

ISSUES OF TEACHING ARMENIAN IN A DIPLOMATIC SETTING (ON THE CASE OF AMERICAN DIPLOMACY)

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Abstract

The paper investigates the issues of language teaching, especially Armenian, within the realm of diplomacy. It comprehensively examines the problem of language study in diplomatic settings, specifically:

1. Problems and needs in language training of Armenian diplomats, and its forms of organization.
2. The language teaching policy in the American diplomacy.
3. The challenges of learning Armenian in the American diplomatic settings.

It should be underlined that language teaching and learning in diplomatic settings is predominantly a matter of national security, besides being a security issue, implies one of the best and most presentable ways to establish economic, social and diplomatic relations as well.

The authors have concluded as a result of this study that the Armenian language teaching, the development and application of assessment criteria in foreign diplomatic settings should become one of the state strategies widely adopted in the Republic of Armenia. It is of utmost importance to enrich the repositories of study programs, education manuals and dictionaries through mutual cooperation, making it consistent with the demand and established language teaching methodology.

Keywords and phrases: Armenian language, diplomacy, United States of America, Republic of Armenia, language evaluation level, evaluation criteria.

ՀԱՅԵՐԵՆԻ ՈՒՍՈՒՑՄԱՆ ՀԻՄՆԱՀԱՐՑԵՐԸ ԴԻՎԱՆԱԳԻՏԱԿԱՆ ՄԻՋԱՎԱՅՐՈՒՄ (ԱՄԵՐԻԿԱՆ ԴԻՎԱՆԱԳԻՏՈՒԹՅԱՆ ՕՐԻՆԱԿՈՎ)

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Համառոտագիր

Հոդվածի ուսումնասիրության թեման դիվանագիտության ոլորտում լեզվի, հատկապես՝ հայերենի ուսուցման հիմնախնդիրներն են: Ընդհանուր առմամբ դիտարկվել է լեզվի ուսումնասիրության խնդիրը դիվանագիտական միջավայրերում, մասնավորապես՝

1. հայ դիվանագետների լեզվական ուսուցման խնդիրներ և պահանջները, կազմակերպման ձևերը,
2. լեզուների ուսուցման քաղաքականությունը ամերիկյան դիվանագիտության մեջ,
3. ամերիկյան դիվանագիտական միջավայրում հայերենի ուսուցման արդի խնդիրները:

Նշենք, որ դիվանագիտական միջավայրում լեզուների ուսուցումն ունի նախ և առաջ ազգային անվտանգության խնդիր: Լեզվի իմացությունը անվտանգային խնդիր լինելուց զատ, բնականաբար, ենթադրում է նաև տնտեսական, սոցիալական, և դիվանագիտական կապերի ստեղծման համար լավագույն և ներկայանալի ձևերից մեկը:

Ուսումնասիրության արդյունքում հեղինակներն հանգում են այն հիմնական եզրակացության, որ հայերենի ուսուցումը, գնահատման չափանիշների մշակումն ու ներդրումը օտարերկրյա դիվանագիտական միջավայրերում ևս պետք է դառնա ՀՀ պետական ռազմավարություններից մեկը: Հարկ է փոխհամագործակցության միջոցով հարստացնել կրթական ծրագրերի, ուսումնական ձեռնարկների և բառարանների շտեմարանները՝ համապատասխանեցնելով պահանջարկին և լեզվի առկա ուսուցման մեթոդաբանությանը:

Բանալի բառեր և բառակապակցություններ. հայերեն, դիվանագիտություն, Ամերիկայի Միացյալ Նահանգներ, Հայաստանի Հանրապետություն, լեզվի գնահատման մակարդակ, գնահատման չափանիշ:

ВОПРОСЫ ПРЕПОДАВАНИЯ АРМЯНСКОГО ЯЗЫКА В ДИПЛОМАТИЧЕСКОЙ СРЕДЕ (НА ПРИМЕРЕ АМЕРИКАНСКОЙ ДИПЛОМАТИИ)

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Аннотация

Темой исследования статьи являются проблемы преподавания языка, в частности армянского, в сфере дипломатии. В целом рассматривается проблема изучения языка в дипломатической среде, и в частности:

1. Проблемы и требования языковой подготовки армянских дипломатов, формы организации;
2. Политика изучения языков в американской дипломатии;
3. Проблемы изучения армянского языка в американской дипломатической среде.

Следует отметить, что преподавание языков в дипломатической среде – это прежде всего вопрос национальной безопасности. Помимо проблемы безопасности, знание языка предполагает также один из лучших и наиболее презентабельных способов установления экономических, социальных и дипломатических отношений.

В результате исследования авторы приходят к выводу, что преподавание армянского языка, разработка и внедрение критериев оценки в зарубежной дипломатической среде также должны стать одной из государственных стратегий РА. Необходимо пополнять репозитории образовательных программ, учебников и словарей путем взаимного сотрудничества, в соответствии со спросом и существующей методикой преподавания языка.

Ключевые слова и словосочетания: армянский язык, дипломатия, Соединенные Штаты Америки, Республика Армения, уровень оценки языка, критерии оценки.

Research topicality: Research on the challenges of teaching and learning Armenian in a diplomatic setting is considered to be a novelty due to the fact that language teaching and learning practices in a diplomatic setting were not previously identified as a research problem. Some studies or works related to the study of Armenian as a language of diplomatic negotiations were partially investigated but the focal point was the study of the vocabulary used and the language materials to represent us worldwide, thus, establishing our global presence. Nevertheless, such issues are not directly related to the subject matter of our interest, so it can be asserted that the issue of language teaching in the diplomatic setting is primarily new, topical and not relevantly studied in our scientific community. In relation to this issue, the research carried out is the first attempt to investigate the teaching challenges in a diplomatic setting, specifically as aligned with the American diplomacy.

Research purpose and issues: The purpose of the research is to identify the problem of language teaching, specifically Armenian, in the realm of diplomacy. In pursuit of this objective, the research developed in the direction of investigating several substrata:

1. The problem of language study in diplomatic settings was investigated in general, and problems and needs of language teaching for Armenian diplomats, and forms of its organization, specifically.

2. The language teaching policy in American diplomacy.

3. The issues of learning Armenian in the American diplomatic setting.

Research methodology: The methods of analysis, combination, comparison, and comprehensive interviews were implemented throughout the research.

Evolution of the issue: The main responsible body for the organization of training and professional development of the diplomats in the Republic of Armenia is the RA Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Diplomatic School of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia. The subject and objectives of its activities are outlined below:

1) Professional development of diplomats, as well as employees of departments responsible for foreign relations of governmental bodies,

2) Training of diplomatic corps by delivering special professional expertise to citizens with tertiary education of the Republic of Armenia,

3) Participation in international collaborative endeavors in science and education in the field of international relations,

4) Implementation of some other educational programs [1].

Diplomatic school is the primary route of entering the diplomatic service.

Mediums of instruction are Armenian and English. Excellent knowledge and competence in the previously mentioned languages, as well as learning one more foreign language chosen by the applicant is mandatory.

Language proficiency is tested in both written and oral sections of the exam. The applicant references the knowledge of second foreign language he/she has mastered in the application form when submitting an application for admission. The first stage of the written examination includes a variety of examination questions concerning the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia, Armenian history, world history and geography, conflict resolution process of Nagorno-Karabakh, multiple-choice test questions to check general knowledge, expertise and logical reasoning, as well as translation of professional texts in the language of instruction and the second foreign language previously referenced by the applicant.

Applicants who have successfully progressed beyond the initial phase of the written exam are invited to the second phase of the written exam (an essay on international relations/foreign policy). Applicants successfully passing the second phase will be invited for the interview process and in case of successfully completing it will be eligible and be admitted to the course [1].

Based on the information accessible on the website, our diplomats at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs undertake some subjects: the list is introduced in detail in **Appendix 1**. It should be underlined that the latest possible data provided on the website are from 2017. As can be inferred from the list of subjects taught (as of 2017), the section of languages is not included. However, during the oral interview phase conducted by us, we discovered that the applicants pass several exams, including an essay writing in Armenian. It is inferred that students graduating from the universities apply for the studies in the Diplomatic School, thus, their knowledge of Armenian is excellent, so the problem of teaching Armenian is not the case.

In the case of foreign languages, Russian and English are taught as an integral part of the compulsory curriculum: they are taught based on specially developed programs, and

upon its completion students master the oral and written communication skills in Russian and English. Additionally, another foreign language is also taught chosen by the students, mainly Georgian, Turkish or Azerbaijani. The Diplomatic School leadership assured us that the English and Russian language programs were specifically developed for the School based on the research carried out on the accumulated knowledge of respective international structures. The information is not freely accessible for specific reasons.

The role and importance of language teaching and learning, especially in the diplomatic setting, is a matter of national security. The next problem of our research delves into the demand for language teaching or language teaching standards applied.

Initiated from the midpoint of the 20th century continuously up to present time, educational reforms and standardized and non-standardized models of educational organizations were manifested and implemented prevalently in most developed countries of the world. From the standpoint of ensuring the quality of education and mutual recognition and mobility of diplomas, the adoption of consistent standards and institutional and program accreditations were the inception phases of the reforms.

In the context of language acquisition, it should be underlined that since the 1980s, US approaches to language teaching and learning were published: “National Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century”. From the 1990s, Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) as common European criteria was shaped and spread enabling the assessment of language competence, on the basis of which national systems of European language teaching and assessment were developed and implemented in all countries of the European Union [2].

It should be underscored that following the example of the European Union countries, other countries and states (e.g., China, Turkey, Kazakhstan, Egypt, etc.) have also developed and implemented national systems of language competence and assessment, facilitating the localization process of international standards and their further spread. Throughout the years, apart from English, teaching and assessment standards were developed for Croatian, Czech, German, Italian, French, and Spanish [3].

Integral to international standards for foreign language teaching and testing dwells the “level framework” of language assessment. From this perspective, the European framework differs to some extent from the American framework. The core representation of the difference is related to the titles for the level determinations. Therefore:

European framework [4].	American framework
A1 /beginner	0
A2 / elementary	1
B1 intermediate	2
B2 upper-intermediate	3
C1 advanced	4
C2 proficient	5

Essentially, the Common European Framework of foreign language assessment comprises 3 levels: A, B, C and 6 scales: A1, A2, B1, B2, C1 and C2 [4].

The American system has 6 levels: 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and in each case it also distinguishes +levels, for example: 0, 0+, 1, 1+ and so on and so forth.

A specific and concrete scope of knowledge or expertise is defined for each level and scale.

It can be asserted that the level framework of foreign language learning and teaching has an unambiguous structure and methodology that serves as a guide for linguists when designing textbooks or education manuals based on the appropriate level. Each level should

definitely include the following sections of language competence:

1. Vocabulary/lexicon
2. Speaking skills
3. Writing skills
4. Listening comprehension.

Unfortunately, standards have not yet been developed for Armenian that would enable us to assess the level of Armenian language competence. Concerning this issue, several attempts have been made at the chairs of languages of various institutions of higher education, but we are still devoid of an officially sanctioned system and internationally acceptable “standard” of teaching and assessment systems.

2. Foreign language teaching strategies in the American diplomatic system

We should consider the objectives, mechanisms, approaches and methods of teaching foreign languages in the American diplomacy settings in general, prior to addressing the problems of teaching Armenian specifically, as the language teaching approaches derive from the above-mentioned issues, and Armenian is also regarded an integral part of that system.

In the United States of America, all diplomats, military attachés, members of special services who must serve in foreign countries in the future, predominantly in embassies and consulates, undertake relevant foreign language courses. In the case of the US, teaching diplomats the language of the host country is a matter of national security (respectively, the famous experience of Yuri Kim is often introduced as an example).

Foreign language competence, besides being a security issue, implies one of the best and most presentable ways to establish economic, social and diplomatic relations as well. It is of utmost importance to clearly formulate and shape the objectives of language learning to develop and deliver language courses tailored to these needs. Foreign language teaching is conducted at the Foreign Service Office, specifically at the Foreign Service Institute (hereinafter referred to as FSI).

In the USA, FSI is an institution integrated within the State Department system, which is considered a small-scale university for diplomats. This is a school that develops other educational programs in line with language programs. Approximately 60 languages are taught here, including Armenian. Languages are taught considering the professional position of the individuals, the urgency and the language level to be finally mastered by the learners. It should be highlighted that due to the specific nature of the profession as in the case of military attachés, language training can be conducted in other language centers that are directly subordinate to FSI, specifically DLS (Diplomatic Language Services).

The level of language proficiency or competence for diplomats is carried out through tests developed by FSI, called FSI tests, and based on the field of expertise, can be used by other knowledge testing mechanisms as well, such as OPI (Oral Proficiency Interview, or oral proficiency assessment) or DLPT (Defense Language Proficiency Tests being a collection of foreign language tests and being used by the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD)), etc.

The duration of foreign language courses varies according to the complexity level of the language, which is also defined by FSI (see the table). It is apparent that four levels of complexity are identified. Consequently, language learning periods are defined: 24-30 weeks for languages of moderate difficulty and 88 weeks for languages perceived as complex. It should also be highlighted that language learning is regarded as the primary occupation for diplomat-students registered for language courses. They are mostly exempted from their obligation to attend the workplace so that they can spend 6-8 hours a day at the language school, by allocating all their work hours to language learning processes [5].

Category I: 23–24 weeks (575–600 hours) Languages closely related to English	
<u>Afrikaans</u> <u>Danish</u> <u>Dutch</u> <u>French</u> <u>Italian</u>	<u>Norwegian</u> <u>Portuguese</u> <u>Romanian</u> <u>Spanish</u> <u>Swedish</u>
Category II: 30 weeks (750 hours) Languages similar to English	
<u>German</u>	
Category III: 36 weeks (900 hours) Languages with linguistic and/or cultural differences from English	
<u>Indonesian</u> <u>Malaysian</u>	<u>Swahili</u>
Category IV: 44 weeks (1100 hours) Languages with significant linguistic and/or cultural differences from English	
<u>Albanian</u> <u>Amharic</u> <u>Armenian</u> <u>Azerbaijani</u> <u>Bengali</u> <u>Bosnian</u> <u>Bulgarian</u> <u>Burmese</u> <u>Croatian</u> <u>Czech</u> <u>*Estonian</u> <u>*Finnish</u> <u>*Georgian</u> <u>Greek</u> <u>Hebrew</u> <u>Hindi</u> <u>*Hungarian</u> <u>Icelandic</u> <u>Khmer</u> <u>Lao</u> <u>Latvian</u>	<u>Lithuanian</u> <u>Macedonian</u> <u>*Mongolian</u> <u>Nepali</u> <u>Pashto</u> <u>Persian (Dari, Farsi, Tajik)</u> <u>Polish</u> <u>Russian</u> <u>Serbian</u> <u>Sinhala</u> <u>Slovak</u> <u>Slovenian</u> <u>Tagalog</u> <u>*Thai</u> <u>Turkish</u> <u>Ukrainian</u> <u>Urdu</u> <u>Uzbek</u> <u>*Vietnamese</u> <u>Xhosa</u> <u>Zulu</u>
Category V: 88 weeks (2200 hours) Languages which are exceptionally difficult for native English speakers	
<u>Arabic</u> <u>Cantonese (Chinese)</u> <u>Mandarin (Chinese)</u>	<u>*Japanese</u> <u>Korean</u>

* Languages preceded by asterisks are usually more difficult for native English speakers to learn than other languages in the same category.

After the completion of the course every student undergoes language proficiency assessments, which, as mentioned above, are designed to evaluate different areas of focus based on occupational traits. Language learning is conducted in four main directions: reading, listening, writing and speaking skills. In each case, a particular knowledge base, tools, and instructional materials and methodology are presupposed. Levels of language proficiency are tested in these three main directions, again based on occupational traits.

Testing language competency: Conventionally, the level of language proficiency being instructed is further assessed employing the ILR proficiency scale (Interagency Language Roundtable). The implementation of this benchmark has a compelling background. The implementation of this benchmark was necessitated in the 1950s, in light of the emergence of crisis in foreign relations.

Prior to that, if the language competence of government officials was primarily assessed as good, satisfactory, standard, and fluent, it soon became evident that such assessments do not provide an accurate representation of the language competence of the professionals, which frequently leads to national security issues. It was necessary to establish a unified mechanism for testing the foreign language proficiency that will reveal the accurate understanding of the language proficiency of officials. “The commission concluded that a system that is objective, relevant to all languages and for all positions within the civil service, and not associated with any language syllabus is of utmost importance for the United States government. Since the academic community lacked such a system, the government had to develop its own [6].

The ILR scale comprises six primary levels, ranging from 0 (which is considered non-functional proficiency) to 5 (which is comparable to that of a proficient native speaker of the language), as well as comprehensive descriptors of the ‘+’ levels, commonly referred to as plus levels such as “0” and “0+”, “1” and “1+”, etc. The FSI testing center has developed a testing mechanism evaluated through a structured interview according to the above-mentioned 6-point scale, when the student’s listening, speaking, reading and writing skills are tested and assessed.

(For the definitions of proficiency of all the levels, please see the table below featuring the standards for assessing the reading proficiency).

R-0: Reading 0 (No Proficiency) No practical ability to read the language. Consistently misunderstands or cannot comprehend at all.
R-0+: Reading 0+ (Memorized Proficiency) Can recognize all the letters in the printed version of an alphabetic system and high-frequency elements of a syllabary or a character system. Able to read some or all of the following: numbers, isolated words and phrases, personal and place names, street signs, office and shop designations. The above often interpreted inaccurately. Unable to read connected prose.

R-1: Reading 1 (Elementary Proficiency) Sufficient comprehension to read very simple connected written material in a form equivalent to usual printing or typescript. Can read either representations of familiar formulaic verbal exchanges or simple language containing only the highest frequency structural patterns and vocabulary, including shared international vocabulary items and cognates (when appropriate). Able to read and understand known language elements that have been recombined in new ways to achieve different meanings at a similar level of simplicity. Texts may include descriptions of persons, places or things: and explanations of geography and government such as those simplified for tourists. Some misunderstandings possible on simple texts. Can get some main ideas and locate prominent items of professional significance in more complex texts. Can identify general subject matter in some authentic texts.

R-1+: Reading 1+ (Elementary Proficiency, Plus) Sufficient comprehension to understand simple discourse in printed form for informative social purposes. Can read material such as announcements of public events, simple prose containing biographical information or narration of events, and straightforward newspaper headlines. Can guess at unfamiliar vocabulary if highly contextualized, but with difficulty in unfamiliar contexts. Can get some main ideas and locate routine information of professional significance in more complex texts. Can follow essential points of written discussion at an elementary level on topics in his/her special professional field. In commonly taught languages, the individual may not control the structure well. For example, basic grammatical relations are often misinterpreted, and temporal reference may rely primarily on lexical items as time indicators. Has some difficulty with the cohesive factors in discourse, such as matching pronouns with referents. May have to read materials several times for understanding.

R-2: Reading 2 (Limited Working Proficiency) Sufficient comprehension to read simple, authentic written material in a form equivalent to usual printing or typescript on subjects within a familiar context. Able to read with some misunderstandings straightforward, familiar, factual material, but in general insufficiently experienced with the language to draw inferences directly from the linguistic aspects of the text. Can locate and understand the main ideas and details in material written for the general reader. However, persons who have professional knowledge of a subject may be able to summarize or perform sorting and locating tasks with written texts that are well beyond their general proficiency level. The individual can read uncomplicated, but authentic prose on familiar subjects that are normally presented in a predictable sequence which aids the reader in understanding. Texts may include descriptions and narrations in contexts such as news items describing frequently occurring events, simple biographical information, social notices, formulaic business letters, and simple technical material written for the general reader. Generally the prose that can be read by the individual is predominantly in straightforward/high-frequency sentence patterns. The individual does not have a broad active vocabulary (that is, which he/she recognizes immediately on sight), but is able to use contextual and real-world cues to understand the text. Characteristically, however, the individual is quite slow in performing such a process. Is typically able to answer factual questions about authentic texts of the types described above.

<p>R-2+: Reading 2+ (Limited Working Proficiency, Plus) Sufficient comprehension to understand most factual material in non-technical prose as well as some discussions on concrete topics related to special professional interests. Is markedly more proficient at reading materials on a familiar topic. Is able to separate the main ideas and details from lesser ones and uses that distinction to advance understanding. The individual is able to use linguistic context and real-world knowledge to make sensible guesses about unfamiliar material. Has a broad active reading vocabulary. The individual is able to get the gist of main and subsidiary ideas in texts which could only be read thoroughly by persons with much higher proficiencies. Weaknesses include slowness, uncertainty, inability to discern nuance and/or intentionally disguised meaning.</p>
<p>R-3: Reading 3 (General Professional Proficiency) Able to read within a normal range of speed and with almost complete comprehension a variety of authentic prose material on unfamiliar subjects. Reading ability is not dependent on subject matter knowledge, although it is not expected that the individual can comprehend thoroughly subject matter which is highly dependent on cultural knowledge or which is outside his/her general experience and not accompanied by explanation. Text-types include news stories similar to wire service reports or international news items in major periodicals, routine correspondence, general reports, and technical material in his/her professional field; all of these may include hypothesis, argumentation and supported opinions. Misreading rare. Almost always able to interpret material correctly, relate ideas and “read between the lines,” (that is, understand the writers’ implicit intents in text of the above types). Can get the gist of more sophisticated texts, but may be unable to detect or understand subtlety and nuance. Rarely has to pause over or reread general vocabulary. However, may experience some difficulty with unusually complex structure and low frequency idioms.</p>
<p>R-3+: Reading 3+ (General Professional Proficiency, Plus) Can comprehend a variety of styles and forms pertinent to professional needs. Rarely misinterprets such texts or rarely experiences difficulty relating ideas or making inferences. Able to comprehend many sociolinguistic and cultural references. However, may miss some nuances and subtleties. Able to comprehend a considerable range of intentionally complex structures, low frequency idioms, and uncommon connotative intentions, however, accuracy is not complete. The individual is typically able to read with facility, understand, and appreciate contemporary expository, technical or literary texts which do not rely heavily on slang and unusual items.</p>
<p>R-4: Reading 4 (Advanced Professional Proficiency) Able to read fluently and accurately all styles and forms of the language pertinent to professional needs. The individual’s experience with the written language is extensive enough that he/she is able to relate inferences in the text to real-world knowledge and understand almost all sociolinguistic and cultural references. Able to “read beyond the lines” (that is, to understand the full ramifications of texts as they are situated in the wider cultural, political, or social environment). Able to read and understand the intent of writers’ use of nuance and subtlety. The individual can discern relationships among sophisticated written materials in the context of broad experience. Can follow unpredictable turns of thought readily in, for example, editorial, conjectural, and literary texts in any subject matter area directed to the general reader. Can read essentially all materials in his/her special field, including official and professional documents and correspondence. Recognizes all professionally relevant vocabulary known to the educated non-professional native, although may have some difficulty with slang. Can read reasonably legible handwriting without difficulty. Accuracy is often nearly that of a well-educated native reader.</p>

R-4+: Reading 4+ (Advanced Professional Proficiency, Plus) Nearly native ability to read and understand extremely difficult or abstract prose, a very wide variety of vocabulary, idioms, colloquialisms and slang. Strong sensitivity to and understanding of sociolinguistic and cultural references. Little difficulty in reading less than fully legible handwriting. Broad ability to “read beyond the lines” (that is, to understand the full ramifications of texts as they are situated in the wider cultural, political, or social environment) is nearly that of a well-read or well-educated native reader. Accuracy is close to that of the well-educated native reader, but not equivalent.

R-5: Reading 5 (Functionally Native Proficiency) Reading proficiency is functionally equivalent to that of the well-educated native reader. Can read extremely difficult and abstract prose; for example, general legal and technical as well as highly colloquial writings. Able to read literary texts, typically including contemporary avant-garde prose, poetry and theatrical writing. Can read classical/archaic forms of literature with the same degree of facility as the well-educated, but non-specialist native. Reads and understands a wide variety of vocabulary and idioms, colloquialisms, slang, and pertinent cultural references. With varying degrees of difficulty, can read all kinds of handwritten documents. Accuracy of comprehension is equivalent to that of a well-educated native reader [7].

Context and Challenges in Armenian Language Learning and Acquisition

As indicated earlier, Armenian is on the third rank of the scale based on its level of complexity, and usually 44 weeks or 1100 hours are dedicated to learning Armenian due to its complexity level. In the diplomatic setting, Armenian is also not widely regarded as a popular language, based on the capabilities of our country. Consequently, it results in a disparity between the number of specialists and diplomats, and in comparison to other languages, this number is relatively small.

The learning process adheres to the same logic as in the case of other languages: the enrichment of vocabulary, the refinement of speaking and writing skills, listening comprehension and understanding of the spoken language.

We concentrate on identifying some challenges being noticed during our activities, which are primarily related to the Armenian language.

Professional framework: Specialists teaching in diplomatic schools are primarily native speakers. In accordance with the language competence, they have insufficient linguistic education. And those with professional education in the relevant language (and the case is not only the language, but the specialist should also have knowledge in culture and history) generally do not know English in a way that they can properly introduce the grammar and rules of the language by employing the accurate English terminology.

Education manuals: Education manuals are the subsequent issue to be identified and studied. In the case of Armenian, there is also the issue concerning the existence of Western Armenian and Eastern Armenian languages. At a certain point, Western Armenian was also the language of instruction in these schools, but gradually, due to objective factors, Western Armenian was assigned to a secondary position and is no longer considered a language of state importance. Nevertheless, it should be highlighted that education manuals developed in Western Armenian are occasionally of better quality and methodologically properly structured, such as the education manual by Gevorg Bardakchyan “A Textbook of Modern Western Armenian”[8].

Meanwhile, Eastern Armenian education manuals are distinguished by their emphasis on grammar and do not fulfill the major professional prerequisites of diplomatic education as

a rule. Regarding the content, most education manuals are designed to transfer knowledge of the fundamental levels of language proficiency such as “0+”, “1” and “1+”. They facilitate letter identification, rather basic conversational skills and basic or trivial knowledge (main topics include family, profession, food, transport, directions, weather, etc.).

However, there is shortage of education manuals that satisfy the criteria of advanced levels of language proficiency: specifically, they are not suitable for the professional field, i.e. all the diplomatic criteria established by the FSI during the assessment exams.

Priority is given to instruction materials developed by the teaching staff being mainly obtained from the Internet, newspapers, videos, etc.

From a methodological standpoint, such manuals do not facilitate equal development of all three skills: reading, speaking, and listening skills, as in this instance, they are not adequately equipped with instruction materials to develop the auditory apparatus.

The next matter of consideration is dictionaries in general sense and specialized dictionaries specifically that indicates a substantial disparity and necessitates sustained professional commitment and professional duties.

Education manuals prevailing in modern professional discourse are identified in Refferances [9]; [10]; [11]; moreover, education manuals are also available being developed by FSI, without free and open access.

Conclusions: In light of the findings of this research, the researchers have arrived at the following conclusions:

1. Teaching languages in a diplomatic setting is predominantly a matter of national security, besides being a security issue, implies one of the best and most presentable ways to establish economic, social and diplomatic relations as well.

2. There are Common European and American frameworks identifying the proficiency standards for language education and assessment, nevertheless, there is no precise categorization for the Armenian language from the standpoint of national standards.

3. In some countries, in the diplomatic setting (specifically, the case of the USA is the focal point of our study), based on concerns for national security, foreign language teaching guidelines are put into practice by government entities under state supervision.

4. When referring to educational frameworks, we mean the course or curriculum contents, methods for language competence development according to particular professional characteristics, the methodology, the education manuals, the testing and assessment of the extent of knowledge.

5. In the case of the USA, as previously identified, not only the problem of foreign language education is closely supervised by governmental bodies in the American diplomatic setting, but also the methodology and approaches of teaching English in foreign diplomatic settings.

6. Taking the above-mentioned into account, we consider that the teaching of Armenian, the development and implementation of assessment criteria in foreign diplomatic settings should also be incorporated into the state strategies.

7. It is imperative to enrich the databases of educational programs, education manuals and dictionaries through mutual cooperation, in accordance with the requirements and the established methods of language instruction.

Appendix 1: Educational courses for diplomats

Topics for mid-career training program 2014

Some aspects of Armenia's foreign policy

1	The current state of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict
2	Armenia's relations with neighboring countries
3	Armenia's relations with the Eurasian Union and the Russian Federation
4	Armenia's relations with countries in the Americas
5	Armenia – European Union relations
6	Armenia's relations with major international organizations
7	Armenia's relations with the Arab world
8	Armenia's relations with countries in Africa, Asia and the Pacific
9	100 th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide and beyond
10	Challenges of parliamentary diplomacy
11	The structure of Armenian Diaspora and trends of change
12	The legal framework for Armenia's diplomatic service
13	Some issues of international law
14	Summary of Armenia's foreign policy
Practical skills	
15	Negotiation skills
16	Public diplomacy
17	Communications skills
18	Political analysis and diplomatic correspondence
19	Working with the media
20	Psychology and communications
21	State protocol of Armenia
22	Financial reporting

Consular training

Topic for Consular Training Course (2014)
The rights and duties of Consuls according to the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations and the Republic of Armenia “Law on Consular Service”
Information technologies in Consular Services
Services offered to citizens. Receiving of citizens and etiquette
Providing citizens with Reference Letters; Requesting required documents; Verification of documents
Ensuring accessibility to information and awareness by the citizens of the legislation about and procedures of consular activities; working with the media
a) The concept of a state duties, calculating of duties, and their transfer to the state budget, b) Quarterly and annual consular reports c) Special documents: their types, usage and registry
Processing documents for granting of Special Residency Status in the Republic of Armenia
Processing passports-related cases
Passport-related cases: processing of documents on acquiring and changing citizenship of the Republic of Armenia

Registration of citizens subject to military service
Notary services: legislation
Issuing Certificates of Repatriation of the RA
Registration of births, marriages, deaths, adoption etc.
Consular legalization of documents
Consular registry
Issuing visas of entry to the Republic of Armenia

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2. Details are on <https://www.actfl.org/educator-resources/world-readiness-standards-for-learning-languages>, as of 14.02.2024.
3. <https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages/reference-level-descriptions>
4. For the European framework, please read English language description beneath, in the link: <https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=090000168045bc7b> ;
5. For more detailed information: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages/level-descriptions>
6. <https://effectivelanguagelearning.com/language-guide/language-difficulty>
7. <https://www.govtilr.org/Skills/IRL%20Scale%20History.htm>
8. <https://www.govtilr.org/Skills/ILRscale4.htm>
9. Gevorg Pargevi Bardakchyan, Thomson, Robert W., A Textbook of Modern Western Armenian, Edition 1st ed. Type: book; Literary form: non-fiction Publisher: New York, Caravan Books, 1977.

10. Eastern Armenian Books:

- Eastern Armenian for the English-Speaking World: <http://www.armin.am/images/menus/2238/Arevelahayeren.pdf>
- Eastern Armenian Comprehensive Self-Study Language Course: <https://pdfcoffee.com/eastern-armenian-comprehensive-self-study-language-course-pdf-free.html>
- Armenian. Modern Eastern Armenian <https://vahagnakanch.files.wordpress.com/2011/04/modern-eastern-armenian.pdf> or here: <https://books.google.fr/books?id=SGyop5guXDkC&lpg=PP1&dq=armenian&pg=PR4#v=onepage&q&f=false>
- Mary Hakobyan, Eastern Armenian textbook, <https://easternarmeniantextbook.com/>

11. Grammar:

- Elementary Modern Armenian Grammar: [https://archive.org/details/ElementaryModernArmenianGrammar/page/n13/mode/2up?view=theater\(in English\)](https://archive.org/details/ElementaryModernArmenianGrammar/page/n13/mode/2up?view=theater(in%20English))
- Armenian Grammar: http://www.dictionnaires-machtotz.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=97&Itemid=80&lang=fr

12. Online Resources:

- Eastern Armenian Language: https://armeniapedia.org/wiki/Armenian_Language_Lessons
- Learn Eastern Armenian with Veronica-

Lesson	1	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U0XszA9vWls
Lesson	2	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2M0wmK7nSdk
Lesson	3	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JATuQGXF_Tc
Lesson	4	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pSzd7knynqE
Lesson	5:	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iBVtmImWWfA

- Lesson 6 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x6BK6_Urppw
- Lesson 7 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=72rx5MbYITM>
- Lesson 8 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GGv3q44RHyE>
- Lesson 9 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zlrjgwdnikY>
- Lesson 10 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xWEEFW3ek0c>
- The Eastern Armenian Alphabet: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z46vAYblc_s
- Western and Eastern Armenian – Pronunciation Differences: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tJywTbIjQVY>
- The Eastern Armenian Three Part Consonant System: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lsv90IA6Qao>
- Eastern Armenian Phrasebook: [http://wikitravel.org/en/Armenian_\(Eastern\)_phrasebook](http://wikitravel.org/en/Armenian_(Eastern)_phrasebook)

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