WESTERN ARMENIAN

Mesut Cetinkaya
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FACTS

- Արեւմտահայերէն (Arevmdahayeren)
- Indo-European Language Family
- Istanbul, Hatay (Vakıflı village), Iraq, Lebanon, Syria and others.
- Turkish (82% of the Armenian people in Turkey)
FACTS

- Number of speakers: 879,612 in year 2001 all over the world (Ethnologue)
  50,000 in Turkey (UNESCO's Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger)
- De facto minority language in Turkey
- Armenian alphabet since 405 AD
FACTS

Sentence structure => SOV but no dominant order

Left to right

One of the two main dialects

Written material available
Western Armenian for the English Speaking World

Agos Newspaper (agos.com.tr)
HISTORY

- Alphabet in 405 AD by Mesrop Mashtots
- 5th century Bible translation
- Helleno-Armenian (hypothetical) - Pedersen and Meillet.
- Treaty of Turkmenchay (1828) => Ottoman, Russian, Persian.
- Istanbul => center of Western Armenian
USE

Church

Armenian minority schools (16, Istanbul)

3100 students

No economic support from government
USE

- Prove you’re Armenian

- One of parents must be Turkish citizen.

- Lack of teachers

- High school & university exams: Turkish
USE

- Elective course in Boğaziçi University.
- Armenian Language and Literature in Erciyes University in Kayseri
- Public Education Center of Sur municipality in Diyarbakır (under investigation)
OVERALL: Definitely Endangered

Proportion of speakers within the overall population: 2
Severely endangered (a minority speaks the language)
ENDANGERMENT

- Intergenerational Language Transmission: 3
  Definitely endangered (The language is used mostly by the parental generation and up.)

- Absolute Number of Speakers: 4
  Critically endangered
ENDANGERMENT

- Shifts in Domains of Language Use: 3
  Dwindling domains (Parents start using the dominant language, children are semi speakers, bilingual children may exist.) Might be 2!

- Response to New Domains and Media: 1
  Minimal (The language is used only in a few new domains.)
Availabilty of Materials for Language Education and Literacy: 4

Written materials exist. At school, children are developing literacy in the language. Writing in the language is not used in administration.

Governmental and Institutional Language Attitudes and Policies, Including Official Status and Use: 3

Passive Assimilation (No explicit policy exists for minority languages; the dominant language prevails in the public domain.)
Community Members’ Attitudes towards Their Own Language: 4-5
Many or all of the members support and value their language.

Type and Quality of Documentation: 3
Fair (Adequate books, dictionaries no daily media)
WHY ENDANGERED

➤ Government’s lack of support or even opposition.

➤ Idea of one state = one nation
   one nation = one language

➤ Switching to dominant language is more pragmatic.
SAMPLES

 Text 3

 Naze’s lullaby

 Introductory Unit
REFERENCES

Western Armenian for the English Speaking World, A Contrastive Approach by Dora Sakayan

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