

Language and Literacy Practices in a Diasporic Setting: Case Study of Armenian Community in Buenos Aires

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This research investigates the language use and literacy practices in the Armenian community in Buenos Aires. The community is formed more than 100 years ago, predominantly by the survivors of the Armenian Genocide – a traumatic event during which 1,5 million Armenians were massacred, and the remaining survivors were scattered around the world. The memory of the Genocide, the fight for its recognition and justice, as well as efforts to preserve the culture and heritage of their ancestors are the paramount ideologies of the community members.

The research shares the experiences of the community members and their use of the language on day-to-day basis, and explores the values attached to the language among the members. More specifically, the research focuses on language and literacy practices, aiming to distinguish how they are used as a tool to maintain the culture and heritage. In this ethnography the use of the language is examined from different perspectives, including the domains where the language is used, the Armenian alphabet and the visibility of the language in public spaces in Buenos Aires, and, most importantly, the role of the Armenian language in transmitting stories of the Genocide and traumatic memory from one generation to the other.