for language and identity maintenance is a common practice for representatives of different Diaspora communities as well. For example, Hatoss (2003) mentions that respondents of the Hungarian Diaspora confirmed attending dance nights, soccer games, concerts, and other cultural events in addition to being actively involved in Hungarian club activities. Various activities are tools for "keeping in touch with the community," for cultural and identity maintenance (Hatoss, 2003, p. 73).

Notably, nowadays language lessons have become more accessible and effective due to the Internet and technologies that allow students to connect with tutors directly from their countries, thereby giving them an opportunity to learn the language with a native speaker. This technological factor encourages students as well as their parents' active participation and involvement in classes with tutors from Armenia.

As a chess tutor from Armenia, I often come across parents who want their children to communicate in Armenian during chess class. They usually request to speak as much Armenian as possible from the tutor. Apart from that, when students give answers in English, parents often correct them right during the class and request to say the same thing in Armenian. Therefore,

parental involvement is also a very common case in extracurricular activities, where they mostly intend their children to speak Armenian and be in a little Armenian environment for a while.

Connection to the Homeland: Environment and Culture

Whereas the new local environment and culture of an individual affect their overall language perceptions, it also affects the sense of connection to the homeland. Language ideology also depends on the surrounding context and is influenced by, intertwined with, and relates to “economic, political, sociocultural, linguistic, and parental educational experiences and expectations” (Curd-Christiansen, 2009, p. 355). As previously indicated, the cultural aspect is very significant in heritage language maintenance. Language and culture are so interconnected that it is possible to get acquainted with the culture via language, and vice versa.

I think when we learn the language we also learn the culture because every word and phrase has a story that is specific to the culture, and it forms the culture (personal interview, March 29, 2023).

Hua and Wei (2016) similarly noted that “their [Chinese transnational families in Britain] “loss” is a connection with the culture in which the new words and expressions are emerging and used” (p. 10). For instance, according to the experience of one of my interviewees, she had to dedicate an entire class to explaining that we cannot say “to wear makeup” or “to wear glasses” in Armenian since the word “wear” in Armenian only refers to clothing. Similarly, they mentioned that words like *հայրենի, մայրենի* [hayreni, mayreni] which mean *native [language]* as we refer to the *mother* tongue in English, are not very comprehensible for students since these words are perceived in a greater spiritual and culturally valuable sense for Armenian-speaking community. The reason is that *հայրենի, մայրենի* [hayreni, mayreni] consist of the roots *հայր, մայր* [hayr, mayr] which mean father/mother. Thus, to describe whatever is very native to them

in terms of homeland or culture, Armenian language speakers use the dearest words: mother and father.

Thus, the new environment and culture sometimes create obstacles for Armenian language teachers. Nevertheless, the obstacles are quite possible to overcome by learning Armenian culture and history as well along with the language.

The elements discussed above indicate the sophistication of learning the Armenian language and how various aspects may impact the formation of language ideology for an individual living in the Diaspora. The findings answer the main research questions and demonstrate why Diasporan Armenians give importance to learning the heritage language, the possibilities in today's world, and how culture, environment, and parents influence children's perception of heritage language and homeland.

Limitations and Avenues for Future Research

Interviewing Dasa2 Armenian language teachers as part of my research design has shifted a lot from what I thought was going to be implemented. When I made a post in the Dasa2 teachers' private group, six people responded. However, I could only implement Zoom interviews with two of them, and also two people agreed to have an interview via voice recordings. Apart from that, one of the participants did not give information about her age, education, and her perspectives on cross-cultural attitudes. The data collected from this participant is mostly about methods of teaching. Thus, the expected data collection from interviewees has diminished since there were some who changed their minds and did not participate, and also the ones that did not give sufficient answers to the questions.

At the beginning of the survey designing process, I decided to include open-ended questions as well. Nevertheless, I did not have open-ended questions because, throughout the process of interviews, I realized that some people do not usually want to give long answers especially when there is no one asking the question directly to them. Other than that, based on my peers' experience, people often discontinue filling in the survey when they see an open-ended question. Thus, all of my questions were in the form of multiple choice which in its turn allowed having more concise answers. However, at the end of every question in the survey, there was a section "other" and some people used it to write their own answers. I realized it was the right decision when one of the survey participants told me how easy-going my survey was.

I was expecting all of my Dasa2 students' parents to participate in the survey. The number was very small at the beginning. However, some mothers of my students came to help and they shared my survey link with other Diasporan Armenians that they know. Nevertheless, for future research, the involvement of more participants can give precise answers and abundant information, thereby letting the study widen.

Conclusion

Heritage language maintenance is a very common concern for Diasporan Armenians. The sense of duty to preserve the language and pass it on to the next generations is very relevant since the language connects the culture, history, and all the other elements of the homeland; it depicts who the person is and contains a wealth of information on the individual's identity. Factors like parental involvement, environment, culture, extracurricular activities, and possibilities of today's technologies develop the language ideology of the next generation. The

easier access to learning the language opens new perspectives to explore Armenian history, culture as well as the country itself.

The language ideology of Diasporan Armenians is based on maintaining a so-called identity that brings a broader spectrum of socio-economic, political, or even religious policies that are established in them as a result of experiencing an entire history full of pain and suffering. My research concentrated on one of the most important aspects which is capable of bonding Armenia-Diaspora-Artsakh unity.

Epilogue

April 2023

Artsakh is in a blockade. People don't have food, medicine, or gas supply. Electricity is a problem, too. The sign "You are entering the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan" has been set up on the road recently.

A horrible state of uncertainty follows you every day. It is getting worse. Nightmares. You wear the smile mask not to show the sorrowful expression on your face. People are mostly unconcerned. They carelessly continue their routine work and you, too, try to keep up with everything in this big city. You try hard to carry the load of people's discussions, classes, plans, and events... In reality, none of these bother you, nor do they matter. Rather, you feel this heavy burden on your neck. Your chest is filled with ache, pain, and anger but you try to swallow "it" because you don't want "it" to come out of your mouth.

At the end of the day, you come home to see a person just like you. You both don't need any words to understand what happened. You both start silently extracting pieces of the burden from each other's necks. Suddenly, you hear heartwarming words from your dialect.

- Եկ մին խորթնալ չայ սարքիւ, խմինք, դիւզունաւք... / *Let me make us thyme tea to drink and calm down...*

In this big world, your home is a tiny land where you can feel relieved.

Your home is a person. Your home is a language.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Interview Consent Form [Armenian Version]

Համաձայնության հավաստագիր

Համաձայնագիր մասնակցելու դիպլոմային ծրագրի իրականացման Հայաստանի ամերիկյան համալսարանում: Մույնով հավաստում եմ, որ համաձայն եմ մասնակցել ՀԱՀ Հումանիտար և հասարակական գիտությունների ֆակուլտետի դասախոս դոկտոր Հուրիկ Ադաբեանի (հեռ.՝ 060 612769, էլ. հասցե՝ hourig.attarian@aua.am) ղեկավարությամբ Մանե Ադամյանի կողմից դիպլոմային աշխատանքի նախագծի հարցազրույցին:

Նախագծի նպատակը

Տեղյակ եմ, որ այս նախագծի նպատակն է հասկանալ հայոց լեզվի իմացության նշանակությունը սփյուռքահայերի հայկական ինքնության պահպանման մեջ: Մանե Ադամյանի անցկացրած հարցազրույցի նպատակը սփյուռքահայ երեխաների հետ աշխատող հայոց լեզվի ուսուցիչների օնլայն ուսուցման փորձի և մեթոդների լուսաբանելն է ընդհանուր նախագծի համատեքստում:

Ընթացակարգը

Հասկանում եմ, որ հարցազրույցը անցկացվելու է Zoom օնլայն հարթակում կամ ձայնային հաղորդագրության միջոցով, և ձայնագրվելու է: Որպես մասնակից ես տալու եմ ընդհանուր տեղեկություններ սփյուռքահայ երեխաների հետ աշխատելու իմ փորձի մասին: Տեղյակ եմ, որ հարցազրույցները տևելու են մոտ մեկ ժամ, բայց այդուհանդերձ մասնակիցները կարող են որևէ պահի դադարեցնել հարցազրույցը, հրաժարվել պատասխանել որևէ հարցի, կամ որևէ պահի դուրս գալ նախագծից: Հասկանում եմ, որ եթե ցանկանամ հարցազրույցը երկու ժամից ավելի երկարաձգել, ինձ այդ հնարավորությունը կընձեռվի:

Ռիսկեր և օգուտներ

Հասկանում եմ, որ այս հարցազրույցը իր մեջ ներառում է իմ անձնական արժեքների և կարծիքի կիսում, որին կվերաբերվեն առավելագույն խնամքով և հոգատարությամբ: Տեղյակ եմ, որ ազատ եմ կանգնելու, դադար տալու և չչարունակելու ցանկացած պահի: Հարցազրույցին մասնակցելը չի ներառում որևէ ռիսկեր:

Մասնակցության պայմանները

Որպես մասնակից ինձ հասանելի կլինեն ձայնագրված և գրի առնված տվյալները՝ դրանք ստուգելու նպատակով: Նախագծի ամբողջ տևողության ընթացքում, ես հնարավորություն կունենամ վերանայել ու հաստատել անզլերեն թարգմանությունը, եթե նյութը հայերեն է:

___ Հասկանում եմ, որ որևէ պահի կարող եմ հետ վերցնել համաձայնությունս ու հրաժարվել մասնակցել նախագծին՝ առանց բացասական հետևանքների:

___ Հասկանում եմ, որ այս նախագծի տվյալները գիտաուսումնական նպատակներով կարող են հրատարակվել՝ տպագիր կամ թվային տարբերակներով:

Իմ հարցազրույցի **ինքնության բացահայտման և վերարտադրման առումով**

— համաձայն եմ **բացահայտելու իմ ինքնությունը**: Հասկանում եմ, որ իմ ինքնությունը կարող է բացահայտվել այս հարցազրույցի արդյունքում հրատարակված նյութերում կամ ելույթներում:

— Համաձայն եմ գիտաուսումնական նպատակներով այս հարցազրույցի նկարների ու ձայնագրությունների վերարտադրմանը որևէ հաղորդամիջոցով (վեբ կայքեր, վավերագրական ֆիլմեր, և այլն):

ԿԱՄ

— Հասկանում եմ, որ իմ մասնակցությունն այս ուսումնասիրությանը **զաղտնի է**: Հասկանում եմ, որ իմ ինքնությունը չի բացահայտվի, այլ ցանկացած հրատարակման կամ ներկայացման մեջ, կօգտագործվի ծածկանուն:

— Համաձայն եմ, որ չնայած իմ հարցազրույցից որոշ նյութեր կարող են հրատարակվել, սակայն ոչ մի ձայնագրություն կամ պատկեր չի կարող վերարտադրվել:

ՈՒՇԱԴԴԻՐ ԿԱՐԴԱՅԵԼ ԵՄ ՎԵՐԸ ՇԱՐԱԴԴՐՎԱԾԸ և ՀԱՍԿԱՆՈՒՄ ԵՄ ԱՅՍ ՀԱՄԱԶԱՅՆԱԳՐԻ ԿԵՏԵՐԸ: ՀՈԺԱՐԱԿԱՄ ՀԱՄԱԶԱՅՆՈՒՄ ԵՄ ՄԱՍՆԱԿՑԵԼ ԱՅՍ ՈՒՍՈՒՄՆԱՍԻՐՈՒԹՅԱՆԸ:

Մասնակից՝

Անուն ազգանուն (Խնդրում ենք գրել տպատառ) _____

Ստորագրություն _____ Ամսաթիվ _____

Հարցազրույց վարող՝

Անուն ազգանուն (Խնդրում ենք գրել տպատառ)

Ստորագրություն _____ Ամսաթիվ _____

Եթե որևէ պահի հարցեր կունենաք ձեր իրավունքների վերաբերյալ, որպես դիպլոմային

ծրագրի մասնակից, կարող եք կապվել ՀԱՀ Հումանիտար և հասարակական

գիտությունների ֆակուլտետի դասախոս դոկտոր Հուրիկ Ադդարեանի հետ (հեռ.՝ 060

612769, էլ.հասցե՝ hourig.attarian@aua.am):

Appendix B: Survey Consent Form [English Version]

Survey consent form

I have been informed that the purpose of this survey is to collect data for a capstone project in American University of Armenia. Within the bigger context of the capstone project, the survey conducted by Mane Adamyan is meant to focus on the cross-cultural attitudes of Diaspora Armenians and their heritage language maintenance.

This is to state that I agree to participate in this survey for the capstone project conducted by Mane Adamyan. The capstone director is Dr. Hourig Attarian of the College of Humanities & Social Sciences at AUA (tel.: 060 612769, email: hourig.attarian@aua.am).

I understand that my participation in this study is anonymous; the data collected in the following survey will only be published as aggregated data; the data may be published in print or digital format for academic purposes; and that I am free to withdraw my consent and discontinue my participation at any time without negative consequences.

Appendix C: Interview Questionnaire

1. Խնդրում եմ նշել Ձեր անունը:
2. Մի փոքր կպատմե՞ք Ձեր մասին:
3. Քանի՞ տարի եք առցանց դասավանդում և որտե՞ղ:
4. Խնդրում եմ պատմել, թե ինչպես որոշեցիք դասավանդել և ինչպես սկսեցիք: Ինչ-որ մանկավարժական դասընթացների մասնակցել ե՞ք:
5. Ի՞նչ առարկա եք դասավանդում: Դա Ձեր մասնագիտականն է՞:
6. Քանի աշակերտ ունեք և ի՞նչ տարիքի են աշակերտները: Պատմեք նրանց մասին:
7. Ի՞նչ մեթոդներ և աղբյուրներ եք օգտագործում դասի ժամանակ: Ինչքա՞ն է տևում դասը:
8. Կա՞ր արդյոք ինչ-որ հատուկ աղբյուր, որը մշտապես եք օգտագործում:
9. Ինչպե՞ս են ընկալում հայոց լեզուն Ձեր աշակերտները՝ որպես հավելյալ լեզու, թե՞ որպես մայրենի լեզու: Առնչվում եք արդյո՞ք խնդիրների: Եթե այո, ապա որոնք են:
10. Հնարավո՞ր է արդյոք սովորել հայ մշակույթը լեզվի հետ մեկտեղ: Ինչպե՞ս: Կա՞ն մեթոդներ, որոնք Դուք եգ օգտագործում այդ ուղղությամբ:
11. Ձեր կարծիքով, ինչո՞վ են ներշնչված հայերեն սովորող Ձեր աշակերտները:
12. Ո՞րն է ժառանգված լեզուն սովորելու կարևորությունը Ձեր կարծիքով: Կա՞ր արդյոք տարբերություն, երբ ուսուցանում եք հայերենը որպես մայրենի լեզու և որպես ժառանգված լեզու:

Appendix D: Survey

Cross-cultural attitudes and heritage language maintenance for Diaspora Armenians

Survey consent form

I have been informed that the purpose of this survey is to collect data for a capstone project in American University of Armenia. Within the bigger context of the capstone project, the survey conducted by Mane Adamyan is meant to focus on cross-cultural attitudes of Diaspora Armenians and their heritage language maintenance.

This is to state that I agree to participate in this survey for the capstone project conducted by Mane Adamyan. The capstone director is Dr. Hourig Attarian of the College of Humanities & Social Sciences at AUA (tel.: 060 612769, email: hourig.attarian@aua.am).

I understand that my participation in this study is anonymous; the data collected in the following survey will only be published as aggregated data; the data may be published in print or digital format for academic purposes; and that I am free to withdraw my consent and discontinue my participation at any time without negative consequences.

Do you speak Armenian fluently? *

- Yes
- No
- Other...

Do your children speak Armenian fluently? *

- Yes
- No
- Other...

How often do you speak Armenian at home? *

- Always
- Often
- Sometimes

How often do your children attend Armenian schools/extracurricular activities?

- Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Never
- Other...

*

Have you attended an Armenian school?

- Yes
- No
- Other...

How often do you cook Armenian food? *

- Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Never
- Other...

How often do you listen to Armenian music? *

- Always
 - Often
 - Sometimes
 - Never
 - Other...
-

How often do you go to an Armenian church? *

- Always
 - Often
 - Sometimes
 - Never
 - Other...
-

Have you/your children ever attended Armenian camps? *

- Always
 - Often
 - Sometimes
 - Never
 - Other...
-

How often do you travel to Armenia? *

- Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Never
- Other...

How are you/your children learning the Armenian language? *

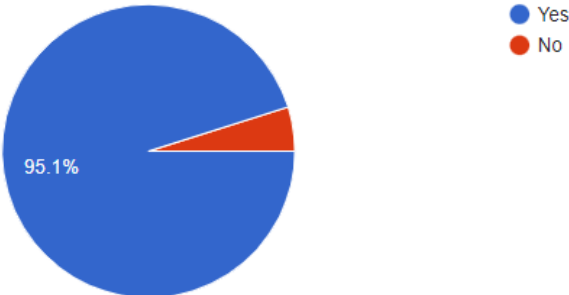
- Online instructors/platforms
- Local teachers
- Self-learning
- Not learning Armenian
- Other...

Appendix E: Raw Numerical Data

Do you speak Armenian fluently?

 Copy

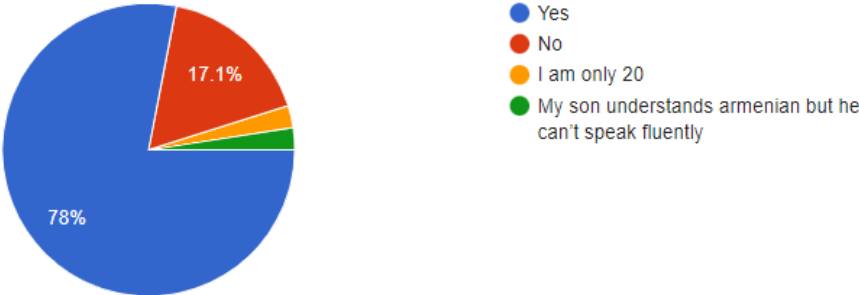
41 responses



Do your children speak Armenian fluently?

 Copy

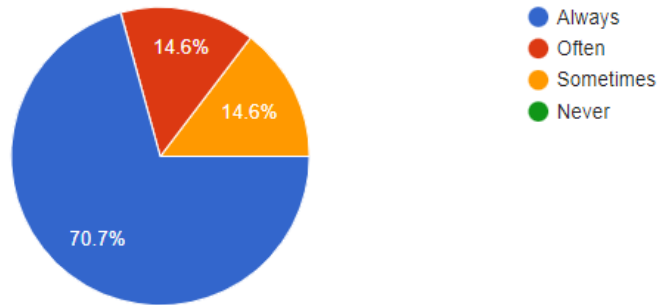
41 responses



How often do you speak Armenian at home?

 Copy

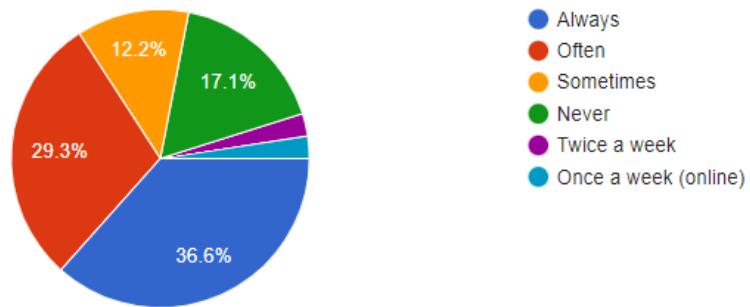
41 responses



How often do your children attend Armenian schools/extracurricular activities?

 Copy

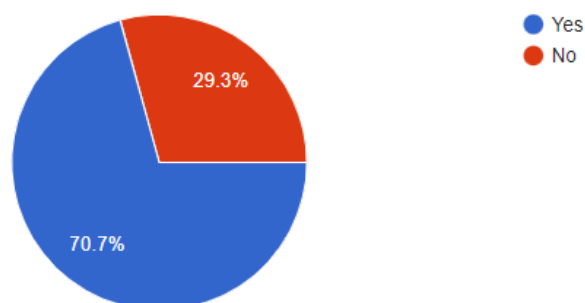
41 responses



 Copy

Have you attended an Armenian school?

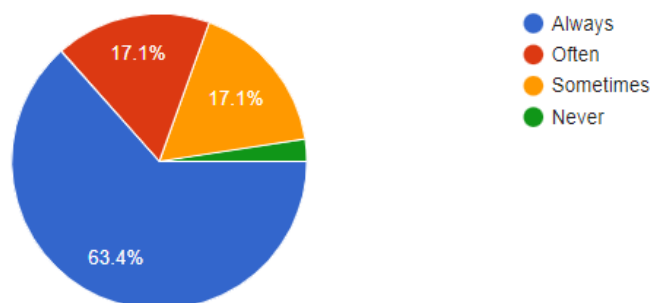
41 responses



 Copy

How often do you cook Armenian food?

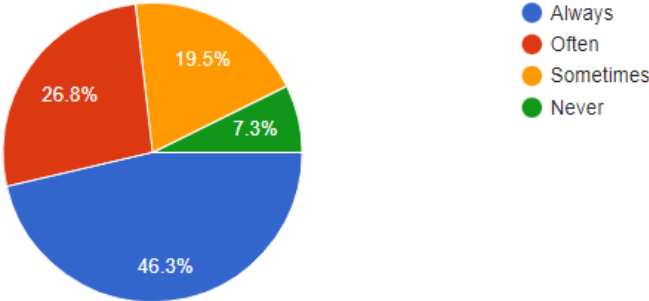
41 responses



How often do you listen to Armenian music?

 Copy

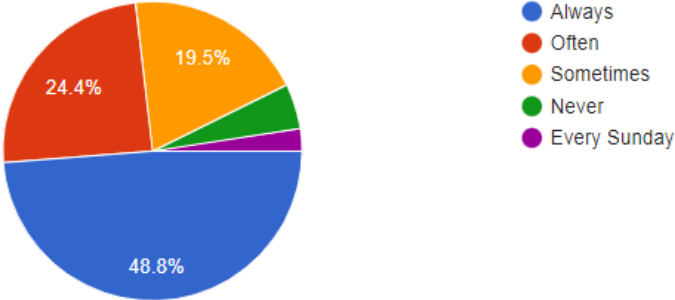
41 responses



How often do you go to an Armenian church?

 Copy

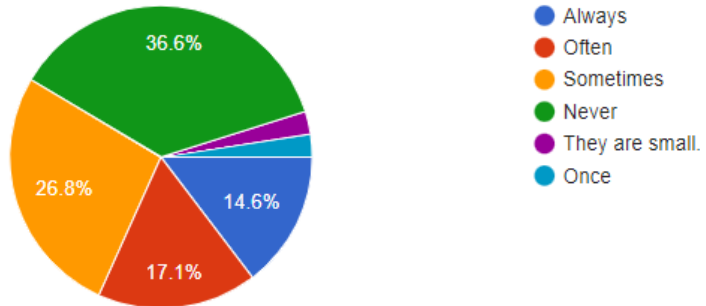
41 responses



Have you/your children ever attended Armenian camps?

[Copy](#)

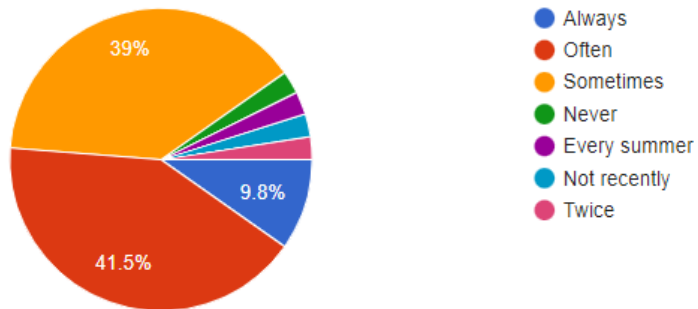
41 responses



How often do you travel to Armenia?

[Copy](#)

41 responses



How are you/your children learning the Armenian language?

[Copy](#)

41 responses

