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"It's not important where you are, it's important what you are": International Armenian Cultural Education as a Strategy for Language Maintenance

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Abstract

This article draws on ethnographic and interview data to document a case of transnational cultural education in a diasporan context. The activities of the cultural and educational arm of an Armenian political party are described in terms of their curricular, extracurricular and social variety, and in terms of their transnational organizational structure. The author regards two important theories, Fishman's (1965, 1991, 2001) domains model and Ethnolinguistic Vitality Theory (Allard & Landry, 1986, 1992; Giles, Bourhis & Taylor, 1977) as complementary in their contributions to the understanding of language maintenance as opposed to language shift. These frameworks are applied to analyze the language maintenance value of the organization's programming, and to identify weaknesses in the current model. Challenges for the organization itself and for other communities who may wish to implement such a model for language maintenance or revitalization are discussed, and areas for further research are identified. While the model's strength lies in its immersive teaching, especially of extracurricular subjects, a significant weakness is found in the application of a maintenance model of cultural education to situations where language revitalization is needed.

Keywords

Ethnolinguistic vitality, domains of language use, language maintenance, revitalization, Armenian diaspora

Introduction

The increasing global problem of language endangerment has created an urgent need for language maintenance and revitalization programs, and for research into the efficacy of various models for these programs. This paper seeks to contribute to this worldwide project by documenting some of the activities of one organization that is setting a powerful example for cultural education institutions, due to the breadth, variety and transnational connections of its programs. After documenting a selection of the organization's current activities, limited due to space constraints, the paper goes on to present two frameworks that have been developed to explain why languages survive or die. The author argues that these two frameworks each help us to better understand the relevance of the other. The organization's activities are then analyzed in terms of

how they correspond to the measures of each framework, strengths and weaknesses are identified from each perspective. Finally, practical challenges for this organization are discussed, and areas for growth are suggested.

The Western Armenian language has been maintained in diaspora, without an accessible homeland or the support of any regional power structure (Western Armenian is a language native to Anatolia, distinct from Eastern Armenian, which is now the official language of Armenia. The two languages share an alphabet but have distinct grammars and limited lexical intelligibility), for nearly one hundred years after a catastrophic genocide and exile from what is now Turkey. Educational programs are strongly associated with this success by many members of the speaker community. The language has a unique alphabet that is held in reverence by most speakers, and many centuries of literary history. The organization discussed here is one of several that have built transnational ties between Armenian cultural education programs, and its context spans the gap between immigrant and indigenous language community experiences in a way unique to a diaspora situation.

Creating an international network of language and cultural education addresses significant issues of resource development and distribution, and cultural education can complement or improve upon a dominant schooling system. But what is the value of such a network of organizations and activities for the maintenance of a language? How to combat the pull of language shift, such that activities that teach culture do not lose all potential to support the language's vitality, with language becoming only ceremonial or symbolic? How to leverage social and cultural interests to help young people attain and maintain fluency in the heritage language? In order to answer these questions, a theoretical framework is needed to shed light on what helps a language live, and what makes it die. Here we look through the lens of theory at a particular organization.

Hamazkayin Armenian Educational and Cultural Society

Hamazkayin Armenian Educational and Cultural Society is a non-profit organization operating since 1928 with chapters in more than 10 countries (Hamazkayin.com, 2010c) It is the cultural and educational establishment of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (better known as the Tashnag/Dashnak party, or *Dashnaktsutyun*), the Armenian Socialist Party. This is a diaspora-specific political party, founded in Tbilisi in 1890 (notably before the Armenian genocide in Anatolia), and names its founding principles as "social justice, democracy and national self-determination for the Armenian people." The party has long had social and political hegemony in the Lebanese Armenian community, which is culturally and politically central to the Armenian diaspora globally. The party has affiliations with the Armenian General Sports and Scouts

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Union, known as Homentmen, with the Armenian Relief Society (ARS), which largely consists of charitable activities carried out especially by women, as well as Hamazkayin (ARF, 2014; Migliorino, 2009). The organizational and often physical proximity between Hamazkayin installations and Homentmen and ARS centers of operation establish the relevance of their activities to the topic of this paper. Below are some of Hamazkayin's significant transnational activities.

Hamazkayin has as its objective "to provide a sound education to the new generation, and to strive towards the preservation of the ethnic identity and cultural heritage of the Armenian people living outside their homeland." (ACCC, 2014) Although Hamazkayin is an explicitly diasporan organization, a chapter exists in Armenia and there is a very frequent flow of experts, performers, teachers and other resources from Armenia to branches throughout the diaspora. The Hamazkayin Student Cultural Forum, initiated in 1994, is an annual gathering of Armenian youth from across the diaspora, with a focus on discussing common concerns and fueling motivations for cultural maintenance. Until 2002, this gathering took place in Beirut, the cultural hub of the diaspora, and included meetings with leaders of the Armenian Apostolic Church. Since 2002, the event takes place in Armenia. Round-table discussions are organized, as well as visits to important cultural landmarks and social events. Although the event is held in Armenian, translation is often offered for those participants who do not speak Armenian. Leadership and pride in Armenian identity are emphasized. Interviewees in both France and England reported that youth return highly motivated from this trip, and are often seen to be speaking noticeably more Armenian with peers after the experience.

Hamazkayin runs a publishing house and bookstore, located in Beirut, Lebanon, which is a major source of both literature and textbooks in Western Armenian, and these are distributed to all parts of the diaspora. This includes distribution to Armenian schools run by other international Armenian educational organizations, such as Armenian Evangelical schools and the programs of the Armenian General Benevolent Union. The publishing house also runs a printing press, which prints private and institutional materials to order in Armenian, Arabic and Latin alphabets. The publishing house holds yearly contests for Armenian writing and bookmaking (including illustrations) for schoolchildren. Important areas of focus for the publishing house are the development of modern and updated textbooks for Armenian language, history and religion classes, the printing of scholarly works by Armenian diasporan writers (in numerous languages) or on Armenian scholarly topics, and the production of engaging children's books in Western Armenian. As far as this researcher has been able to learn, nearly all Armenian schools in the diaspora are currently using the same textbook for Armenian History (*hayotz badmoutioun*)

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classes, and this book is well-known for being out of date. The publishing house is currently working with a committee of respected community members to produce an updated book, and several interviewees expressed hopes that the end product would represent a more critical-thinking-based and interactive approach to instruction. Others have pointed out that textbooks are primarily resources for teachers to prevent them from reinventing the proverbial wheel, but that pedagogical innovations and "life" are brought to the instruction by the individual teacher at the time of teaching. The publishing house building also houses a Hamazkayin art gallery and a sound studio. The Voice of Van radio station and the Aztag newspaper, both media outlets of the Tashnag political party, are also headquartered there and have occasional youth participation.

Hamazkayin has developed an alternative Armenian teacher training model, after a previous institution that offered teaching training closed for lack of enrollment. This model augments local teacher training regimes and offers salary increase incentives for those who teach Armenian in a Hamazkayin school, although enrollment is still in the single digits for this internationally-available opportunity. Furthermore, the organization played a key role in funding a unique and very useful online compilation of Western Armenian dictionaries. A mobile application has been developed with some of the site's functionality, and some preliminary applications have been tried for children's games and stories. The organization is seeking to fund the development of other online and application resources with more entertaining content in Western Armenian.

Fundraising is a huge component of Hamazkayin activities, as all of their activities and facilities are supported by the global Armenian community. In virtually all cases where an institution has been established, an individual or small group of donors have made relatively huge contributions for its funding, and usually the institution bears a name reflecting this. Although all administrators interviewed have expressed distress about the financial situation of Armenian institutions, and schools in particular have had many struggles (Migliorino, 2009) large-scale fundraising efforts continue to be successful. In Lebanon, for example, the Hamazkayin Djemaran (school) has recently secured a foundational donation to build a very large, modern sports complex on the undeveloped part of its property, which is on a hill overlooking the Mediterranean Sea in a suburb just northeast of Beirut. It is important to note that participants in classes, teams, troupes or activities, like enrollment in Hamazkayin schools, is open to everyone without expectation of party membership. Election to committees and employment in leadership roles, however, is of course meant for party members or at least supporters, though this may be established unofficially. Furthermore, Hamazkayin scholarships, such as those that help youth attend the Youth Cultural Forum, do not require

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membership. Below are some specific details about what Hamazkayin programs are available in certain countries. The aim of the following section is to illustrate the variety of activities an organization can offer, while mentioning some effects of geographic contexts on these offerings.

Selected Hamazkayin Activities

Lebanon	
Curricular Activities	Djemaran (Lyceum) • Highly respected school (Hamazkayin.com, 2010a) • Armenian immersion through elementary years • French and Armenian immersion in secondary years • Arabic taught as language, then MOI for Lebanese-curriculum-specific classes • English taught as a language • Armenian is an elective examinable subject for those students who choose to graduate via the French baccalaureate, or both French and Lebanese • Oldest students have weekly electives, currently including: Geopolitics, Audiovisual arts (film making), Armenian Cause (*hay tad*), Wushu Kung Fu, Armenian Handcrafts, and Armenian archeology
Extracurricular Activities	Committees for each program: • multiple community-based youth choirs (around 150 participants), adult choir • Theatre and theatre group, youth theatre group • Dance troupe (about 40 members), dance school • Visual arts school (around 60 students) • Music school (around 200 students) • Sports center with many community teams Homentmen • Scouts • Internationally competitive sports teams (basketball, soccer, track and field, cycling, ping-pong, martial arts, etc.) •
Social Programs/Activities	• Armenian Relief Society • Charitable activities for local and international needs

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	• Frequent fundraising events for various committee/program
United Kingdom	
Curricular Activities	None
Extracurricular Activities	Homentmen • scouting (the best language immersion opportunity for non-speakers) • community sports teams
Social Programs/Activities	• charitable work to support development in rural Armenia • scholarships for youth to join the annual forum in Armenia • fundraisers to support the activities of the chapter • lectures on Armenian topics (often, but not always, in Armenian with some translation offered for young people who do not understand sufficiently) • a youth committee that works alongside the chapter committee to develop activities
France	
Curricular Activities	Marseille Djemaran • full-time, all grade levels (about 341 students) • 50/50 French- and Armenian-immersion in kindergarten • Armenian singing and dancing extracurriculars are offered • Armenian holidays and traditional celebrations, always in Armenian • Armenian is an elective subject on the French Baccalaureate exams Ecole Tarkmanchatz (near Paris) • full-time, elementary only • 50/50 French- and Armenian-immersion in pre-school and kindergarten Each grade has a teacher for core subjects and another for Armenian Studies, taught in Armenian
Extracurricular Activities	Homentmen • scouting, basketball and soccer clubs near Paris, though not in the same suburb as the school

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Social Programs/Activities	• Charitable activities • Cultural events discussing Armenian arts and heritage • Committees for the development of projects
Australia	
Curricular Activities	Galstaun College (Sydney) • full-time primary and secondary school (about 240 students) "To develop in our students a striving for excellence; to relay to them the essence of a 3,000 year culture; to prepare them to be responsible, productive and contributing citizens and leaders of the future." • termly multi-page newsletter in Armenian with colored photos of school events • rich and up-to-date website, laboratories for science and computers, smartboards at every academic level and a modern library • Government curriculum with about one period per day in Armenian • Preparation for elective graduation exams requires knowledge of both Eastern and Western Four regional complementary schools • offer four or five hours of intensive Armenian language and culture instruction, one day per week
Extracurricular Activities	• two dance troupes • multiple regional adult and youth choirs • a theatre group
Social Programs/Activities	• secondary class trip to Armenia for language and cultural immersion • Student Representative Council engages in raising money to support an orphanage in Armenia, among other projects

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The Hamazkayin Djemaran in Beirut was opened in 1930.

"The goal of the Armenian Lyceum (Djemaran) was to furnish upcoming Armenian generations with a sound general knowledge, but most importantly, with a solid Armenian education. Its aim was also to keep the national spirit (in this context, "national" refers specifically to that which is derived from, or symbolic of, membership in the global Armenian population, which includes speakers of both Western and Eastern Armenian), the love of the mother language and the Armenian culture alive within its students, educate them into individuals aware of their national values, and guide them to develop into dedicated and conscientious Armenian intellectuals" (Hamazkayin.com, 2010b)

Indeed these sentiments were echoed, almost exactly, by the staff interviewed.

Students in the Lebanese Djemaran and other programs, with only rare exceptions, are native speakers of Western Armenian, who arrive to the programs dominant or monolingual in that language. Armenian is the language of the community and, outside of instructional immersion for the teaching of foreign language,; it is not generally acceptable for Armenians to interact in a language other than Armenian. This contrasts starkly with the linguistic ecology surrounding Hamazkayin programs in France, Australia and England.

The linguistic dynamics in the United Kingdom can be well summed up by the observations of a Hamazkayin volunteer:

"[P]eople above 50, they all know Armenian. People below 50, below say 20 or 30, they either don't know at all, or if they know, they don't understand, or if they understand they can't speak. These people who were born here, and they don't have proper schooling of, everyday schooling of Armenian language or history or whatever. But that middle part, who are the parents of the youngsters, because they don't know Armenian, so their youngsters, their children, they don't know either. So it's these people who come to learn something so they can transfer it to their children. They are a minority, though. The older generation they're always the biggest part" (UKPM1).

Perhaps the most intensive activity for young people in this area is scouting with Homentmen. This is done through the medium of Armenian, and may be the most instructive and immersive opportunity available to children who did learn Armenian at home.

It can be generally said of the language's situation in France that very few of the enrolled children use Armenian at home, and where (at least) one parent speaks predominantly Armenian, it is most common for children to reply in French. This is related to the dynamic of students using French between themselves, even in Armenian classes, while teachers may use Armenian with them. Teachers of Armenian at the Marseille school are actively engaged in re-

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thinking the Armenian language pedagogy, developing assessments that suit their student population, and working to overcome the dominance of French in their students' language use by engaging them in more student-centered projects and activity-based learning units. Although these teachers actively encourage the use of Armenian in verbal interactions, they rarely take a strict immersion approach wherein they demand that students communicate in Armenian, even at the secondary level when students have high competence in the language.

Similarly, in Australia, the language of Hamazkayin activities is Armenian, and several of the extracurricular teachers have been hired from Armenia (this is consistently true internationally of dance teachers in particular), but it is generally the case that young people speak English to one another and some struggle to understand the content of meetings or instructions in Armenian, and then they may ask elders to explain in English. This creates a "pull" on activity leaders to use more English, while jeopardizing the language transmission potential of the activity. The Sydney school does explicitly offer small-group and individual tutoring in Armenian language, however, for children who enroll without having learned Armenian at home, and they expect that these children will soon be able to participate in Armenian-language courses.

Hamazkayin as a Model for Language Maintenance and Revitalization Efforts: A Domain-based View

Fishman (1965) found that, in multilingual contexts, it is rare that two languages occupy the same place in the social life of the speakers. Thus, there is usually a stratification of language use, where each is preferred for certain functions, which Fishman delineated by location, topic of conversation, and the speakers involved. He calls these functions "domains" (Fig. 1). A minority language will often be spoken in the areas of family, religion, friendship, and neighborhood (in order from most to least intimate), whereas it will be spoken far less in areas such as business, education, government or employment. When the functions of a language become restricted, it is generally due to the gradual transition from one language to another in a given domain. Changes in domains of use, whether toward language shift or toward its reversal, usually have either official (legal) or demographic causes.

This framework has served as the basis for Fishman's own theories of language vitality and revitalization progression (Fig. 2) (Fishman, 1991, 2001), and has informed the current UNESCO rubric for evaluating the vitality of a language (Fig. 3, Fig. 4) (cf. Dwyer, 2012).

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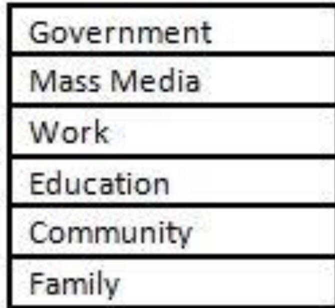

Fig 1: A possible model of domains

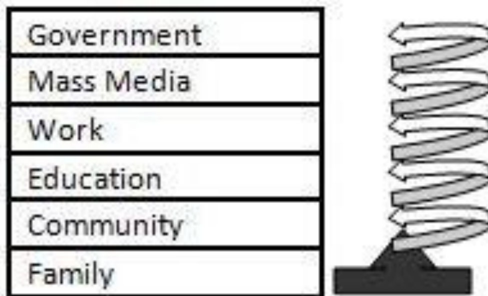

Fig 2: An interpretation of Fishman's (1991) model of Reversing Language Shift

Degree of Endangerment	**Grade**	**New Domains and Media Accepted by the Endangered Language**
dynamic	5	The language is used in all new domains.
robust/active	4	The language is used in most new domains.
receptive	3	The language is used in many domains.
coping	2	The language is used in some new domains.
minimal	1	The language is used only in a few new domains.
inactive	0	The language is not used in any new domains.

Fig 3: UNESCO's Vitality Factor "Response to New Domains"

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Degree of Endangerment	Grade	Domains and Functions
universal use	5	The language is used in all domains and for all functions
multilingual parity	4	Two or more languages may be used in most social domains and for most functions.
dwindling domains	3	The language is in home domains and for many functions, but the dominant language begins to penetrate even home domains.
limited or formal domains	2	The language is used in limited social domains and for several functions
highly limited domains	1	The language is used only in a very restricted domains and for a very few functions
extinct	0	The language is not used in any domain and for any function.

Fig 4: UNESCO's Vitality Factor "Trends in Existing Domains"

Fishman does not prescribe an *a priori* breakdown of domains, as the divisions are produced by each individual society and new domains (such as "internet communication") may develop over time. The concept of domains is also closely linked to the concept of linguistic registers (Agha, 2007), which are an important aspect of language competence, confidence, and, thus, vitality. When speakers only use a language in a limited range of situations, they are likely to master and retain a similarly limited range of vocabulary, grammatical forms, and level of formality/politeness. Speaker confidence has been shown (Cenoz & Valencia, 1993; Labrie, 1984) to be strongly linked to subjective vitality, and thus to crucial choices about language maintenance. Furthermore, education, which is our interest here, is specifically concerned with developing domains (and thereby, registers) of language that may otherwise weaken, such as literature, philosophical reasoning, historical documentation, and formal verbal interactions. Extracurricular classes can be thought of as adding to the artistic, social and sport domains that may not be as developed by the curriculum of the school. Community groups and teams may not specifically aim to develop or transmit language, but in fact do so by combining the social domain with technical and artistic uses of the language.

A worthwhile critique of this model is that it assumes a neat division between languages (as opposed to mixing or alternations), and in cases of societal plurilingualism (where not only the minority group is plurilingual), more than one language may indeed be used in some, especially spoken, domains, without this being an inherent indication of language loss (in Lebanon, many native

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speakers of Armenian live in quadrilingual contexts, where they may, for example, use Western Armenian exclusively with their parents, some combination of Western Armenian and French with siblings and Armenian friends, Arabic and English with non-Armenian friends, and English and Armenian in work and study).

Hamazkayin's international programs operate within a continuum of language vitality situations, but certainly in no case is the language used in the domains of government or media at the national level. A crucial function of the programs, then, is to provide the possibility for use of Western Armenian in domains other than the family and religion, to which it may otherwise be restricted. It can be argued that Hamazkayin schools, clubs, committees and classes create parallel domains of government, work, education and community socialization that differ from the larger regional or national domains notably by their use, at least in part, of Western Armenian. Schools do this most significantly, by permitting the creation of grammars, textbooks, teaching materials and even literature on a huge variety of topics, providing jobs that require high levels of competence in Armenian, and introducing students to core subjects through the medium of Armenian in the youngest grades.

While most members may use the dominant language(s) in their work or educational lives, those who are employed by or volunteer for committees, centers and groups will be expected or strongly encouraged to use Armenian in a professional manner to discuss topics related to their work in the organization. Radio stations, newsletters and the production of Armenian music and entertainment add to the domains of media and arts. Extracurricular classes and sports, whether they take place within schools or outside, provide not only specific sub-domains of life in which the use of Armenian is expected or encouraged (depending on the vitality context), but also provide the otherwise scarce input of activity-specific vocabulary and expressions. Dance students, for example, learn terms for movements and anatomy, commands and evaluative expressions from their Armenian-speaking teachers, while basketball players learn parallel content for their activity of choice. Those participating in audio/visual recording or creative writing activities, for example, will be exposed not only to the concrete "tools of the trade" in Armenian, but also to more abstract expressions of inspiration and evaluation. Scouts are specifically acquiring vocabulary for narrow tasks, but these may range enormously and change often as a scout progresses through different challenges and endeavors. Additionally, all schools, classes and scouting environments are sites for language about discipline, ethics, identity and other abstract concepts, as character education is a goal for these programs as well.

Rates of consumption may not be as high as the community would hope, but it is of some benefit that community members, especially youth, have local access to opportunities for both consumption and production of audiovisual and print media in Western Armenian. An important endeavor of the organization is the funding and development of electronic resources, such as the electronic collection of dictionaries *nayiri.com*, and a series of mobile device applications that allow typing in Armenian, as well as others that have engaging Armenian content for audiences of different generations. This is key to expanding the use of Armenian to the technological domain, where its lagging has aroused widespread concerns among community leaders.

The greater the range of activities offered by Hamazkayin or Homentmen, the more domains can be named where the language is being used and/or transmitted. Thus, the programs in Lebanon are clearly far more effective in creating a breadth of relevance for the language than are those in other countries. When one considers sub-domains such as visual arts, music production, and the crucial area of parenting, there is room for improvement in the organization's offerings. Of course, the wealth of programming in Lebanon exists in a cyclical relationship with the vitality of the language and the size of the speaker community, but a broader range of interests should nonetheless be targeted with the available resources in other contexts.

The family domain is notably absent from the purview of the organization, but interviewees whose sole Armenian institutional affiliation was a club and its activities reported that their children were more likely to speak and be interested in the Armenian language at home as their participation in club activities increased, and that the club was an important site for the development of friendships with other young Armenian speakers. While family language policy has been shown to be more consequential than educational or social contexts for minority language vitality, activities like those run by Hamazkayin can have an indirect effect on the use of Armenian within the family, by offering increased domains of use and opportunities to practice to the members of each generation.

Complementary Theoretical Frameworks

As readers have seen, the groundbreaking concept of domains of language use has been vital to understanding how multiple languages can co-exist in a society. Its framework has since served to conceptualize how languages decline, and the steps that can be taken to revitalize them. It does not address, however, what conditions are likely to foster the motivation needed on the part of speakers to revive and maintain their language. This is richly explained by Ethnolinguistic Vitality (ELV) Theory, and aspects of the latter, such as the measures of

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legitimacy and *efficacy*, are much more concretely understood when domains of use are considered.

The Theory of Ethnolinguistic Vitality

Ethnolinguistic Vitality Theory is grounded in a prolonged academic discussion, starting from the socio- psychological work of Giles, Taylor & Bourhis (1973) and of Tajfel & Turner (1979). The fact that much of language maintenance or language shift depends on speaker motivation is taken as a basis for attempts to specify the factors influencing this motivation. This theory aspires to predict the degree of maintenance of, or shift from, a given minority language. An understanding has developed within this field (Allard & Landry, 1986) that some disparity may exist between the "objective" state of a language among a community of speakers, and speakers' "subjective" perception of the same situation. On the socio-psychological level, ELV theorists find significance in the nature of contacts between a speaker and her Interpersonal Network of Linguistic Contacts (INLC), as well as her scholastic experiences, media contacts, and contacts with speakers of other languages. These can either reinforce or reduce her pride in or esteem for her language, and thereby influence her language attitudes, vitality ideas, and, ultimately, language behavior. On the psychological level, a person's competence in a language, as well as his perception of his own competence, are considered important factors in whether the individual seeks to use the language often or not. While a ranking of the importance of factors in language maintenance or shift has not been developed, an inventory of relevant factors has been outlined and applied to a wide variety of minority language situations (Cenoz & Valencia, 1993; Currie & Hogg, 1994; Ytsma, Viladot & Giles, 1994). Each of the following factors affects the prospects for maintenance of the minority language, and a reciprocal relationship is understood to exist between how speakers perceive these factors and how the general state of these factors evolves (Gilbert, et al., 2005).

Future Vitality: This is the vitality that a language will have (objectively), or is expected to have (subjectively), in the future.

Legitimate Vitality: Legitimacy is used here in the sense of what people agree on, or what society accepts. This is different than the present vitality of a language in that people from different groups may believe that a given language should be more or less widely used, and there may even be discord between high legitimate vitality, in the sense that a language may be declared an official national or regional language, and its legitimate use in socially-controlled domains, as the latter may lag behind or even exceed the former.

Social Models: This measure is based on the importance of social learning, in that friends and role models may demonstrate language use patterns that

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increase or decrease the attractiveness of speaking a given language. Friends and role models also provide critical linguistic input needed for acquisition. This factor is indirectly related to language use domains, in that one function of role models is to define the appropriate domains for use of the minority language.

Belongingness: This category measures the importance of target language competence for membership in a social or ethnic group. It may also refer to the degree of success in achieving membership that speakers feel they have by virtue of speaking the language. In other words, if one does not need to speak the language in order to be considered a member of the group, or if one fails to be considered a member in spite of language competence and use, this metric would be low.

Valorization: This is the value assigned, implicitly or explicitly, to the pursuit of language competence and use either in daily life or inside given institutions. This assumes that access to resources is possible, and measures the attitude toward the act of accessing those resources.

Efficacy: This is the possibility of achieving one's objectives in life through use of the target language. This is essentially a speaker's understanding of the usefulness of the language in domains related to economic and political success.

Goals and Wishes: This is a more personal measure of whether a given individual sees competence in or use of the language as one of, or a means to, her particular goals in life. This admits an individual's possible differentiation from the larger group or society in terms of motivation and usefulness. In both this and the *efficacy* metric, domain use and development play a key role. If language input and models are not available in a desired domain, most speakers are doomed to see the language as irrelevant, or perhaps as a hindrance, to related pursuits.

An Ethnolinguistic Vitality Critique

Legitimate Vitality: Hamazkayin's activities are intended to be spaces where Armenian is the only acceptable language of use, and is the *medium*, rather than the object of instruction. While young people whose families have shifted from Armenian use at home may not be able to meet this expectation, the institution's culture nonetheless creates a space in which Armenian competence and use is validated and rewarded. At present, activities do not affect the language's legitimacy in the wider society, however.

Since the school is known to be, in Jaffe's (2011) words, "a conservative, gate-keeping institution which traditionally validates only one right answer, one legitimate code, one form of knowledge," (and indeed, Hamazkayin has built schools with forms of conservation in mind), they teach a standard of language that is idealized, and which cannot possibly represent the spectrum of registers,

styles, hybrids and competencies of all people who use that language. Armenian schools and language classes define "Armenian" as either Standard Eastern Armenian or Standard Western Armenian, and teach a manner of using the language that is considered to be refined, eloquent, consistent and free of foreign material. A "good" speaker of the language is someone who can and does use this variant of the language in the overwhelming majority of her speech and written compositions. Recent controversies within the Lebanese theatre group illustrate the practical complications of this, as committee members overseeing productions have clashed with playwrights and directors about the use of local colloquialisms and Turkish borrowings in the dialogue of plays. When some plays were not approved, some later productions were done without first seeking approval. This tension represents one side of the problem of linguistic purism- or the opposition of authority and authenticity (cf. Jaffe, 2011) - while the linguistic tug-of-war between youth, activity leaders, and, indirectly, those who hire the activity leaders represent another.

Social Models: Armenian-speaking teachers provide both linguistic input and role modeling of Armenian competence and use, and relationships developed within Hamazkayin, Homentmen and ARS programs are important foundations for Armenian-speaking INLCs. Even in cases where not all participants are fluent speakers of Armenian, an INLC is nonetheless formed within which Armenian is valued and desired, and where other elements of ethnolinguistic identity are promoted, although this does not necessarily translate into language maintenance.

Belongingness: Language is central to the global discourse of Armenian identity, and language maintenance is an aim, explicit or implicit, of most Hamazkayin activities. Thus, mastery and use of the language function as access keys to the community and networks of the organization. In cases (rare in Lebanon, common in France) where students enroll in a Hamazkayin school without functional fluency in Armenian, they are immersed in the language and have to acquire it in order to participate in the daily activities of the school. Homentmen scouts create this pressure as well, even in contexts of falling family transmission such as the UK. Furthermore, prominent discourses about the value of literacy in Armenian and cultural education hold that these are most important so that young people can "access" or "understand" their heritage and identity, so levels of *belongingness* are implicitly multiple, with greater mastery of the language and familiarity with history and tradition strengthening one's claim to community membership, and functioning as sites of prestige and validation. It is notable that this larger, more historically-embedded conception of Armenianness includes speakers of Eastern Armenian, and is equally available to the children of

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mixed marriages and those who may have greater fluency in another language, making greater acceptance possible.

For many migrant groups, the concept of "homeland" and a return to such may be more concrete than it is for Armenians, but organizations like Hamazkayin have nonetheless helped to cultivate a nostalgic view of Armenia among even those who have no personal or historical experience of the place, and despite the fact that immigration to Armenia is relatively uncommon at this time. Young participants in an organization like Hamazkayin are likely to cultivate a transnational perspective, as has been attested among other migrant populations (Meintel, 1994; Mitchell, 2001). Growing up in a multilingual context allows speakers to place contextual, rather than absolute, value on a language (Lamarre & Dagenais, 2004). Furthermore, motivations for language acquisition or use are often products of the relevance of a given language to the identity a speaker is developing. Armenians in the high-vitality communities of Lebanon, for example, must master spoken Arabic for practical purposes, but the ability to switch easily to English allows them to distance themselves from the threat that fluency in Arabic poses to their unique Armenian identity. In low-vitality contexts like the UK or France, it is precisely the idea that acquiring Western Armenian will validate a person's Armenianness that is the primary motivating discourse.

Valorization: The valorization of the Armenian language, literary history and alphabet in Hamazkayin institutions is impossible to overstate. The alphabet is displayed ubiquitously and artistically, and its history specifically taught as part of the cultural patrimony. The language is talked about in positive terms with regard to its longevity, rich vocabulary, artistic potential and indispensability to the "Armenianness" of one's mind. Even Armenian interviewees who were not literate in the language subscribed to the view that literacy was inextricably linked to Armenian identity and pride. Spoken fluency in the language is held in even higher regard, travel to Armenian is promoted for language acquisition purposes, and the organization explicitly works to make modern, attractive language learning tools available to young people and parents.

Efficacy: One downside of sourcing teachers from Armenia and high-vitality centers of the diaspora is that students and parents are not seeing people from their own communities attaining careers as a virtue of their fluency in Armenian or their ethnolinguistic expertise. On the other hand, although economic and political goals outside of the organization are rarely attainable as a direct result of competence in Armenian, Hamazkayin does provide these limited contexts.

Goals and Wishes: In the case of some participants, the content of a class, extracurricular activity or group may be a highly desirable pursuit, such as dancing, playing basketball or learning traditional handicrafts. In this scenario, mastery of the appropriate language and skills within the Armenian contest will

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have instrumental value for the individual. While this cannot be the role of all or perhaps even most participants, the existence of Hamazkayin programs makes such a dynamic possible, and in some cases an activity may become a hobby that ties the individual to the community in a stable way, such as those who make a long-term (side) career in community theatre or sports. With this in mind, it is advisable for Hamazkayin to direct resources toward the development of a wider range of activities, particularly extracurriculars, in low vitality countries, since this will allow more individuals to pursue their particular interests while simultaneously gaining exposure to Armenian, rather than having to commit to pursuing the latter on its own.

Future Vitality: This measure has been discussed last as it can really only be viewed as an outcome of the combined strength of the preceding factors. Some discouraging realities are the high rate of shift for young people in France, the UK and Australia. The fact that schools and clubs are struggling to cope with this reality is indicative of the inadequacy of a maintenance model in situations where revitalization has become necessary. Furthermore, the ubiquitous hiring of teachers from Armenia and the high-vitality areas of the diaspora, which very often were sites of previous residence for Armenians now living in low-vitality areas, tends to communicate that Armenian is somehow "kept" there, that a "reaching back" is needed in order to obtain legitimate, fluent speakers and ethnolinguistic representatives. Nonetheless, the longevity of the language and its future vitality are frequent topics of discussion in Hamazkayin settings, sometimes in a polemic way, and sometimes in a way that communicates that they are taken for granted. The continuing success of certain fundraising efforts has implicit implications for this measure, but these are unevenly distributed throughout the diaspora.

Conclusion: Future Challenges for Hamazkayin and Directions for Research

Crombie, Houia & Reedy (2000), Huss (2008) and Shohamy (2006) have demonstrated that some educational programming that is intended to support language vitality lacks integration of cultural activities that allow students to optimally acquire a heritage language in another lifestyle context. There has also been found to be a cyclical relationship between community, non-academic life, and the extent to which the school can transmit high levels of competence in the language. Fishman's (1965) domain model for language maintenance predicts that even full immersion in the language, if restricted to the domains of the school, will not necessarily secure vitality for the language as a mother tongue. This has been borne out in some of the most successful cases of schooling in an endangered language (e.g., Edwards & Newcombe, 2005, Landry & Allard, 1993).

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Given these various limitations on academic instruction as a means of transmitting a language and its cultural heritage, cultural and extra-curricular programs present themselves as an interesting alternative/supplement for language transmission. The effectiveness of this approach appears to be supported by data from interviews with Armenian students and parents who do not participate in curricular programs in Armenian, but who are involved in clubs and other social and cultural activities.

An immediate challenge for Hamazkayin to face, and one that can be informative for other programs developing in diasporic situations, is the inadequacy of maintenance models of ethnolinguistic, and particularly linguistic, transmission in low-vitality situations where intergenerational transmission in the home is weak. What's more, the need for revitalization efforts already exists alongside maintenance situations in high-vitality areas like Lebanon, since rates of mixed marriage are thought to exceed 50% and full-time school enrollment is falling. There are few options for families who have not begun raising their children in Armenian immersion to "re-enter the fold" within the maintenance model, and therefore this trend is inevitable. Teachers in the Marseille Djemaran and perhaps pedagogues from Australia may be able to offer leadership in this matter, as they have already begun developing new teaching techniques and materials to better suit low-vitality communities. Language nests and parental support programs have played keys roles in this in other contexts (Edwards & Newcombe, 2005; McIvor, 1998) In this context, transnational continuity may function as an obstacle to innovation and adaptation, but with sufficient accord between members on the need for such adaptation, the mechanisms of resource sharing and distribution already in existence could be key to creating, distributing, and training speakers in, the necessary language instruction curricula. Internationally, language revitalization programs have been successful when they linked language to culture, had written teaching materials, integrated relevant technologies and had sufficient community support and parental involvement (Stiles, 1997). Existing Hamazkayin programs demonstrate high potential in all of these areas, so a change in approach would likely be met with sufficient resources.

Moreover, this paper has mentioned several instances in which the current realities of Hamazkayin activities offer contradictory prospects for language maintenance, according to an ethnolinguistic vitality assessment. Measurement is needed for the outcomes of the program, and particularly for the language competence and actual language use outcomes. Leaders in research on language planning and policy have emphasized that no one-size-fits-all program evaluation can be advocated, since the evaluation of any program depends on its goals. Development of measures will require careful accounting for diasporan realities,

and differences across vitality contexts and program offerings. Outcomes can then inform program development along these same lines, and can provide further guidance for other communities looking to develop similar structures.

Other specific topics for further research include the linguistic needs of young participants in each diasporan community, in order to better understand the grey areas of intergenerational transmission and family language policies that are common there, as well as their linguistic consequences for speakers, and the relationship between teacher training of different types and language outcomes for low-vitality situation programs, since the training of experts in non-language areas would be needed in order to leverage these activities in a revitalization model.

To propose Hamazkayin as a model for other speaker communities may seem to set a high bar in many respects. Certainly, the offerings and approach to administering programs that Hamazkayin has are rooted in its unique history, political character, and cultural priorities. This paper most notably underlines the breadth of its activity as a promising alternative to an entirely schools-driven approach to language maintenance or revitalization.

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