

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

<http://www.armin.am/images/menus/1306/DoraSakayanpdf.pdf>

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)

ENDANGERMENT



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.)

ENDANGERMENT



- ❧ Availability 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.)

ENDANGERMENT



- 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



œ Text 3

œ Naze's lullaby

œ Introductory Unit

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