

**Heritage Language and Culture Maintenance: A Study of Armenian Ethnic Cultural  
Center**

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

in

Multilingual Education

Nazarbayev University Graduate School of Education

June, 2017

Word Count: 20342 words

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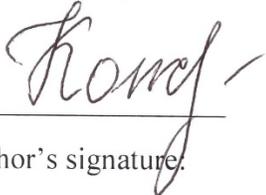
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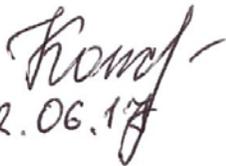
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From: GSE Research committee gse\_researchcommittee@nu.edu.kz

11/4/16

To: me, Nettie

Dear Kamila,

The NUGSE Research Committee reviewed the project entitled "Heritage language and culture maintenance in Kazakhstan: A study of Armenian ethnic cultural center."

and decided:

To grant approval for this study

**Approval:** This approval is effective for the life of the study. However, any time you change any aspect of your project (e.g., recruitment process, administering materials, collecting data, gaining consent, and changing participants) you will need to submit a request for modification to the NUGSE Research Committee. Make sure to address all of the information requested on the request for modification form(s). Please be advised that in some circumstances, changes to the protocol may disqualify the project from approval.

Sincerely,

NUGSE Research Committee

**Dedication**

To my Grandfather, my best friend and the greatest man in my life, Ilset Ishmukhametov.

### **Acknowledgements**

I want to thank my thesis supervisor Dr. Nettie Boivin, the woman who embodies an excellent scholar, an exemplary mother and a decent person, for guiding but not pushing, for encouraging but not praising, for providing academic and moral support.

My special gratitude goes to my English instructors Kuralay Bozymbekova and Phil Montgomery, who were very helpful and motivating in writing this thesis. I also want to thank other NUGSE faculty members for everything they taught me.

I am grateful for the people who supported me, while going through the same process, Nazira, Arina, Dilnoza, Markhabat and Rizagul, and the person who is always there for me, Maryam. You are the best.

Finally, I want to thank my Grandmother Lubov and mother Liana for everything they gave me, which basically means everything I have.

### **Abstract**

#### **Heritage language and culture maintenance: A study of Armenian ethnic cultural center**

Situated in Central Asia, Kazakhstan is an ethnically diverse post-Soviet country, where more than 463 ethnic community schools, called ethnic cultural centers, operate under supervision and protection of government. Armenians are one of the smaller ethnic minority groups in Kazakhstan, accounting for only 33000 persons, who managed to successfully maintain ethnic culture and language (Karapetyan, 2015). As majority of existing literature on heritage language and culture maintenance focuses on immigrants in mono-/multilingual countries where the majority language is widely spoken, this qualitative case study reveals the situation of forced migrants who live in multilingual context with the majority language, Kazakh, being revitalized. The study answered the research questions about socio-cultural practices of the Armenian ethnic center, challenges that the center administration and attendees face, and how the center participants perceive the center and why they continue attending it. Qualitative face-to-face interviews and non-participant observation of the event hosted by the center show that practising language and culture during the bonding gatherings within the ethnic community plays essential role in maintaining heritage language and culture in multilingual context. Although the center currently experiences lack of participant engagement, especially youth participants, absence of teachers of Armenian, problems with office and center facilities and lack of center resources, participants and administration reported the positive effect of the center's work. Thus, attending the center helped participants gain the sense of ethnic community, maintain and, for some of them, learn Armenian language and culture, and gain the sense of acceptance and appreciation in Kazakhstan. These findings emphasize the importance of Kazakhstani ethnic cultural centers in

developing and supporting ethnic diversity and highlight the ways in which government and center administration can improve the work of the centers.

## Аңдатпа

### Мәдени мұра тілінің сақталуы: Армян этномәдени орталығының тәжірибесіне негізделген зерттеу

Қазақстан — Орта Азиядағы посткеңестік көп ұлтты мемлекет. Қазақстанда үкімет қолдауымен 463-тен астам ұлт пен ұлыс өкілдерінің мәдениет орталықтары қызмет атқарады. Армяндар – Қазақстандағы адам саны шамамен 33,000-ға жуық кішігірім этностардың бірі болып табылады. Соған қарамастан, бұл қауым өзінің мәдениеті мен тілін сақтай алды (Карапетян, 2015). Бір немесе көптілді елдердегі ресми тіл және көпшіліктің мәдениетінен бөлек мәдениет пен мәдени мұра тілін сақтау жөніндегі жазылған әдебиет иммигранттарды зерттеуіне негізделген. Алайда, осы кейс стади әдісіне негізделген сапалық зерттеу көпшілік тілі, яғни қазақ тілінің қайта жандандыру кезеңіндегі көп тілді мемлекетте тұратын еріксіз қоныстандырылған этностың жағдайын қарастырады. Осы зерттеу армян этномәдени орталығындағы қолданылатын әлеуметтік-мәдени шаралар туралы сұрақтарға жауап беріп, әкімшілік пен орталық мүшелерінің қиындықтары анықтады. Сонымен қатар, бұл зерттеу осы этномәдени орталық мүшелерінің көзқарастары мен оған қатысу себептерін айқындады. Этномәдени орталықтың мүшелерімен бетпе- бет сұхбат және орталықтағы ұйымдастырылған шараларды бақылау нәтижелері бойынша, мәдени мұра тілінің сақталуында маңызды рөлді қауымды біріктіруге арналған шаралар кезіндегі тіл мен мәдениеті қолдану атқаратыны көрсетті. Қазіргі уақытта, Армян этномәдени орталығы бір қатар қиыншылықтарға тап. Олардың ішінде орталықтық белсенді қатысушыларының әсіресе жастардың аздығы, армян тілі мұғалімдерінің жоқтығы, қажетті ресурстардың тапшылығы және кеңсе және басқа нысандарға байланысты проблемалар бар. Осыған қарамастан, орталық басқармасы және

мүшелері орталықтың жұмысы оң нәтижелерді беретінін хабардар етті. Осылайша, орталықтың мәдени шаралына қатысу және де олардың ұйымдастыруына қол ұшын беру осы зерттеу қатысушыларына армян тілі мен мәдениетін үйренуге, этникалық қауымдастық мүшесі және де Қазақстанның бірінғай азаматы ретінде сезінуге оны сақтап қалуға себеп болды. Зерттеудің бұндай нәтижелері Қазақстанның этникалық және мәдени орталықтардың осы мемлекеттегі этникалық алуан түрлілікті сақтап қалудағы маңызды рөлді атқаратының және де мемлекет пен орталық әкімшіліктері жұмыстарын жақсартуға болатынын көрсетеді.

## Абстракт

### **Сохранение культуры и языка культурного наследия: Исследование на базе Армянского культурного центра**

Казахстан – это многонациональное, постсоветское государство, расположенное в Средней Азии, где функционирует более 463 домов культуры различных этнических групп. Они именуется этнокультурными центрами, и находятся под поддержкой и защитой правительства. Армяне - одна из самых малочисленных этнических групп Казахстана, которая составляет около 33000 человек. Тем не менее им успешно удалось сохранить культуру и язык культурного наследия (Карапетян, 2015). Большинство существующей литературы по сохранению культуры и языка культурного наследия ориентируется на изучение иммигрантов в моно-/полиязычных странах, где свободно говорят на официальном языке. Однако, данное качественное исследование по методу кейс-стади освещает ситуацию вынужденных переселенцев, которые сейчас живут в многоязычном контексте, где языком большинства, казахский, находится в процессе восстановления. Исследование ответило на поставленные вопросы о социокультурных методах, применяемых в армянском этническом центре, выявило трудности, с которыми сталкиваются администрация и члены центра, показало, что члены центра думают о центре и почему они продолжают посещать его. Индивидуальные интервью и наблюдение мероприятия, организованного центром, показали, что практика языком и культуры во время сближающих мероприятий в этническом сообществе играет существенную роль в сохранении культуры и языка культурного наследия в многоязычном контексте. Армянский центр в настоящее время испытывает трудности, связанные с недостаточным уровнем активности участников центра, особенно молодежи, отсутствием учителей

армянского языка, проблемами с офисом и удобствами, и недостатком ресурсов центра. Несмотря на это, члены центра и администрации сообщили о положительном эффекте работы центра. Таким образом, посещение и участие в мероприятиях центра помогло участникам исследования приобрести чувство этнического сообщества, сохранить, а для некоторых из них – выучить, армянский язык и культуру, и приобрести чувство принятия и уважения в Казахстане. Эти результаты подчеркивают важность казахстанских этнокультурных центров в развитии и поддержке этнического разнообразия и указывают на то, как правительство и администрация центра могут улучшить работу центров.

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*Figure 1.* Reasons for attending the center, socio-cultural practices employed by the center and reasons why participants continue attending the center.

## **Chapter 1. Introduction**

Kazakhstan is a multicultural and multiethnic country that comprises over 130 nationalities. After the country gained independence on December 16, 1991, Kazakhstani government focused on constructing cohesive society devoid of ethnic conflicts, establishing and promoting a new Kazakhstani identity, and facilitating heritage language and culture maintenance of ethnic minority groups. There are 463 community centers, called ethnic cultural centers, that maintain this work of supporting and protecting ethnic diversity in Kazakhstan (Karapetyan, 2015). Unlike most of community centers functioning in other countries, Kazakhstani ethnic cultural centers were established at the initiative of government; and all the Kazakhstani ethnic cultural centers are supervised, protected and funded by a constitutional body, the Assembly of People of Kazakhstan.

Each ethnic cultural center held a name of a certain ethnic minority and used to reside in separate offices where various meetings and activities were conducted. Later, it has been decided to unite all the ethnic cultural centers of one city in one building, called “The House of Friendship” in order to facilitate collaboration of various ethnic groups. Devoid of exclusion, Houses of Friendship contain space to maintain the cultures of the ethnic minorities and the cultures with comparatively small number of representatives.

While Armenians are one of the smaller ethnic minority groups in Kazakhstan, accounting for only 30000 persons, they are reported to be successful at maintaining ethnic identity and language (Karapetyan, 2015). They are an ancient civilization with rich history and culture who “existed since before the first century C.E.” (Cohan, 2005, p. 333). Historically, Armenians have struggled numerous genocide attacks at different times and in different countries. First, they were brought to Kazakhstan under the Stalin’s forced migration

of 1930s - early 1950s during USSR era. The largest number of these forced migrants stayed in the south of Kazakhstan. Additional wave of Armenian migration to Kazakh lands occurred in 1988-1989 after the violent conflicts in Baku, Azerbaijan (Karapetyan, 2015).

Today Armenian ethnic cultural centers are represented in 11 oblasts of Kazakhstan. They are united by the Association of Armenian Culture centers of the Republic of Kazakhstan “Nairi” that was established on October 30, 2004 in Almaty (Karapetyan, 2015). This Association promotes collaboration of Kazakhstani Armenian ethnic cultural centers among themselves, with the government of Armenia, and with non-governmental organizations of Kazakhstan and Armenia. Starting from 2006, Armenian ethnic cultural centers of Kazakhstan established monthly newspaper “Nairi” (Karapetyan, 2015). Its content is designed by ethnic centers leaders, Armenian teachers and other activists, and is presented in the Armenian, Kazakh and Russian languages. Armenian centers of different oblasts also cooperate by sharing printed sources, organizing traditional holidays celebrations, gathering information about ethnic group representatives for books and TV programs, conducting art and dance contests, raising money for monument construction and church renovation.

### **Research Gap**

The studies on maintaining heritage language and culture predominantly consider ethnic minorities as immigrants or migrants. There has been little research on ethnic minorities who were forced migrants. Moreover, the literature on the forced migration does not consider the involuntary forced migration during the totalitarian rule, which is the case of the first wave of Armenian migration to Kazakhstan when Stalin was a secretary of USSR. This population does also present a peculiar example when even though they technically could be defined as internally displaced persons (IDPs), whose who did not cross the international

border (Castles, 2003), they experienced a completely different linguistic and cultural environment, and after roughly 50 years of the migration turned out to be citizens of a new country. Therefore, the case of Armenians in Kazakhstan comprises the characteristics that make them a unique population under investigation that has not been researched before.

Majority of the existing literature also investigates the context of either monolingual countries or bi-/multilingual countries where the official majority languages have had this status for a very long time. However, Kazakhstan represents a country where the official and titular language, Kazakh, has been undervalued and minoritized for a long time and only has started to be revitalized. Therefore, the current study also fills the gap in literature as it sheds a light on how ethnic minorities maintain heritage language and culture in a multilingual context where the majority language is being revitalized.

There is limited empirical research made to explore the work of ethnic cultural centers to maintain heritage language and culture in multilingual Kazakhstan. Although there has been a research done in order to study perceptions of the people attending one of the ethnic cultural centers, Tatar cultural center, by Davenel (2012), the author pointed out the importance to further examine the voices of other ethnic minorities. Therefore, this study adds to the field of heritage language maintenance in community schools and cultural centers by reporting the socio-cultural practices. Moreover, the present study provides the insights from one of the numerically smallest ethnic minorities of Kazakhstan, Armenians, about the situation of maintaining their heritage language and culture.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to explore the practices being done at Armenian ethnic cultural center to maintain heritage language and culture, to identify types of challenges faced

in the center, to study what role the center plays in maintaining heritage language and culture of the participants and what reasons motivate them to continue attending the center.

### **Research Questions**

The study aims to investigate the socio-cultural practices being done at the Armenian ethnic cultural center, difficulties encountered by the center and the perceptions of the people who attend the center about the center and reasons that motivate them to continue attending it.

The following research questions have been posed to guide the study:

1. What does the Armenian ethnic cultural center do to maintain heritage language and culture?
2. Are there any challenges that ethnic cultural center faces, if so, what types?
3. What are Armenian families' perceptions of the ethnic cultural center, and why do they continue to attend the center?

### **Significance of the Study**

Although the positive influence of the work of government and the Assembly of People of Kazakhstan and ethnic cultural centers is vastly discussed in official governmental meetings and educational materials recommended by the Ministry of Education, there is still little research of the work of ethnic cultural centers, as an important part of the Assembly, conducted in Kazakhstan. Moreover, the past studies have predominantly focused on culture maintenance, while the present study sheds light on what Kazakhstani ethnic cultural centers do to maintain heritage language (Jones, 2010; Davenel, 2012).

To date, the research on the heritage language maintenance that has been done in Kazakhstan has predominantly dealt with the ethnic groups with large numbers of representatives such as Russians and other Slavics, Uzbeks, Tatars, etc. (Arenov & Kalmykov,

1997; Bandey & Rather, 2013; Davenel, 2012; Zharkynbekova, Aimoldina & Akynova, 2015). Yet, little is known about the ethnic minority groups that are numerically underrepresented in Kazakhstan. This leads to another aspect that adds to the significance of the study - shed lighting the situation of maintaining language and culture of Armenians, one of the smallest ethnic minorities of Kazakhstan.

### **Thesis Outline**

The current master thesis consists of introduction, literature review, methodology section, results, discussion, and conclusion chapters. Introduction chapter presents the research problem statement, identifies research gap and significance, and lists the research questions that guided the study. It is followed by the literature review chapter that contains the overview and analysis of the previously conducted studies on heritage language maintenance, ethnic identity, community centers, their structure and challenges they encounter. After that the methodological rationale of the current research, research methods of the study, research site and participants are described in the methodology chapter. This chapter also illustrates the measures taken by the researchers in order to ensure the anonymity of the participants. Next chapter, results, describes the findings of the study, containing the quotes of the participants. It, however, simply lists the findings, while the next chapter, discussion, interprets and analyzes them, compares them to the existing concepts and findings of other studies. Finally, the conclusion chapter contains the summary of the findings, limitations of the study, its implications, and suggestions for the further research.

## Chapter 2. Literature Review

### Introduction

This chapter contains the theoretical background of the current study such as definitions of the terms that are integral for reading and understanding the thesis such as ethnic identity, heritage language, heritage language speakers and learners, language maintenance. The chapter contains the rationale for investigating heritage language and culture together. Here I also discuss what terms fit the context of the study the most and what alternative terms might also be met in the literature. This is followed by the description of the community centers that aim at preserving heritage language and culture. Next, the chapter reveals the factors that influence heritage language maintenance, socio-cultural practices employed, both in family and community centers, to preserve the heritage language and the challenges that centers face during this process. Finally, the conceptual framework is presented in order to inform readers how the findings of the study have been analyzed.

### Ethnic Identity

Before reviewing the concepts of heritage language and culture, we need to identify the rationale for examining two of them simultaneously. The theory combining heritage language and culture is *ethnic identity*, which can be defined as identification of self in a relation with a certain cultural group. Larrañaga, Garcia, Azurmendi and Bourhis (2015) recently pinpointed that it is the extent to which one affiliates him-/herself with a certain ethnic group, its language and culture. Some scholars state that knowledge of heritage language contributes to the formation of ethnic identity to such a degree that failing to maintain the language might lead to the loss of ethnic identity (Wang, 2015). In addition, Blackledge et al. (2008) revealed that heritage language and culture are “inexorably

intertwined” during the learning process (p. 536). This provides a rationale for considering language and culture simultaneously, as a whole.

### **Heritage language**

In this paper, I employ the term heritage language as it is relevant in the Kazakhstani context; it encompasses the notion of language of cultural heritage (Kaz: мәдени мұра тілі, Rus: язык культурного наследия), the term that is used the most in both Kazakh and Russian language versions of state documents and at official events such as meeting of Assembly of People of Kazakhstan. Although there are other corresponding terms utilized in the existing literature, the term *heritage language* is used in this paper. The rationale for choosing it and various definitions of heritage language are discussed in this section.

Among the terms interchangeably used to define the languages other than the official ones spoken in a country are minority, indigenous, immigrant, second or foreign language. While some of them fit the specific contexts more than others, lately there has been a shift to avoiding some of them. Thus, while having quite a neutral tone to describe the languages other than English in the United States, a country with overwhelming influence of English, once a very commonly used term, *minority language*, has been widely criticized in multilingual and multiethnic countries. Ndhlovu (2009) revealed that people consider the term minority language to be “derogatory and condescending” (p. 102), which is also the case in Kazakhstan. It also implies offensive meaning in Kazakh and Russian, and may bring confusion and tension to the discussion of this paper, in case it is translated into these languages. The most recent studies preferred using the term heritage language as it gained the status of “a neutral and inclusive alternative” to the others (Hornberger, 2005, p. 102). It also fits the Kazakhstani context as the term *heritage language* emphasizes a certain ethnic group

and its culture and history, rather than its connection to the country/land they live right now or used to live in, or the small number of speakers.

The term heritage language (HL), initially introduced in Canada to refer to languages other than the majority languages, English and French, has been later used for similar purposes in the United States (Cummins, 1991, as cited in King & Ennser-Kananen, 2013). Later, corresponding terms such as ethnic minority language and community language emerged in Europe and Australia. However, as the definitions of heritage language have been questioned and criticized, scholars continued to search for a more accurate definition. Thus, Fishman (1999) suggested defining heritage language as “language of personal relevance” (as cited in King & Ennser-Kananen, 2013, p. 1).

Contemporary studies define heritage language as the non-official language spoken by ethnic minorities that “have migrated or immigrated to another country” (Boivin, 2013, p. 41). It has indispensable value in terms of cultural and ethnic self-identification (McCabe, 2016) of ethnic minority groups even when they experience problems with speaking it. One’s self-identification in relation to his/her heritage language is a widely accepted type of identity (Manosuthikit & De Costa, 2016) and is closely connected to other identities of a person. In this paper, I will use the term heritage language and the abbreviation HL interchangeably. Besides the multiple interpretation of the term, there are also diverse views of the people speaking and learning heritage language as some overlapping terms can be traced in the existing literature, which is addressed further.

### **Heritage language speakers**

Similarly to defining the term heritage language, scholars suggested numerous ways of interpreting both heritage language learners and speakers. In pedagogical contexts, the most

commonly accepted definition of heritage language speakers, or heritage speakers, has been coined by Valdés (2001, as cited in King & Enns-Kananen, 2013). She suggested that HL speakers are individuals who, besides the majority language, use an additional language at home, and tend to be bilingual in those two languages to a certain extent. Van Deusen-Scholl (2003) points out that language proficiency of HL speakers can range from high, native proficiency to extremely limited or not developed proficiency at all. Moreover, besides lacking some language knowledge, HL speakers usually are not exposed to or have a limited access to formal education in HL (Montrul & Bowles, 2010). According to Faneca, Araújo e Sá, Melo-Pfeifer (2016), this contributes to the language shift to the majority language of the younger generation. Heritage speakers are sometimes characterized as “interrupted native speakers” (Montrul, 2012, p.30), whose competence of heritage language turns out to be the lower than their competence in other language(-s) that they speak. All in all, it can be concluded that HL speakers are usually immigrants who affiliate themselves with the language that is not common in the country they live in, their proficiency in this language is limited, as they lack formal language instruction. In such situations the HL is under the risk of being lost. In the next section I discuss the literature on the factors that influence the process of HL maintenance.

### **Factors influencing heritage language maintenance**

Heritage language maintenance is both a goal and a complex process of preserving the language that is not widely spoken in a certain country. Failing to maintain HL results in alternative processes such as language shift and/or language loss. What is more, Fishman (1991, as cited in Shin, 2010) argues that a complete shift to a majority language is almost inevitable within three generations of heritage speakers if no special effort to maintain the

language is made. Heritage language maintenance is dependent on various factors discussed further.

One of the major factors influencing heritage language maintenance is the link between language and culture. The studies conducted by Shin (2010), Mucherah (2008), McCabe (2016), Brown (2011), Faneca, Araújo e Sá and Melo-Pfeifer (2016) identified that heritage speakers believe that speaking HL significantly contributes to preserving the culture of their ancestors and connections to the country of their origin. For instance, speaking or at least learning Korean as a HL to Korean Americans means to illustrate the “ethnic pride” and “define who they are as individuals” (Brown, 2011, p.31, 33). Moreover, failing to communicate in heritage language within a family was reported to be a reason for family breakout. This applies both to the immediate and extended family relationships, especially when the representatives of the latter live in the country of origin or other country abroad. In this case HL becomes indispensable tool to integrate in the extended family, travel to the native country, take part in the cultural events and celebrations, and, therefore, obtain a feeling of belonging to an ethnic group (Jones, 2010; Mucherah, 2008). That is to say that family members, parents and older relatives enhance motivation of youngsters to learn heritage language.

Another factor influencing language maintenance is intergenerational communication, parental involvement in particular, as parents decide on the family language policy, the medium of instruction of the school for their children, extra curriculum classes aimed at learning heritage language, visits to the native country. As heritage language education is not a widespread practice and in the countries where schools provide immersion programs or HL courses the variety of those language is still limited, parents take the responsibility for their

children's heritage language education. Parents' consistency in using the heritage language only at home is regarded as one of the most frequently employed practices. Thus, in a multiple case study of Czech and Slovak families living in the South-East of the USA conducted by McCabe (2016) parents showed a great level of motivation to maintain the HLs. They refused to switch to English even when they experienced resistance from their children to speak HL. Besides speaking Czech or Slovak to their children, parents also made extra efforts to provide children with exposure to the native speakers of the heritage languages, which helped to motivate young heritage learners. However, there might be an alternative interpretation of the findings. The practice of speaking HL only as a family language policy might sometimes be employed because of parents' insufficient proficiency in a majority language (Brown, 2011). In this case family language policy can be considered as an intrinsic, natural action, rather than a planned agenda. Parents struggling when speaking majority language then are more likely to appreciate the bi-/multilingualism of their children and consider an additional language as an asset.

Exposure to the country of origin where HL is widely spoken is another factor that influences language maintenance. Thus, a number of studies show that the lack of such exposure results in better developed receptive HL skills rather than the productive ones (Brown, 2011; Kagan, 2012; McCabe, 2016; Montrul, 2012; Polinsky & Kagan, 2007; Shin, 2010). For instance, in the study of Koreans living in the United States children of the first generation immigrants that were born in the United States do understand their parents speaking Korean. They also watch TV programs and TV shows in Korean at home. However, when it comes to the productive language skills, speaking and writing, they often struggle or do not try to produce at all (Brown, 2011). In addition, writing has been reported as the most

challenging skill of HL to develop. The study of Albanians living in Greece showed an extreme case when no productive written skills were acquired at all (Gkaintartzi, Kiliari, & Tsokalidou, 2016). Since the most efficient way to learn writing skills is formal schooling, this brings up the idea of a lack of formal language classes that has been discussed earlier.

Maintaining HL can also be stimulated by expanding educational and professional opportunities (Mejía, 2016). For example, vast majority of young learners from various immigrant families in Portugal that answered questionnaire questions regarded the employment opportunity as one of the main drivers motivating them to learn their heritage languages (Faneca, Araújo e Sá, & Melo-Pfeifer, 2016). Importance of speaking a HL as an additional language varies depending on the context and the country where heritage speakers live. Ireland is a notable example of a country where multilingualism is beneficial. In order to obtain the so-called Leaving Certificate Examination when graduating from school, students need to select the subjects among which a number of heritage languages is suggested. Russian immigrant parents interviewed for the study conducted by Eriksson (2015) stated that ever since the Russian language was added to the list of language electives in 2003, they have got an extra incentive to encourage their children to learn Russian, besides maintaining cultural identity and link with relatives. Speaking HL in this case does not only provide a chance to pay tribute to the past, the history of the ethnic group, but also get an extra credit to advance in the future, in studies and career. Although there are numerous factors contributing to the language maintenance or hindering this process, the most frequently mentioned factors are the connection between language and identity, parental involvement and encouragement, and educational and job opportunities.

**Community centers**

As maintaining HL is extremely difficult to succeed without external help of society, communities of immigrant families quite often establish institutions called community centers. This is a general term that refers to an organization that conduct various events and classes aimed at maintaining a certain culture and language and facilitating “community cohesion” (Martin, 2007). The major advantage of community centers is that they unite people of various age groups and, therefore, stimulate and facilitate linguistic and cultural “intergenerational transmission” (Budiyana, 2017, p.2). It varies from country to country whether the center is organized, maintained and financed by the community of immigrants or also has a government support. Flores and Matkin (2014) define community centers as organizations that provide services of various kinds to the specific ethnic groups. They emphasize that most of the time those centers are created because government institutions fail to satisfy the needs of those groups or ethnolinguistic communities, as Oriyama (2012) defines them; therefore, community centers are the product of individuals’ initiative rather than state-established institutions.

Community centers take various forms both official and unofficial and can be called in different ways such as community schools or Sunday schools, culture or ethnic centers. They can also function on the basis of a religious institution such as church or mosque, or become a result of cohesive social networking of immigrants (Jee, 2016). While the concept of social networking generally focuses on the number of participants, Wenger proposed a term communities of practice in 1998 to describe the groups that emphasize practices being done by them (Oriyama, 2016). Thus, communities of practice refer to the cohesive groups of people sharing a similar hallmark such as culture, heritage and ethnicity (Boivin, 2013).

Participating in the communities of practice means to focus on doings learn and share your knowledge, provide help to the ones in need, facilitating adaptation process for newcomers.

Community centers, however, sometimes serve the purpose of promoting heritage language and culture of both majority and minority. Concerned about young generation losing ethnic identity after country's integration into the European Union, the activists of Lithuania established the centers called the culture centers that promote the ethnic cultures and languages of the whole country (Jureniene, 2012). While created for a different purpose, Kazakhstani community centers, ethnic cultural centers, maintain similar work of preserving the culture and language of ethnic minorities and promoting the titular culture, Kazakh, and developing a new culture – Kazakhstani culture at the same time.

Community centers of various kinds apply socio-cultural and linguistic practices aimed at maintaining heritage language and culture. Despite their organization and status, they inevitably face various types of challenges during this process. Therefore, below such practices and challenges are discussed.

### **Socio-cultural and linguistic practices**

Success of the HL maintenance as a process depends on both reasons motivating the learners and the socio-cultural and linguistic practices they employ. One of the most prevalent reasons for preserving ethnic identity and, thus, heritage language and culture is family influence. Therefore, the practices of successful language and culture maintenance described in the literature are used long before heritage speakers start attending the community centers. Thus, families start speaking HL at home. It does not necessarily signify a conscious adoption of family language policy as sometimes it happens unintentionally and naturally, as the language of majority is the one they are less proficient in (Brown, 2011). On the other hand,

heritage-language-only policy can be a thoughtful process that requires significant efforts of parents as in the case of Czech and Slovak immigrant families in the United States studied by McCabe (2016). This study reported that several parent participants admitted putting “a mild pressure” on their children whenever they switched to English (p. 184). Linguistic practices occurring at such times involved demanding to repeat the sentence in heritage language. Parents also used a strategy of pretending that they do not understand the majority language and can only speak the heritage language. Although quite reasonable and efficient, this strategy stops working after children realize that parents do speak the majority language (McCabe, 2016). Therefore, it requires constant self-discipline, persistence of parents, and further additional support from other HL speakers.

In order to increase a level of children’s exposure to the heritage language and culture, parents start putting extra efforts to increase the exposure to the heritage culture and language by including more HL speakers in everyday life of their children. This is when the community centers bring the diversity in terms of the socio-cultural practices. Some community centers create junior groups or play groups for children who could speak HL to each other and teach one another. In case of absence of the groups, the heritage communities are helpful in finding a playdate for children, or a HL speaking au pairs (McCabe, 2016). These can be strengthened by inviting a relative from the home country, who could only speak heritage language, or moving closer to other families from the same ethnic background. Cooperating with people from the ethnic community helps to combine the efforts of finding resources in HL.

Authentic materials such as books, music, TV, newspapers and magazines in heritage language contribute to maintaining HL competence of adult heritage speakers, motivating younger generation of heritage learners, and facilitating the development of the language

competence of young learners (Brown, 2011; McCabe, 2016). With the help of internet it is feasible to find some sources in various heritage languages. However, the number of sources, their quality, appropriateness or price can still cause a problem, as some languages are more developed and have more sources available online than others. In case of Armenian school in California, the role of cooperation with the government of Armenia is highlighted, as a large number of Armenian resources is brought from Armenia to this school (Chahinian & Bakalian, 2015). However, this type of collaboration is not always in place. This is when other local institutions step forward in influencing the heritage language and culture maintenance.

Among such institutions are the ones that only focus on employing socio-cultural practices of a certain type, for instance, religious institutions. Thus, Budiya (2017) reiterated the situation when such organizations served a role of community centers and stimulated the younger generation of Chinese in Indonesia. The socio-cultural and linguistic practices utilized there include praying in Chinese, speaking to other representatives of the community in Chinese when attending the religious ceremonies, reading and exchanging the religious books in the heritage language. As religious identity is often linked to one's ethnic self-identification, "religious language planning" tends to become crucial in preserving HL (Spolsky, 2009, p. 43, as cited in Wang, 2016). Thus, in the study of religious practices and language maintenance of the Hakka Catholic Community in Malaysia, where the Catholic churches switched to using Mandarin, it has been revealed that the switch from Hakka to Mandarin intensified (Wang, 2016).

Another type of cultural practices is learning and practising the traditional dances and songs in groups. Thus, in the Lithuanian community center participants can sign up for various groups where they would do the culture-related activities such as playing musical

instruments, learning traditional dancing, singing the traditional folk songs (Jureniene, 2012).

Once a family of HL speakers lives in a city with cohesive ethnic society, all the socio-cultural practices described in this part of literature review such as insisting on speaking heritage language as much as possible, increasing exposure of a child to the language and providing HL learners with authentic materials can be put in practice in community centers.

### **Challenges of community centers**

Among the most common challenges that community centers have to deal with is low budget (Flores & Matkin, 2014), which results in poor infrastructure, insufficient learning materials and human resources. Consequently, some centers are located in small offices and remote areas of the cities. Despite being viewed as the main “culture spread” places by public, Lithuanian culture centers experience insufficient governmental support and funding, and lack of professional culture managers and teachers to work at the centers (Jureniene, 2012, p. 502). In order to compensate this, center administration and members maintain active work to involve international organizations and independent investors who “value the national culture more than the popular one” (Jureniene, 2012, p. 502).

Financial problem is not reported in the existing literature about Kazakhstani ethnic cultural centers as they are sponsored both by the government and independent investors; they also enjoy support from abroad, for instance, the native countries of the ethnic groups of the centers. However, having studied Tatar ethnic cultural centers, Davenel (2012) pointed out that the centers still lack support from local authorities. Moreover, both Davenel (2012) and Jones (2010) also reported that the work of Kazakhstani ethnic cultural centers needs better promotion because quite often the only people aware of the scheduled events and festivals are those who regularly attend the centers.

Because of the distance between the native country and a host country, community centers that serve a role of schools might experience the challenge of updating the curriculum. Thus, Chahinian and Bakalian (2015) revealed that the Sunday Armenian schools in the Mid-Eastern U.S.A. faced the problem of inflexible curriculum. In their words, both the condition of the language and the methodology of language that have been used for the first generation immigrants remained the same; therefore, it does not fit the modern class realities and the students who are predominantly the third generation immigrants. While the challenges of community centers are not studied extensively, the most common challenges that can be extracted from the literature are financial, lack of governmental and community support, the lack of printed materials and artifacts, and lack of people able to teach the heritage language.

### **Conceptual framework**

In order to analyze the data collected from the participants and administration of the Armenian center, there is a need for the conceptual framework. Therefore, the results are considered through the prism of three layers: macro-level, meso-level and micro-level, a framework that is commonly used in sociolinguistics (Dopfer, Foster & Potts, 2004). Below is the explanation of how these levels can be defined.

The macro-level regards the Kazakhstani community, the government, and policies considering ethnic diversity. At this level, it is important to consider how Kazakhstanis perceive ethnic cultural centers and their work and the impact they have on the society in general. It also includes the governmental influence on the center and its support that can be expressed in policies. For instance, currently the ethnic centers of Kazakhstan are protected by the government and its official constitutional body, the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan.

The meso-level indicates the matters concerning the Armenian community. Thus, it deals with the relationships within the group, the level of cohesiveness and representation of various age groups. Ethnic community has the accepted norms and regulations that are either similar to the ones of their home-country, or different due to their close relationships with other ethnic communities, languages and cultures.

Finally, the micro-level examines the personal beliefs, perceptions and family situation. Thus, at this level each participant represents a unique case with certain drivers that motivate them to act in certain ways, e.g. start attending the center to maintain the language and culture.

### **Conclusion**

To summarize, as ethnic identity is closely related to one's heritage culture and language, these notions cannot be regarded separately. Although various studies proved that heritage language and culture are highly valued by ethnic minorities living in different contexts, there is still a problem of maintaining them. Some families try to do it at home by speaking only heritage language; however, to enhance this process the external help is needed. Community centers present one type of such help as they serve a role of a platform where many families from ethnic community can combine their efforts to maintain ethnic identity. Some of the practices aimed at that are providing the younger with engaging activities such as dancing and singing groups, helping the representatives of the group to follow the traditions and customs, attending the religious institutions and ceremonies. Depending on the context and the country where the community center is based, some of them struggle with the lack of administrative and financial support from government, lack of youth attendance that can be explained by preferring popular culture to the heritage culture. Having observed the previous

studies, it can be said that the current study fills in the gap in the existing literature as it reveals the case of Armenians, forced migrants, in multilingual context. The methodological rationale is presented in the next chapter.

### **Chapter 3. Methodology**

While the previous chapter addressed the key terms that are used in this paper, important results of the previous studies that have been conducted in the field of HL maintenance and the work of Kazakhstani ethnic cultural centers, this chapter discusses the research design, sampling method, data collection tools, procedures, data analysis, ethical issues and limitations of the study. Therefore, this chapter will provide reader with a broader understanding of the methods deployed in the present study and provide the rationale for how these methods helped to answer the following research questions:

1. What does the Armenian ethnic cultural center do to maintain heritage language and culture?
2. Are there any challenges that ethnic cultural center faces, if so, what types?
3. What are Armenian families' perceptions of the ethnic cultural center, and why do they continue to attend the center?

Moreover, the information presented in the chapter might be of a great importance to the researchers who plan to conduct similar study and expand the knowledge in the field of heritage language maintenance.

#### **Research Design**

To decide on the research design the similar studies on heritage language and culture have been analyzed. Thus, Davenel (2012) conducted a case study to examine the strategies that Tatar ethnic center employed to preserve their ethnic identity and the challenges they faced while doing that. In order to answer the research questions of the current study in the most efficient way, it is also designed to be a qualitative case study because this design helps to extensively examine views of individuals united by the same characteristic/-s focusing on

their attitudes and beliefs (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007; Creswell, 2014; Miles, Huberman, 1994; Punch, 2006). Another rationale for choosing this type of research design is that the study considers Armenian ethnic cultural center as a case, “complex social phenomena to obtain “holistic and real-world perspective” (Yin, 2014, p. 4), and only focuses on its participants, administration and activities, disregarding any external factors such as center’s relationships with other centers and organizations. Additionally, the present study is best defined as instrumental case study, as it explores specific issue, namely heritage language maintenance, rather than a person or phenomenon (Gordin, 2006; Stakes, 1995, as cited in Thomas, 2016; Thomas & Hodges, 2010).

To collect the data both Davenel (2012) and Chahinian and Bakalian (2016), who investigated the work of Armenian day schools in California, used face-to-face interviews as the main data collection tool to elicit the information from the participants. This data collection tool provided efficient data about the socio-cultural strategies used by the center, the center attendees’ perceptions of the center and its role in heritage language and culture maintenance. For this study face-to-face semi-structured interviews were chosen too. Besides the interviews both studies involved additional data collection tools. For instance, Chahinian and Bakalian (2016) used surveys as a tool of recruiting participants. They used the help of a bilingual research assistant who translated the surveys, interviewed participants in Armenian, and then translated the interviews into English. Although the approach of involving a person speaking the first language of participants seemed quite logical and efficient, I decided not to use as the data could be distorted after translation. During the preliminary meeting with my gatekeeper I found out that all the Armenians who participate in the work of the center fluently speak Russian and/or Kazakh. However, I did provide my participants with a choice

of a language of interview and was ready to hire a translator. However, I decided to add non-participant observation of the event hosted by the center as Davenel (2012) did. The researcher highlighted the importance of observations as they helped him triangulate the data from the participants and gain better understanding of the phenomenon.

### **Research Sample**

In the study of Davenel (2012) everyone who attends the center could be enrolled no matter how many years they spent participating in the center events. However, I decided to ensure participant credibility by not including those who just started attending the center as they had insufficient experience of attending the center. So, I concentrated on finding people with sufficient experience of participating in Armenian center events and celebrations to make sure the participants have enough knowledge relevant to my study (Creswell, 2014). The sampling method I employed is best identified as purposive sampling (Thomas & Hodges, 2010) because the participants chosen for the study are united by similar characteristic, their attending Armenian ethnic cultural center and the events organized by this center lasted for more than two years by the time of interview.

I decided on two-years-experience because if a center attendee has only participated in the center's activities for only a year, he/she would not be able to compare the center's progress, various celebrations, etc. It can also be assumed that during a one-year-term a participant might miss some of the thematic celebrations, official events or social gatherings hosted by the center. Although increasing requirement of the center attending experience to two years could not guarantee that participants have a diverse experience of attending the center; it allowed to include the participants with expanded exposure to the center's activities.

I started the process of recruiting participants by attending a brief meeting of the center administration and getting acquainted with people taking part in the upcoming concert organized by Armenian center. I used this meeting as an opportunity to invite my first participants to take part in the study. Thus, by the time I met other center participants at the concert I had already known some of them and was supported by them. I continued to recruit participants before and after the concert in informal conversations. As I started interviewing the ones who agreed to participate in the research, I asked them to spread the word and ask their friends and family who also attend the center if they would like to be interviewed too.

All participants have been given a right to choose the language of the interview from Russian, Kazakh, English and any other language. All the participants chose Russian language; therefore, the interviews were conducted in this language. I also asked my gatekeeper or one of the participant to translate what they discussed in Armenian during the meeting that I have observed.

### **Participants**

To answer the research questions listed in the beginning of this chapter I interviewed 11 participants. They were volunteers who completed the informed consent forms before the interviews. I have completed the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) training and followed the recommended procedures (See Appendix A). Thus, besides the consent forms, this study participants have been also instructed and informed orally about the study purpose, limitations, risks of research, their rights, and anonymity procedures and ethical issues. To ensure confidentiality, certain information about participants will not be revealed. Other information that does not bring any risks to anonymity is presented below (see the Table 1):

Table 1

*Information about participants*

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Gender, Age</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Marital status</b>	<b>Note</b>
<b>Participant 1</b>	Male, 27 y.o.	businessman	married	married to Participant 4, has a 4-year-old child
<b>Participant 2</b>	Male, 22 y.o.	taxi driver	single	
<b>Participant 3</b>	Female, 21 y.o.	college student	single	limited exposure to Armenian language and culture in family
<b>Participant 4</b>	Female, 27 y.o.	housewife	married	ethnically Russian, married to Participant 1
<b>Participant 5</b>	Female, 46 y.o.	teacher	married	
<b>Participant 6</b>	Female, 35 y.o.	teacher	single	
<b>Participant 7</b>	Female, 26 y.o.	accountant	single	
<b>Participant 8</b>	Male, 43 y.o.	businessman	married	Married to Participant 9
<b>Participant 9</b>	Female, 39 y.o.	housewife	married	Married to Participant 8
<b>Participant 10</b>	Female, 30 y.o.	bank worker	single	Used to teach Armenian in the center
<b>Participant 11</b>				Head of the Armenian center

All the participants are ethnically Armenian except for Participant 4. Participant 11, is the head of the center, whose gender, age, occupation and marital status will not be revealed for the sake of anonymity.

### **Research Site**

Although the city where the research has been done will not be revealed, it is still important to define the context. Research has been conducted in the south of Kazakhstan in an urban setting with participants who mostly can be identified as middle social class. The chosen Armenian ethnic cultural center exists for more than 10 years. Because there are

several Armenian ethnic centers in the south of Kazakhstan led by people of different genders, I will not reveal the gender of the head of the center I studied.

In 2011 they opened a Sunday school where they started teaching Armenian and Kazakh, which were cancelled almost two years ago. The center possesses set of books in Armenian: books about Armenian culture and Armenian ethnic group written by Kazakhstani authors, Armenian textbooks, traditional clothes and pottery, a set of items containing ethnic patterns.

### **Data Collection Tools**

To collect the data, face-to-face semi-structured interviews with administration and the center attendees have been used. Although this type of interviews is time-consuming in terms of conducting and analyzing them, they allow asking follow-up questions right away to elicit detailed information and to avoid ambiguity in interpreting the data (Creswell, 2014). I also considered focus groups, but refused to use them due to the differences in personal schedule of participants and, most importantly, participants could hide some information that they felt uncomfortable to share with other center attendees. Since one of the participants could not meet in person due to the family issues, I conducted one telephone interview. For the semi-structured interviews, I designed the list of questions to ask each participant (See Appendix B) but during interviews I paid attention to each participant's perception and opinion and asked follow-up questions.

I piloted the questions of interview protocol (See Appendix C) with representatives of other ethnic minorities who take part in their ethnic group center to find out how relevant they were. Therefore, I had two piloting interviews with two different people. I also checked with these two persons at the stage of data analysis as I was interpreting my findings, so that they

could say whether there could be an alternative explanation of the findings, besides the ones I came up with.

In addition, I conducted a non-participant observation of the event organized by the ethnic cultural center in order to compare the information gathered from interviews to the observation data (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). As my primary goal during observation was to collect the data that can be triangulated with the data collected by interviews, I focused on observing the first stage of the event - the culture fair, what are the roles of center attendees during the fair, what language they speak to each other, and what are other languages that are spoken at the event, I also observed the concert organized by several ethnic centers. Since I observed the public event and the public behavior of the center attendees in a public place, this type of observation, which is called naturalistic observation, does not require asking to sign a consent from the people who I observe (Angrosino, 2016; Jarvis & Russel, 2008). This observation played an instrumental role as it gave me an opportunity to understand how the official event of the center are carried out.

### **Data Collection Procedures**

After deciding on the location of the ethnic cultural center, I visited the center two months prior the start of data collection stage. I met the head of the Armenian center and asked informal permission to study the work of the center and conduct the study on the basis of the center, e.g. approaching and recruiting participants, conduct interviews, if needed, observing the event organized by the center. As I have received the informal consent, I asked the head of the center some general questions about what I needed to know in order to plan and conduct the study. Because some of the answers were different from the information I gathered on internet, some of my plans were not feasible.

Before I went to the center, I was planning to interview two parent-participants who attend the center as well as their children, two teenage-participants aged 14-16 years old who attend or participate the center's events, two participants who teach the Armenian language at the center. As I found out in the field, the language courses of Armenian and Kazakh for children and adults were cancelled due to the absence of teachers. Both teachers had to move to another city due to personal circumstances, and the center never found people to replace them. Because the center had no teachers of the language at the time of data collection, and even if the center administration found new teachers, I still needed to interview the person who had at least a year of teaching experience at the center. Therefore, after I consulted with my supervisor I decided to find those teachers who had to leave the city.

After my meeting with center administration I also found out that there weren't any teenage attendees at the center, only children aged 6-12. The current study required thorough answers and deep self-reflection during interviews, which they could not provide me with due to their young age. The only way I could collect meaningful data from such young participants was longitudinal observations of their behavior during rehearsals and concerts. However, as I was limited in terms of time, I decided not to include them.

During the data collection period I found out that people in this Armenian community had an unofficial division of attendees: older and younger generations. Younger generation includes people aged 17 to 30 year-old, most of the time they were the ones who started participating the center activities since they were 6-7 year-olds. Older generation is considered to include the parents of the younger generation. Although the division is conditional, I decided follow it as my participants are accustomed of it. Therefore, instead of parent-child participants I included participants from older and younger generations. Including younger

generation participants enriched the data collected because they had impressive experience of participating in the center activities and reflected on their experience and the effect that the center had on their heritage language and culture maintenance and ethnic identity. Before going into the field I completed the CITI training, which helped me better understand how the research involving vulnerable population, such as ethnic minorities, should be conducted. Thus, while recruiting participants I started from informing them about the confidentiality procedures, emphasized that their opinion is valued and that researcher does not expect any certain answers from them, highlighted that there is no right and wrong questions and pointed out that their identities would always be kept in secret. I also explained that I chose Armenians in particular because to the date numerically small ethnic minorities of Kazakhstan are understudied, and that Armenian culture is one of the oldest civilizations represented in Kazakhstan.

At the beginning of data collection process, I gave the head of the center a letter of introduction from Nazarbayev University Graduate School of Education notifying him/her that research will be supervised by one of the school professors, Dr. Nettie Boivin. The letter informed the center administrator that the study has been approved by ethics committee that is responsible for the study, provided administration with all the contact information of my supervisor, NUGSE and research committee.

I started the data collection process from attending and observing the celebration of a “Day of language, culture and traditions of the people of Kazakhstan” that was dedicated to the 25<sup>th</sup> year of independence of Kazakhstan. This event consisted of a culture exposition (exposition of the traditional food, clothes, accessories, books, textbooks) and a concert. In order to meet the center attendees before the celebration and observe them while they were

preparing the culture exposition and rehearsing for the concert. I took the notes in the observation protocol (See Appendix D).

After the head of the center introduced me to the people taking part in the event, I had informal talks with them, answering questions about my study and asking them if they want to participate. If yes, I asked them about the most appropriate date, place and time for interview so that to reduce any risk related to participation in the study. Moreover, this measure helped to facilitate the conversation, building the rapport with interviewees and reduce the “social desirability bias”, which occurs when respondents feel that they need to tell what is accepted by society (Garrett, 2010, p. 44). When I asked participants to choose a place of interview I asked them to prioritize the one they would be more likely to relax and feel free to share their insights. As a result, one person preferred to have phone interview, two of them chose a public place (concert hall lobby), three participants invited me to their work place, three participants chose the office of the head of the center, two of them invited me to their house.

Before every interview each participant was given informed consent (See Appendix E). It informed interviewee about the aim of research, the ways of analyzing the data collected, ethical considerations and anonymity matters, where and how the finding will be presented; this should guarantee “non-maleficence” (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011, p. 422). Consent form emphasized their right to withdraw from research any time without any social, emotional or financial consequences, and measures that I take in order to keep their identities confidential. Consent form also contained my contact information and contact information of my supervisor, NUGSE and research committee, approximate length of interview. This information was written in details in the consent form and talked through orally before interviews to make sure each participant understands his/her rights. Consent was

handed out in the language chosen by participant. After participant signed the consent, I collected one copy and gave the second one to them.

Moreover, to transcribe and code the interviews properly I also asked permission in the form to record the interview, ensuring participants that the tapes would only be used by the researcher during transcribing process. At the end of the interview each participant was able to add more information in case he/she feels that researcher overlooked something, to point out the most valuable information that needs consideration. According to Mears (2013), this helps to minimize the “incompleteness of interview” (p. 173). Although participants generally felt free to be recorded, there were three participants who refused. I also did not record the phone call as it was easier for me to type notes on my laptop.

Because the topic of interviews was very personal try to avoid excessively formalistic question wording. This helped to eliminate interviewee to concentrate on how they speak rather than what they speak about. To assure that I obtain rich and detailed data, I asked probes when the answer seems too general. In this case I alternated the probes with the technique of rephrasing the answer of interviewee and asking him/her if I understood it correctly. In case a participant started speaking off-topic I decided not to interrupt them but guide the conversation with the probes.

### **Limitations**

Due to the time constraints, I was not able to have a larger sample size; however, I did my best to conduct data collection and data analysis of a very high level to ensure that my study will be a salient and decent basis for a larger research. Because my study involves some sensitive aspects such as language minority, ethnic identity and heritage language maintenance, there was a possibility of the so-called social desirability bias. To reduce this

bias, I tried to establish rapport with my participants and persuade them that their identities would be kept in secret. While there is no way to completely eliminate the psychological, social, economic, and emotional pressure, I listed the measures I took in order to reduce those risks to the minimum.

### **Anonymity and Confidentiality Procedures**

In order to ensure that participant knows the aim of research, the ways of analyzing the data collected and how the data will be used, ethical considerations, each participant was asked to read the detailed informed consent form and sign it. The form clearly articulated that participation was voluntary, that they have a right to withdraw from the research at any time. Participants were also informed that he/she can choose the language of interview. Consent form stated that their names would be replaced with pseudonyms to assure anonymity, the city's name would be kept in secret as well, and no geographically-identifiable features would be included in the background section.

Because in order to transcribe and code the interviews properly I asked permission in the form to record the interview, I put extra efforts in terms of ensuring anonymity. Therefore, in case my participants agreed to be tape recorded, I informed them that the tape recordings would only be used by the researcher during transcribing process. If a participant refused to be recorded (3/11), I took notes manually during interview, and added more notes right after the interview while I still remembered the details. I also let participants know how I was going to store the data. To assure anonymity, I saved the copies of the tape recordings on my personal hard drive which is protected by password, and online password-protected server. Moreover, the hard copies of transcripts, the hard drive with recordings and my handwritten notes were

to be kept in the locked file cabinet. Participants were also informed that after the data analysis stage all the copies of recordings will be deleted from all servers and devices.

I let all the participants know that their names will be replaced with numbers. Thus, I assigned the pseudonyms to participants depending on the order of interviews: Participant 1 to Participant 11. The name of the head of the Armenian center was replaced with Participant 11. Because this participant was the most vulnerable and easy to be uncovered, I did not mention Participant 11's gender, age, occupation and marital status, so that both identity of this person and the location of the center would not be identifiable.

I did not ask my participants to sign the consent forms because the observation of an event hosted by the Armenian center was public and, therefore, falls under the category of naturalistic observation (Angrosino, 2016; Jarvis & Russel, 2008). However, before I started observation the head of Armenian center introduced me to the center attendees, and I told them about the study I was conducting. I orally stated that the purpose of the observation is to understand how the events of the center are carried out, I warned participants that I would take pictures of the artifacts represented at the exhibition, but I would not take any pictures of people. Participants were also informed that their participation is voluntary and they can refuse to participate at any time of observation. I followed the ethical considerations of this type of observation. I did not use any information from the conversations of the participants, but only made records about what languages they spoke to each other. During the observation, I paid attention to what activities the event consisted from, what were the working languages of the event, who were the people who attended the event. During the observation, I only took the pictures of artifacts such as traditional dishes, books, paintings, not people.

**Risks of Research**

There is no obvious risk of participation in the proposed research. However, in order to minimize any kind of unforeseen risk to participants, all the names (including names of participants, name of the ethnic cultural center and the name of the city) were hidden and kept in secret. While some general information about gender, age, marital status and occupation of participants is presented, any information about the head of the center will not be revealed. This is done to ensure the anonymity of the center location. Only researcher has an access to this confidential information.

**Data Analysis**

In order to analyze the collected data, I followed six steps proposed by Creswell (2014). First of all, I prepared and organized the data by transcribing the scripts using the audio production and recording software called Listen N Write, a software that allows to play the audio file in a slower pace that facilitates transcribing by hand. Next, I started coding the data (See Appendix F). After that I grouped the codes into themes, such as HL=heritage language, RC=role of the center, C=challenges, PC=perception of the center, and employed the thematic analysis. This helped me to identify what themes helped answer each of the three questions. Thus, the first question about socio-cultural practices included the themes EHC – Events Hosted by Center, H&C – Holidays and Celebrations, LC – Language Courses, PA – Physical Artifacts. Themes that answered the second research question about challenges were PRC – Participant-Related Challenges, PC - Physical Challenges. The themes that helped to answer the third question about perceptions of the center and the reasons why participant continue attending it were HLM – Heritage Language Maintenance, HCM – Heritage Culture Maintenance, LALC – Learning Armenian Language and Culture SAC – Sense of Armenian

Community, SAK – Sense of Acceptance in Kazakhstan. I omitted certain items that had no link to answering research questions of the current study. Eventually, I have obtained six themes, which is the number recommended by Creswell (2014). Later, I interpreted and reported the findings. To assure the validity of my interpretation I asked two unbiased persons, who are also representatives of ethnic minorities, to read through the report and considered their feedback of what alternative interpretations, besides the ones that I already suggested, might be relevant. When I was not sure that I correctly understood the words of participants, which happened twice, I called those participants and double checked with them, so that I do not misinterpret and distort the data.

## **Chapter 4. Findings**

While previous chapters discussed existing studies on heritage language maintenance and the methodology used in the current study, this chapter contains the findings of this study on Armenian language and culture maintenance in Kazakhstan. It is organized by the research questions and themes that emerged from the analysis of collected data. The chapter also contains the information of how common the theme was, quotes that represent the common opinion of the respondents or the quotes of participants whose point of view differed from the others. This chapter excludes the in-depth analysis and interpretation of the findings, as they will be highlighted in the discussion chapter.

### **Research Question 1**

When it comes to the question of what the Armenian ethnic cultural center does to maintain heritage language and culture, a number of themes has been harvested from the research participants. Major activities that influenced the heritage culture and language were the bonding gatherings and official events, and language developing tools and opportunities. The terms are conditional and therefore are further explained.

Bonding gatherings are the social gatherings dedicated to traditional and religious celebrations, where usually only center attendees are present; therefore, during such gatherings Armenians of different generations speak Armenian to each other. Such gatherings take place in the evenings so that the participants could attend them after work; they are not public, so there are no news reporters. Finally, the social meetings of this kind can be characterized by the fact that participants speak predominantly Armenian during them.

Official events differ from them because they are usually conducted in several languages as there are guests of other ethnic groups present. Local authorities, akim,

representatives and administration of other ethnic centers often attend such events. Therefore, official events are reported to be important in terms of maintaining heritage culture by promoting it. The center also owns a collection of books and magazines in Armenian or about Armenian culture, which are considered as language developing tools. There are also language developing opportunities such as language courses for children.

**Bonding gatherings.** One of the most illustrious activities of the center acknowledged by ten participants out of eleven is social gatherings of different kinds that are reported to have bonding effect. Such gatherings have various purposes such as celebrations of traditional Armenian holidays, religious holidays, and national Kazakhstani holidays (Table 2):

Table 2

*Types of Bonding Gatherings and Their Purposes*

Type of bonding gatherings	Purpose
February 21 – a Day of The Armenian Language	a day dedicated to honoring the Armenian language. It is usually celebrated by reciting poems, singing ancient folklore songs in Armenian.
April 7 – a Day of Motherhood and Love	a day on which men congratulate women. The way it is celebrated resembles celebration of the 8 <sup>th</sup> of March. On this day the Armenian center organizes concert for women.
98 <sup>th</sup> day after Easter - Vardavar (Transformation)	religious summer holiday. Traditionally, people celebrate it by organizing food and dance festivals for everyone in the neighborhood.
December 25/January 6 - Christmas	due to the historical events now some Armenian families celebrate Christmas in December, some of them – in January. As for the participants of the research, only one participant out of eleven celebrates Christmas in January.
January 1 – New Year	center attendees usually gather a week before New Year at Armenian restaurant.
August 14 - Navasard (New Year)	ancient traditional holiday. This is a holiday of traditional songs and dances, traditional food and traditional clothes.
Zatik (Easter)	Religious holiday. Participants start from attending the church, proceeding to the food festival.

People attending the center usually invite their families and friends and bring homemade dishes, often of Armenian traditional cuisine. Answering to the question about what impact those gatherings had on heritage language maintenance, Participant 2 said that it was the fact that older and younger generations speak only Armenian during such gatherings. This, as he pointed out, was very helpful to him when he was a child because older people corrected him when he used Russian words. He said that back then he did not realize that Armenian equivalents of some words existed; therefore, when older people helped him out to learn them he kept using Armenian words from then on, without code-mixing. Overall, all the participants had an experience of attending the gatherings of this kind, and all of them reported that speaking to each other in Armenian only helped them remember some words that they no longer use, and learn some new words and expressions.

Participants 1 and 4, ethnically Armenian husband and ethnically Russian wife, a married interethnic couple, both highlighted the importance of such celebrations as it was a perfect opportunity for them to provide their child exposure to Armenian culture and Armenian community. For example, Participant 1 consults older ladies of Armenian community about his daughter's upbringing. According to him, this helps him to even the influence of his wife's family and his parents' influence on his daughter:

The idea of what girls should be raised like in Russian and Armenian cultures are very different. Me and my wife, we want our daughter to be both, the only difference is that daughter spends a lot of time with my wife's parents. I need to compensate the time I spend working and contribute to the upbringing process but it is difficult. I only know how boys should be raised as in my family there were several boys, I only have

brothers. So, I try to always attend celebrations such as April 7<sup>th</sup> to learn what makes up a good Armenian girl, what I need to teach my girl.

Thus, Participant 1 pinpointed the importance of older generation in Armenian community as a valuable source of wisdom. Similar idea has been expressed by Participant 7 as she considered the center meetings as important opportunity to ask advice from older people about some traditional and cultural aspects. Participant 2 emphasized that having the Armenian center organizing the social gatherings “stimulates us [Armenians of the city] meet each other regularly”. 5 participants out of 11 agreed that without such gatherings they would start getting lazy to follow all the traditions, they would only celebrate the major cultural holidays within their own families. Participant 7 uses these gatherings to consult other women about Armenian traditional food recipes, traditions and religious customs: “At the traditional celebrations I often ask older women about Armenian culture, history... You know, you can read millions of books but you can only learn from people, first-hand experience is the best one”. Overall, it can be concluded that older people have a very prominent status in the community center as younger generation of ethnic Armenians turn to them for guidance and counsel. As such, they contribute a great deal to ensuing mutual bonding of the diaspora.

Another type of the bonding meetings that was mentioned is special meetings with famous compatriots. Among those people are Kazakhstani writer who published books about Armenians in Kazakhstan – Artush Karapetyan, famous comedian Yevgenii Petrosyan from Russian Federation, famous actor Armen Dzhigarkhanyan. Although such meetings occur rarely, they are always long anticipated and, as a result, attract a lot of people. Participant 11 explained that people always want to see famous people, take a picture with them; yet, she said that the feeling of pride for their famous and successful compatriots makes these

meetings special. That is to say, people want to see the person who belongs to the same ethnic group and who achieved something. However, 3 participants out of 11 said that such meetings generally have nothing to do with feeling of pride for the ethnic group. They said that any successful person attracts attention. Participant 6 pointed out that it is due to the way such meetings are held that makes them very interesting: “You can have informal conversation with someone exceptional...who you would not meet every day”. Although special talks with well-known fellow Armenians might not always ignite special feelings of pride for their compatriots, they still manage to pull people into the community.

Famous Armenians who come visit Kazakhstan are interesting to the whole population of the city, and usually the meetings with them at the center take place separately from the events that those people come to the city. That is to say, if a book writer comes to the city for a book presentation, it takes place during the day, with the local authorities or other officials and news reporters present in a room. However, the meetings at the center are usually held in the evening, in a casual setting, without cameras, and in Armenian language. They might take a form of questions and answers sessions in Armenian language, and they are not attended by people outside of the Armenian center. People attending the meetings also bring food to have informal dinner after the session. Participant 3 said that she usually attends such meetings when she has some questions to the speakers. For instance, as her major is choreography, she attended the meeting with the dancing group “Nairi” from Almaty because she wanted to ask them specific questions about dance performances.

Participants 4, 8 and 9 added made it clear that meetings organized by the center are not the only gatherings of Armenian community. As a matter of fact, Armenian ethnic center serves a role of a place, a platform that connects people and bring them acquaintances. People

who meet at the center events make friends and then invite each other to family and religious celebrations like a child's baptism or angel's day, weddings and engagement parties, etc. That gatherings organized by the Armenian center provide an opportunity for Armenians to bond with each other, to create a more cohesive ethnic community.

**Official events.** In this section, events organized or delivered by the center in official capacity for wider engagement and outreach are presented. They include concerts, culture and food expositions, museum installations dedicated to Armenian culture, the center's anniversary celebration or commemoration of mutual cooperation between various ethnic centers of the city.

In contrast to the previously described type of the gatherings that serve to deepen the sense of comradeship between Armenians, official events provide less space to the audience and guests for communication and getting to know each other. Moreover, as the official events usually serve a role of presenting the work of the center, sharing the culture with representatives of other ethnic groups and ethnic centers, such events are often conducted in the state and official languages or with obligatory consecutive translation. The rationale for calling this type of events *official* is that they are often attended by city administration, government officials, president, foreign ambassadors and politicians.

All participants reported that they attended the official events organized by or involving the Armenian center. However, only 4 of them said that they attend almost every event of this kind. For instance, Participant 1 said that he still quite often performs at the concerts just like he used to do when he was a child. He explained it by the fact that he enjoys singing and when he had a choice of a major, he considered singing. However, as he

eventually decided to become a businessman, participating in the center concerts is now his favorite hobby.

Culture exposition is an event that usually gathers several ethnic centers at one place. Each ethnic center has a place for installation where various traditional items can be presented. For instance, the culture exposition that I have observed was a part of an event dedicated to the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Kazakhstan; therefore, the culture exposition included 8 expositions of 8 various ethnic centers. As Participant 11 shared, Armenian center sometimes organizes interactive culture expositions that do not just demonstrate the items, but some role-play performances that illustrate a scene from the past (for example, ancient household managing, religious custom, historical event). Such skits require using ancient equivalent of Armenian that had been used at that time; therefore, they also serve educational purposes and are informative even for the representatives of the older generations of Armenians whose Armenian language proficiency is quite prominent.

As seen from the interview of the participants, the center is involved in numerous events representing the Armenian culture. The participants were mostly positive about participating in such events. They mostly mentioned that such events contribute less to bonding with each other, yet serving a role of celebrating the language and culture maintenance along with other ethnic minorities of Kazakhstan.

**Language developing tools and opportunities.** In order to better describe the language development, it is important to identify what falls under this category. Answering the questions like “How did the Armenian center help you learn/enhance/maintain Armenian?”, participants talked about formal language education such as language courses and language learning textbooks.

When asked about language developing tools, first aspect that participants mentioned was the center's provision of Armenian books and textbooks. 7 participants emphasized that literature corner, as everyone calls the library of the center, has the largest number of books about Armenian culture and/or in the Armenian language. Participant 1 and 4, for example, said that they usually borrow children's books for their daughter to read her fairytales in Armenian. Participant 3 borrows fiction books in Armenian because she wants to learn about Armenian traditions from classic literature. As for the textbooks, Participant 3 said that they were outdated and most of them were upper-intermediate and advanced level books, which was too difficult for her. Therefore, she decided to use the digital resources such as learning videos and textbooks she could find online.

Each participant mentioned language courses as the most efficient language developing opportunity. Starting from 2011, Armenian and Kazakh language courses have been taught at the center. The center administration, however, had to cancel the courses in 2015 due to specific circumstances, which are described in the section that highlights the second research question. Although at the time of the data collection language courses were not available, Participants 10 and 11 provided their insights of how helpful they were. Participant 10 claimed the courses to be of extreme importance because soon after starting to teach Armenian she realized that children of the older group (out three existing) aged 10-12-year-old had a very good level of spoken Armenian, but they lacked writing skills:

You see, the language is difficult, script is difficult and it is very different from the languages they [children] learn at school. Kids often made grammatical and spelling mistakes. Therefore, we wanted to have these courses in the first place. (Participant 10)

Both Participants 10 and 11 shared their opinion that courses helped kids gain more respect to the language as “before lots of the students felt that if this language is only needed to speak at home, it is less important” (Participant 10). This opinion has been expressed by majority of the participants, 10 out of 11. Each of them also mentioned the fact that the courses were cancelled and identified it as one of the main challenges the center faces.

Overall, there have been two sets of socio-cultural practices elicited from the interviews. Significant contribution to maintaining heritage language has been made by providing participants with language developing tools, such as textbooks, fiction and history books in Armenian, and opportunities such as language courses. Practising Armenian with the older generation of Armenian speakers during bonding gatherings has been reported as additional support by the younger. Such gatherings facilitate practising heritage culture as participants can obtain first-hand experience of following traditions and customs. Armenian culture maintenance is also well-supported by the practice of sharing and promoting it at the official events, which are attended by other ethnic groups. Along with the reasons of the language course cancellation, other challenges have been elicited from interviews. These challenges are described in details in the next section.

### **Research Question 2**

The Armenian center experiences challenges that can be divided into two: human-related and administrative challenges (Table 3). First group involves or is caused by the center attendees, which includes lack of language teachers and engagement of center attendees as there is no volunteers ready to teach Armenian to children. Moreover, the study participants highlighted that it is the youth, whose participation the center lacks. Second group encompasses the problems that the attendees cannot help with such as problems with office

and facilities, as the local House of Friendship is still under construction, and lack of resources such, especially the updated Armenian books and magazine that reflect the modern language, not its archaic version.

Table 3

*Types of challenges that Armenian ethnic cultural center faces*

<b>Attendees-related</b>	<b>Administrative challenges</b>
Lack of teachers	Office and facilities
Level of engagement	Lack of resources

**Lack of teachers.** The aforementioned Armenian language courses were cancelled after two volunteer teachers had to move to another city. Despite the efforts of the center administration to find teacher substitutes the center still had no language courses available at the time of the data collection for the current research. Six participants pointed out that they regretted when the center administration had to cancel the language courses due to the lack of teachers. Participant 8 mentioned that because the previous teachers were not certified teachers and they taught Armenian and Kazakh as volunteers, in theory any person could substitute them. He suggested that no one volunteered to continue teaching because of busy schedule and modern fast pace of living. Moreover, Participant 8, 7 and 2 said that in order to find a teacher, the center needs to suggest salary as an incentive.

Participant 3 expressed strong feelings about the cancellation of classes as she had hoped that the language courses would expand and open new groups for adults so that she could start attending them:

The courses were great. Teachers were great. Children enjoyed the classes and I even attended two lessons, but they were lessons for kids and I realized that I am too old to be in a children's class. However, I signed up for the adult group and I know that I was not the only one. But then they just canceled the courses! No one wants to be a teacher after those two ladies [previous teachers of Armenian] left. This is a shame!

As can be seen, Armenian language courses have been popular and efficient, yet are still unavailable due to the absence of volunteers ready to teach. Generally, all participants expressed regret about the classes cancellation as they consider language courses to be the most visible measure of culture and language maintenance and dissemination. Yet, the continuous pause in teaching Armenian due to the absence of teachers triggered discussion of other challenge experienced by the center, level of attendees' engagement.

**Level of engagement.** When discussing the problem of the language courses, participants mentioned that the lack of engagement could also be a reason for difficulties in finding new teachers of Armenian. Participants also pointed out the value of the youth in the work of the center and highlighted the lack of youth involvement at the time of data collection.

Four participants said that they wished other center attendees were more active at the center activities. Participant 1 claimed that although he is satisfied with the extent of activism, he wishes center had more youth participants:

Kids now are very stressed out about their studies and UNT and so forth. It takes a lot of efforts from parents to persuade them that they need to learn their culture. It all starts from the family, my parents raised me to be very proud of being Armenian, that's why I started attending the center from childhood. Now I see that young adults

come to the center, those who are already old enough to make decisions for themselves, and this is okay. I just wish more parents encouraged their kids to learn the culture since they are little.

Participant 8 expressed similar idea and suggested that the reason why youth has become less active might be globalization:

Children spend more with their peers or in front of computer. That is why they absorb this new ideas and culture. My son, for example, attends the hip-hop dances and does not even want to hear about the ethnic center.

Thus, the participant reports that lack of youth engagement is caused because they are more interested in the modern global culture, rather than heritage culture, which is perceived as problem by parents. Therefore, he also said that he made his son visit some of the official events of the center, but his son was bored because there were no children of the same age present. Participant 8 called it “a vicious circle” because nowadays teenagers rarely want to be active in the center as there are no peers there, and they would never appear, “not unless something changes”. As an example of such changes, he mentioned language courses for kids as it was a good start to help children bond with each other.

**Office and facilities.** In response to the question about the challenges that the ethnic cultural center faces participants also reported absence of office and facilities of the center. At the time of data collection, the house of friendship was under renovation and Armenian center had no office. Usually, the ethnic centers have an office where the center participants can convene, the head of the center can store the documentation, where people from outside the center can retrieve any interested information about the center. As is reported, besides the office the ethnic center needs a space where the center’s resources, certificates and trophies,

national clothes and musical instruments for performers could be stored. Another type of facilities that would improve the work of the center is rooms for various purposes such as round tables, rehearsals, dance classes and concerts, language classes.

8 participants said that not having an office complicates the work of the center. Participant 11 explained that this problem would be solved soon as the house of friendship was at the initial step of renovation. At the time of data collection, the head of the Armenian center maintained the administrative work of the center and stored the literature corner at her office at work.

Participant 7 also added that having an office is not enough. He suggested that the center should have a space for rehearsals so that to attract youngsters to learn ethnic songs and dances: “Children want to have facilities. They are not motivated when they see that center’s attitude is not serious”. In response to the question about what kinds of facilities children might need she listed study room with books, rehearsal room (sports room), and a multimedia room with projector. Participants expect these types of facilities to boost the interest of the Armenian youth and significantly enhance heritage language and culture maintenance.

**Lack of resources.** Three participants highlighted that resources for learning Armenian are insufficient. For instance, Participant 10 said that she had experienced some complications with teaching Armenian because there were not enough textbooks for everyone and because the textbooks they had were outdated. Moreover, she said that the books they used were authentic, unabridged for the children who spoke Russian as their L1; therefore, she had to put extra efforts to describing the vocabulary and some phrasal verbs and expressions. Participant 10 also expressed her concerns regarding the problems that the lack of resources might cause: “If you have some solid knowledge of Armenian, then those books and

textbooks at the center can be helpful for you. If you are at beginner level, you will not benefit by using them”. This concern has been confirmed by Participant 3, least proficient in Armenian, as she tried to use the center books for self-learning.

In addition, Participant 3 suggested that the center should offer more fiction books as “not everyone wants to learn grammar and collocations from textbooks” and it would be more effective to learn by reading Armenian literature. As for the existing set of books that the center possesses, it is generally composed of the classic fiction books. Thus, Participant 6 said:

You see, I teach for a living. I assure you that it is easier to learn language of our days. Youngsters would never learn English by reading only “Beowulf” or Chaucer. Same thing works with Armenian. We need to give our children access to comics, “Twilight”-like books in Armenian.

By doing this she suggested the center to switch to the role of a “window to the modern Armenian culture and language”. She added that mere presence of modern literature books would be enough as a “hook” to grab attention of the younger who would google and find more of similar resources online.

As described above, four major challenges encountered by the Armenian center have been elicited during face-to-face interviews: absence of Armenian language teachers, extent to which center attendees, especially the youth, are involved in the center’s work, temporary absence of office and facilities, lack of resources in Armenian. Although they are divided into two groups, there is a connection between them as they influence one another. More thorough analysis of this connection is presented in discussion chapter. Further I report the positive

effect of attending Armenian center that participants experience despite the described challenges.

### **Research Question 3**

After describing the challenges faced by the ethnic cultural center, participants were asked questions that helped to identify the reasons why they continue attending the center. Participants extensively discussed that by attending the center they develop the sense of ethnic community, realize the significance of their culture and obtain motivation to maintain heritage language and culture. They preserve the traditions and customs with help of the people that they meet at the center, teach the younger generation, and learn from the older.

**Sense of community.** Ten participants highlighted the importance of the center as an important platform of meeting new people, creating a community, following customs and keeping traditions. Participants 1, 7, 5,6, 8 and 9 pointed out that attending the center and maintaining language and culture prevents them from feeling ashamed when their relatives from Armenia come to visit them. In addition, all participants agreed that Armenian community in their city and Armenians in general feel very strong about speaking their mother tongue.

Participant 1 confessed that in everyday life he often switches from Armenian to Russian when he speaks to his mother and brothers; however, he feels resistant to do so at the center events. He said that especially the presence of the older generation makes it more obvious how often younger ones codemix and code-switch:

At home we usually speak Armenian but we add Russian and Kazakh words, so the sentences turn out to be very weird. I don't like it. I realize that if I go to Armenia I would use a lot of Russian and Kazakh and people would be like "What is he talking

about?”. When we speak to old people who are of my grandparents’ age it is easier to identify what equivalents of Russian and Kazakh words we do not know. I even started saving such words on my iPhone notes so that I remember.

Thus, sense of Armenian-speaking-community prevents him from mixing languages and motivates him to think of the Armenian words whenever he feels that it is easier to say this word in Kazakh or Russian.

Participant 3 said that she values the support and help from the fellow attendees of the center. As her parents passed away, she considers attending the center as paying tribute to them. Thus, she tries to learn “what does it mean to be Armenian” from the people, which is better than learning just from reading about:

In my nearest future I want to marry an Armenian guy but I realize that knowing culture and being able to follow traditions for Armenians is as important as for Kazakhs. I need not only know everything, I need to do everything like hosting a party, attending events of different kinds like funeral, baby shower, angel’s day, etc. I want to be able to pray in Armenian. This is something I am, but I can’t be that without help.

This is why Participant 3 seeks help and advice from the people attending the center. She considers this to be “a natural process of older generation passing the knowledge to the younger”. She also found friends during various events hosted by the center, who often invite her to different traditional celebrations outside of the center.

In general, all participants stated the importance of the center in developing sense of ethnic community. Within this community Armenians meet new acquaintances, seek help with personal problems, learn language and culture, ask advice about following traditions and conducting religious ceremonies.

**Maintaining language and culture.** Five participants said that although Armenian ethnic center is not a primary source of language and culture maintenance (they all said that language and culture maintenance is up to family), it makes the Armenian culture “more prominent” (Participant 11).

Participants 1, 4, 7, 8 and 9 said that another benefit that center attendance brings is that they can set playdates for kids so that they can speak Armenian. Participants 1 and 4 found an Armenian family with a kid of the same age as their daughter. They said that as their children started making some progress of speaking Armenian when playing, watching cartoons in Armenian, they started recommending setting a playdate to other center attendees.

**Learning culture and language.** Although majority of the center attendees are ethnically Armenian and already have solid amount of knowledge of Armenian language and culture, there are people who attend the center in order to start learning language and culture from the basics. Among such people are two participants of the current study, Participant 3 and 4.

Due to unfortunate events Participant 3 lost her parents when she was very young; therefore, she had limited input from the older people regarding ethnic culture and language. Thus, she started attending the center in the attempt to learn language and culture herself:

When I turned 17 I realized I looked like Armenian and had some simple ideas of what the national clothes looked like and that was it. I knew I was going to marry Armenian boy but I started to doubt that I would fit in an Armenian family. Who wants to have an ignorant daughter-in-law? So, I started attending every event organized by the center to learn as much as possible.

Therefore, motivated by a desire to be a part of a community, she actively participated in the events hosted by the center and met friends from the younger generation and “mentors” from the older generations who both taught her traditions, scaffolded the events of the center and exposed her to traditional celebrations outside of the center.

Participant 4, being ethnically Russian, had even less knowledge of Armenian culture and no knowledge of the Armenian language. However, after she married to an Armenian man, she wanted to learn about the culture and learn the Armenian language so that she could teach it her child. At the interview she said that she already noticed the results of participating in the events hosted by the center. She learned various Armenian words and phrases that she started using at home with the help of her husband and mother-in-law: “Now I say simple phrases like ‘Good morning’, ‘Enjoy your meal’ or ‘Bless you’ in Armenian. What we noticed, our daughter picked up them after me really fast”. She also learned Armenian traditions and customs, and how those traditions should be followed. For instance, women whom she met at the center often convene and invite her to their gatherings and teach her how to cook traditional dishes.

Although all participants pinpointed the primary importance of family in maintaining ethnic identity by preserving heritage language and culture, they emphasized the instrumental role of the ethnic center as it compliments the knowledge of the culture given by parents, providing the younger generation with opportunity to acquire and practice various skills. Not only does the center help the ones who need to maintain the culture but it also helps people who strive for learning the culture no matter whether they technically belong to this culture or not.

**Summary**

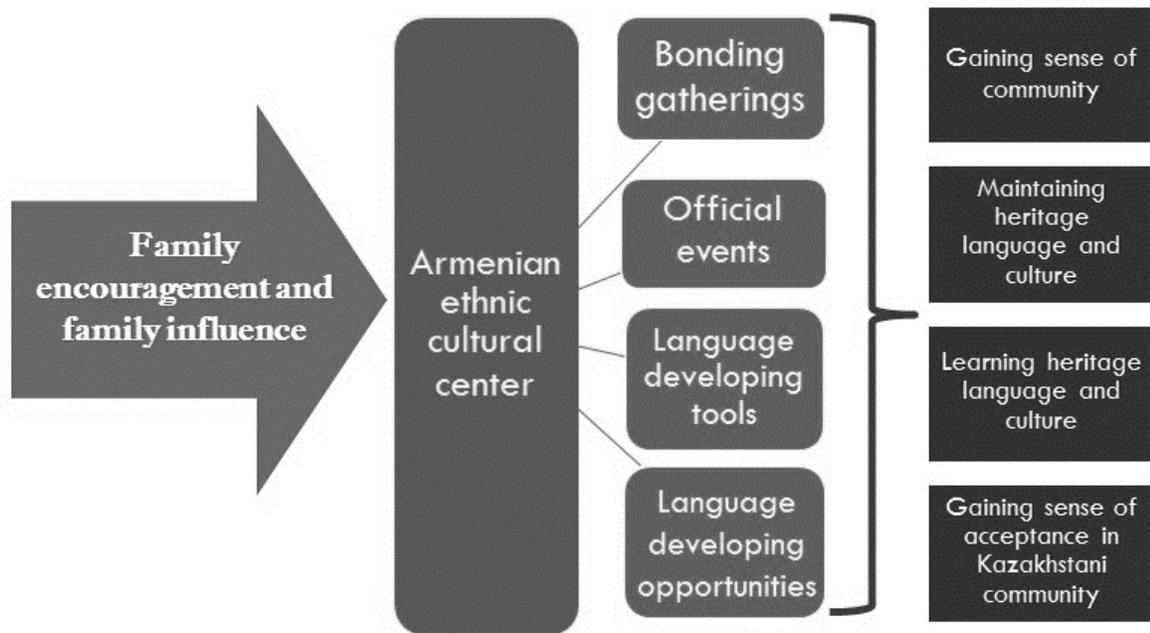
In this chapter major findings that helped to answer the research questions of the study were described. The results in this chapter revealed the socio-cultural practices such as bonding gatherings, official events, language developing tools and opportunities that are observed at the Armenian center, challenges such as lack of language teachers, level of participants' engagement, temporary absence of office and facilities, lack of resources in Armenian that the center faces, and reasons such as gaining sense of community and maintaining heritage and culture which motivate the participants to continue attending the Armenian center. This chapter contains description of the findings; therefore, next chapter continues the discussion of the findings including interpretation of data and comparison with the findings of previous similar studies.

### **Chapter 5. Discussion**

The previous chapter revealed that cultural centers help Armenians maintain heritage language and culture through bonding gatherings at the center for formal and informal events such as the cultural and food fairs, concerts and festivals. The center also offers language developing tools and opportunities such as authentic literature in Armenian, textbooks for various levels of proficiency. However, it was also discovered that Armenian center faces challenges that can be divided into attendees-related and administrative types. These challenges will be discussed in details in this chapter. It also presents the analysis of similarities and disparities of the current and previous studies, interpretation of general and unexpected findings that I came up with during data analysis. Although the unexpected findings encountered in this study do not directly answer its research questions, they are worth considering as they add extra information that helps better understand the role of Armenian ethnic center in maintaining heritage language and culture. Such findings include reasons for attending the center by ethnic Armenians, who for some reasons lacked exposure to the ethnic culture and language at home, and those who are not ethnically Armenian. The chapter presents possible interpretation and implications of these findings, which might be helpful for the further research in the field of heritage language and culture maintenance and the role of the community centers.

Motivated by family members, people start attending Armenian center to alleviate the process of culture and language maintenance. They furthermore participate in various socio-cultural practices being done by the center such as attending bonding gatherings and official events, using language developing tools of the center and taking advantage of the language developing opportunities suggested by the center. These socio-cultural practices result in

gaining sense of ethnic community, preserving and learning heritage culture and language and gaining sense of acceptance in Kazakhstani community, which become the reasons of continuing to attend Armenian ethnic cultural center. This process of deciding to attend the ethnic center, socio-cultural practices being done at the center and the reasons why people continue participating in the work of the center is illustrated below (Figure 1):



*Figure 1.* Reasons for attending the center, socio-cultural practices employed by the center and reasons why participants continue attending the center.

This chapter follows the structure of Figure 4, discussing family role in joining the Armenian center, socio-cultural practices of the center and the positive effect of those practices. This is then followed by analysis of the challenges that are being faced by the attendees and administration.

### **Role of Family in Maintaining Ethnic Identity**

Although the current study focused on exploring the work of the Armenian ethnic cultural center and interview protocol was designed to gain insights of participants' experience of attending the center, data collection has clearly identified the major source of the ethnic identity maintenance, family. Therefore, the current study proved the concept of assigning the integral role of family and parental involvement in the process of heritage language maintenance (Brown, 2011; Chahinian & Bakalian, 2016; Kheirkhah & Cekaite, 2015; McCabe, 2016) as all respondents of the current study strongly believed that maintaining heritage culture and language as two components of ethnic identity is up to a family.

By family, they meant parents and older relatives that could be grouped into three categories. First, those who have obtained firsthand experience of being raised in their historical motherland, Armenia, and, as a result, learned how the cultural and religious traditions should be kept. Second, second-generation immigrants whose parents raised them in authentic-like conditions that were extremely similar to those in Armenia. This can be characterized by maximal number of exposure to the Armenian culture through speaking only Armenian at home, wearing national clothes, decorating house with Armenian pattern, watching Armenian movies and (later) Armenian television, and frequently traveling to Armenia and/or hosting relatives from Armenia. Third type of parental influence is usually made by parents of the third-generation migrants who have been significantly influenced by culture of majority and global culture. They, according to Shin (2010), are the most vulnerable generation as their affiliation to the majority culture and language is the strongest and they are

the most susceptible to the language shift. They do, however, want to maintain their heritage culture and language and teach their kids traditions and language.

Despite the difference between these three groups of Armenian parents and older relatives, they all have common socio-cultural practices that are done in order to preserve heritage culture. Most importantly, all respondents pointed out the importance of family as a community where they only speak Armenian. This process is perceived by children as a natural way of living before they start attending kindergarten or school, when their exposure to the culture and language of majority is very limited. Therefore, after they experience the presence of Russian and Kazakh, they start to code-mix and code-switch those languages and the Armenian language at home. This is when family members' consistency to maintain the language and culture has the strongest impact on the heritage language maintenance process.

Study participants reported a number of techniques that parents employ in order to manage their children's Armenian language learning and language choice at home. For instance, the current study has identified a technique similar to the one of McCabe (2016) that Armenian parents in Kazakhstan ask their children to repeat sentences or words in Armenian if they used them in Russian or Kazakh in the first place. Some of the parents reported that they had used identical wording "I don't understand Russian/Kazakh" to explain their children the reason they requested Armenian version. They also claimed this strategy to be extremely effective to help children understand that they are supposed to speak without mixing languages or "at least understand that they are expected to speak only Armenian at home" (Participant 6). Parents also suggested that this practice can become even more effective if their children are encouraged to communicate with children from Armenian families with similar language policy.

All in all, it is the word “encouragement” that have been used the most frequently when participants discussed the role of family in maintaining heritage culture and language. Armenian families present children with basic knowledge of ethnic traditions, songs, customs, superstitions and religious norms; yet, as the child grows up the influence of parents and relatives gradually reduces. This can be explained by two factors: child’s gaining of independence and limited knowledge of heritage culture and language of family members. Instead of setting the rules and teaching children heritage language and culture parents put efforts to create the environment where speaking Armenian and following traditions becomes routine. Their intention to encourage their child to continue learning and enhancing their knowledge of the language and culture motivates them to attend the ethnic cultural center themselves and encourage their kids to do the same.

### **Importance of the Armenian Center**

The studied Armenian ethnic cultural center facilitates the “community cohesion” (Martin, 2007), as it gathers people of the same ethnic group to conduct cultural events, celebrate traditional holidays, provide them with opportunity to speak heritage language, exchange cultural knowledge and maintain ethnic identity. This study participants did not necessarily report an overt agenda of maintaining heritage language and culture as the key driver for attending the community center; therefore, this section contains all the components that make the category of the role of the ethnic center that have been stated by the participants.

Depending on the family situation, occupation and personal interests Armenians chose to start attending the ethnic cultural center for various reasons. These reasons reveal what role the center plays in the life of participants. They vary from personal satisfaction, paying tribute to the ancestors, gaining confidence in identifying him-/herself with Armenian ethnic group,

fitting into the Armenian ethnic community to the idea of gaining sense of being welcomed and appreciated in Kazakhstani society as an indivisible element of ethnic and cultural diversity of the country.

### **Gaining Sense of Community**

The existing literature that has been analyzed for the literature review lacked the sources on the Armenian community in Kazakhstan and its description. Therefore, this study fills in this gap revealing how study participants perceive their community, its level of cohesiveness, and the impact that the Armenian center has on Armenian community. As there is no literature on Armenian ethnic group that the data could be compared to, sources on other ethnic cultural centers are considered, and the alternative explanations of the findings are also included.

While study participants did not explicitly discuss sense of community, all of them used similar words and structures, such as “we, Armenians”, “those who attend the centers”, and “Kazakhstani Armenians” to describe the people united by the center and express the spirit of unity. Moreover, the center attendees perceive themselves to be more privileged than the Armenians who do not participate in the work of the ethnic center because they feel that they put extra efforts to maintain and promote the culture:

Those who come to the center feel the special connection, because we do not simply talk about being Armenian. We teach each other, we help each other. What is most important, we show the representatives of other cultures what it means to be Armenian, we kind of advertise our culture (P1).

Thus, participants subconsciously consider Armenians attending the ethnic center as the distinguished ethnic community. They also both overtly and covertly talked about the impact that the center has on their gaining the sense of community, Armenians in Kazakhstan.

Attending the Armenian center events does not only allow people to participate in the various concerts and gatherings but also meet the people whom they share the heritage, culture and language. After center attendees get acquainted at the center with others, they gradually bond with each other creating the cohesive community that later goes beyond the work of the center. For instance, celebrations of the traditional holidays and some religious ceremonies often take place twice, the one carried in the center and the unofficial one carried outside of the center.

The unofficial celebrations and gatherings usually occur larger number of people as the center attendees invite their family members and friends who do not participate in the work of the center. Also at such meetings division into smaller groups takes place. Those groups are generally divided by age; thus, there are three groups of people at the celebrations: children, the youth and the older generation. Another possible criterion for dividing into smaller groups is interests like cooking, child upbringing, politics, education, music and movies, fashion, etc.

### **Maintaining Heritage Culture and Language**

Generally, encouraged by the family environment people start attending the ethnic center and its events as a tribute to their heritage. Without being aware what differences those events might bring, they do see the positive impact on maintaining the Armenian culture and language later.

Majority of the center attendees gained significant knowledge of Armenian culture, ways of following the traditions and religious ceremonies in their families. Therefore, study participants did generally claim that the center helped them to “practice” their culture knowledge that their parents taught them:

Our culture is very complex, and has many similarities with the Kazakh culture. For example, we have certain rules for various situations such as words of greetings and support to the just-married, or those whose relatives just passed away, those who purchased something expensive like car or apartment. Of course, we always teach children how to do such things, should greet the older, congratulate people on traditional holidays, etc. In the center, they experience these occasions and get a chance to practise (P6).

Thus, the events hosted by the center bring the practical importance to the theoretical knowledge of traditions and language, socialization in the ethnic environment.

Traditional celebrations at the center effectively reflect the regional differences between families with different backgrounds. Thus, participants who were descendants of refugees from Baku and descendants of the ones who forced migrated during the Stalin’s repression years found out how these backgrounds influenced their cultural, linguistic and religious practices. Such differences do not cause conflicts among participants as they are aware of the historical and political reasons behind this. Additionally, first generation immigrants who moved to the independent Kazakhstan bring some modern perceptions of the culture and language that are currently in place in Armenia. This diversity or variation of cultural knowledge and learning-friendly environment of the center events allows the center attendees to exchange their knowledge and observe the difference in how Armenian culture

differs depending on the place and the duration of a family's living away from the large community of Armenians.

Armenian culture assigns a special role to the older generation as the experienced, wise and knowledgeable group of community, which has been reflected in interviews and observation of the current study. Participants of the Armenian center value the opinion of the older and often ask advice regarding culture and language. This might be explained by the specificity of the culture as participants explicitly expressed that respecting the older is one of the basic rules they teach children. The older are treated as the most respected group of center attendees. For instance, they have reserved rows for various events, they are asked to make a speech before the concerts, comment or evaluate a certain event. Another interpretation might be the fact that the older are expected to have advanced knowledge of Armenian language and culture, and, therefore, are perceived as valuable sources maintaining heritage culture and language.

During the bonding gatherings described in the previous chapter younger center attendees frequently consult with them about matters of different kind. The most significant reported during the interviews was the child upbringing. That is to say, older Armenians advise the younger on how to raise a child according to Armenian traditions, what are the skills every child should have, and what are the difference in the boys and girls' upbringing. Another important aspect that the youngsters discuss with the older ones is relationships within a family such as roles of wife and husband, relationships among siblings. Older people also often play a role of judges both in the personal situations of participants and the work of the center, they recommend places for improving various events hosted by the center.

The current study complemented the findings of Mucherah (2008) and McCabe (2016) that state that older relatives or ethnic group representative involvement might bring considerable results in both learning and maintaining heritage language of the younger. First, the older maintained the language and a manner of speaking that their ancestors had. This explains the fact that the older generation Armenians generally do not code-mix. This was both acknowledged during interviews and observations as the older ones spoke only Armenian to the others, and switched to other languages when spoke to the people from other ethnic cultural centers. Moreover, they value the knowledge of the modern Armenian more than the younger generation as they try to memorize the new words and use them in their speech instead of Kazakh and Russian equivalents.

Second, older generation are the people who currently experience lesser impact of the modern culture; therefore, they tend to use the language devoid of English borrowings. This helps the younger realize that Armenian language does have its counterparts to describe the modern situations. For instance, the youngsters use the word “computer” which sounds the same both in Kazakh and Russian, while the older generation Armenians always say “համարակարգիչ” ([hamakargich’], Arm. “computer”). The older generation learns such words from watching Armenian TV shows online, and then teaches the youngsters at the center bonding gathering dedicated to the modern world technologies.

### **Learning Heritage Culture and Language**

Not all the people, who start attending the center, have prior knowledge of Armenian language and culture, and, therefore, to them the center is important as it helps to start learning language and culture. First participant who represented this case was an ethnically Armenian woman, whose parents passed away when she was six, and she was adopted by the Russian

family. Encouraged by foster parents, participant grew up identifying herself as Armenian and putting efforts to learn the heritage language and culture independently. Second participant that differed from others was an ethnically Russian woman who married an Armenian man and gave a birth to his child. She had a strong motivation to learn heritage culture and language of her husband; therefore, she had become an active member of the ethnic cultural center. Besides the desire to better understand the culture of her husband and act accordingly at his family reunions she also stated that one of the reasons for attending the center was learning the cultural norms of child upbringing.

Both women seemed to have a similar opinion that learning language and culture would significantly assist them in fitting in the Armenian community. They faced similar challenges after they just started attending the center as they needed translations and explanations during various events. In both cases the role of the female community of the center has been emphasized. The fellow female attendees often offered them help during bonding gatherings of the center and invited them to the gatherings of women outside the center. Both Participant 3 and Participant 4 said that spending time with women facilitated the learning of language and culture as they had lots of common interests and topics to talk about. This provides a rationale for assuming that joining a certain group of interest within the center enhances the process of learning the ethnic language and culture.

In terms of learning Armenian language, the participants identified several ways in which attending Armenian center helps: listening to the conversations in Armenian, asking center participants to show and tell at food and culture expositions such as the one that has been observed for the current study (See Appendix G), singling out the words that were used most frequently and asking for their meaning, reading simple children's books in Armenian

with assistance of more proficient Armenian speakers. It can be assumed that attending the gatherings of the ethnic center significantly contributes to developing the receptive skills, gradually expanding them to the productive language skills. For example, Participant 4 read Armenian fairytales and bed stories herself first, and then tried to retell them to her daughter.

Other center attendees used a variety of strategies to help Participant 3 and 4. As both participants attended the event that has been observed for this study, it was revealed that other center participants tend to code-mix Russian and Armenian when speaking to them to accommodate to their needs. Whenever more proficient in Armenian speakers switched to using Armenian mostly, they repeated the key words of conversation and translated them into Russian. Both Participant 3 and 4 could get a gist of conversation and did not seem to be left out. This brings up an argument that the center attendees generally approve the cases when people come to the center to learn language and culture, encourage them and actively accommodate to their level of language proficiency or insufficient cultural knowledge.

### **Gain Sense of Acceptance in Kazakhstani Community**

Besides the previously discussed reasons that have been elicited during interviews, participants also stated that ethnic cultural centers bring sense of acceptance in Kazakhstani community. Although this has not been mentioned as a reason to continue attending the center when asked directly, participants did talk about it when describing the center and its purpose. Therefore, it can be assumed that Armenian center attendees are not aware that the feeling of their heritage being appreciated in Kazakhstan is one of the reasons they continue attending the center.

The fact that Kazakhstani ethnic cultural centers enjoy financial and administrative support of the government of Kazakhstan delineates the difference between the community

centers described in the world literature. For instance, the cases studied by Chahinian and Bakalian (2016), Flores and Matkin (2014) portray a different situation where the work of the community center is supported and funded by the ethnic community representatives themselves. Thus, this proves that maintaining ethnic minority culture and language is not supported only with words but with actions: “Ethnic cultural centers are very important to the people of Kazakhstan. Our center is supported by government. Its events are frequently attended by local authorities or foreign guests and politicians. This means a lot” (P9). As participant draws the connection between presence of local authorities and the feeling of culture importance, there is a clear alignment with the study of Tatars in Kazakhstan (Davenel, 2012). However, the current study revealed lower level of ethnic group’s dependence on the local authorities’ attendance. For instance, Tatar ethnic cultural center does not conduct any event without *akim* or other city authority representative; administration of the center reschedules the event instead (Davenel, 2012).

During the interviews participants also often referred to the historical events when their culture has been oppressed in other countries. They also drew parallels between the situation regarding heritage language and culture maintenance of the countries where their relatives live and Kazakhstani situation. According to Schüller’s study (2015), these feelings comfort, encourage and motivate the second generation immigrants to obtain higher education in the host country and work for its prosperity. They are, therefore, crucial for developing human capital of the country.

### **Challenges of Armenian Ethnic Center**

The current study identified four challenges that Armenian ethnic cultural center faces: lack of teachers of Armenian, office and facilities, level of engagement and lack of resources.

Although the most commonly mentioned challenge of community centers around the world is low budget and absence of financial support from government (Flores & Matkin, 2014; Jureniene, 2012; Chahinian & Bakalian, 2016), it has been mentioned only by one participant indirectly. He assumed that lack of funding might have triggered the absence of volunteers ready to teach Armenian in the center. There is a possibility that financial incentive could have stimulated interest among the center attendees. The possible reasons why lack of financing has not been mentioned by other participants might be lack of knowledge about how the center is funded or avoiding the topic of financing as a sensitive one.

Considering the challenge regarding the lack of involvement, especially the youth involvement, it aligns with the findings of Jureniene (2012) about the youth being more interested in the popular culture rather than learning and maintaining heritage culture. Thus, the younger generation of Armenians do prefer attending modern dance classes over learning traditional dancing styles and performing in the center. However, lack of youth engagement cannot be explained only by the lack of their interest in their heritage culture. As by the youth participants meant teenagers who currently study in high school, there is a possibility that they do not have enough time due to their commitments at school. As a matter of fact, high school students tend to concentrate on preparation for the final examination, Unified National Test.

Concerns regarding the authentic literature in Armenian and the textbooks of Armenian presented in the center resemble the ones discussed by Chahinian and Bakalian (2015). The former teacher of Armenian reported similar reported that resources available in the center are outdated and need to be more diverse so that to at least grab interest of various audiences. The literature stored in Armenian ethnic cultural center needs to present a range of books and magazines of different kinds so that to represent Armenian as a modern language

and Armenian culture that exists and has adjusted to the modern needs, not as a set of fossilized rules and traditions. Kazakhstani Armenians do not necessarily need a huge library of resources that is being updated every week (for instance, newspapers and magazines); however, they do want to see the diversity so that to explore certain books and magazines and subscribe to them online later.

The problem of the absence of office and facilities of the center is temporary as the House of Friendship is still under construction. However, during the interviews participants claimed that to facilitate development of the ethnic center it needs far more facilities than an office. Among such facilities are the rehearsal room where both singing and dancing performances could be rehearsed, conference room that would allow to host the round tables with foreign guests and local authorities, study room for classes of various types such as language courses, crafting classes, cooking club. Presence of the mentioned facilities might stimulate the engagement of the center attendees involvement and attract volunteers who would establish different clubs aimed at maintaining heritage culture and language.

In summary, the current study identified the reasons the ethnic cultural centers are valued by the ethnic minorities, socio-cultural practices employed by the center aimed at maintaining heritage culture and language, and challenges that the center faces.

## **Chapter 6. Conclusion**

This case study investigated the case of Armenian ethnic cultural center in the south of Kazakhstan and examined Armenians as a group of forced migrants living in multilingual context with the official language, Kazakh, undergoing the revitalization process. The current study identified the socio-cultural practices that the Armenian ethnic cultural center employs to maintain heritage language and culture, and determined the challenges that the center faces. In addition, the study revealed the perceptions of the participants of the center and the reasons for their continued participation at the center.

Heritage language and culture are the integral elements of ethnic identity, the one that tends to be one of the most important types of identities people assign to themselves (Wang, 2015). Maintaining heritage language and culture requires significant efforts from the ethnic minorities. In order to combine the efforts they usually establish the community centers where they could both learn and enhance their knowledge of the heritage culture and language.

### **Summary of Main Findings**

As it has been determined, the Armenian center mostly exploits the practices of bonding gatherings as casual meeting where people could improve their Armenian and enrich cultural knowledge. The center attendees emphasized that these social gatherings allow them to meet and communicate with the most respected group of the Armenian ethnic community, the older Armenians who have a rich knowledge of language and culture. The younger generation find it pivotal to learn from the elders of their community. Thus, this study proved an important role assigned to the intergenerational communication in maintaining heritage language and culture (Budiyana, 2017). Special meaning has also been attached to the official events, as they significantly contribute to the maintenance of culture. At such events the center attendees

usually promote Armenian culture by giving musical and drama performances on stage. Official events are attended by local authorities, government officials, news reporters and representatives of other ethnic cultural centers. Center attendees are also encouraged to borrow literature including fiction in Armenian, Armenian textbooks and books about Armenian history and culture available at the center. The socio-cultural practices singled out in the current research could be used by administration of other ethnic centers as an example of efficient measures to maintain heritage culture and language.

The center attendees reported that Armenian ethnic center experiences two types of challenges: participants-related and administrative challenges. Among the participants-related challenges are the problems that the center faces due to the lack of involvement. After the volunteers who taught Armenian at the language courses moved to another city no one stepped forward to substitute them. As a result, the language classes have been cancelled till there are people to teach Armenian. This might signify the need for the head of the center to suggest a paid teaching position. It has also been found that there is a lack of engagement, especially among youth, as only people who have been attending the center for a very long time are still committed to the work of the center. The center administration should consider the ways of better promotion of the ethnic center and provide the activities that would catch the interest of the youth.

As for the administrative challenges, the center experiences temporary absence of office and facilities, as a new city building of the house of friendship is being reconstructed. Participants revealed that among the facilities of the center they lack the office, conference room, room for rehearsals and a multimedia room. This is an important finding that can interest the local authorities who are in charge of the house of friendship. Providing the

facilities determined in the study should be a priority, as it can contribute to attracting more people, especially the youth, to attend the center. Moreover, at the moment of data collection, the center only had the outdated printed resources that do not reflect the modern Armenian language and culture. It can be asserted that the ethnic cultural center should establish a cooperation with the cultural and educational organizations from Armenia in order to provide the Kazakhstani Armenian community with the updated resources, printed or digital, that are in use in Armenia.

Despite the challenges presented above, all the study participants expressed their desire to continue attending the center as it grants them various benefits. Attending the Armenian center helps participants to gain the sense of Armenian ethnic community, as they meet people with similar ethnic background, ask each other advice, and learn from others. Moreover, they perceive themselves to be more privileged compared to the Armenians of the city who do not attend the ethnic center, as being a center attendee means putting extra efforts to maintain and promote heritage language and culture. To some center attendees who have had limited exposure to the language and culture, the center helps to learn the Armenian language and culture from the start. This means that ethnic centers help such population to fit in the ethnic community. The centers also contribute to gaining the sense of being appreciated in Kazakhstan. As participants reported, the interest and support from the government, local authorities and other ethnic groups encourage positive thinking of living outside of the country of their origin, as Armenian culture and language are well accepted in Kazakhstan. These reasons for attending the center help to identify the importance of the ethnic cultural centers of Kazakhstan, and provide rationale for the government of Kazakhstan to continue supporting the ethnic cultural centers.

**Limitations of the Study**

This qualitative case study involved interviews with 11 participants and the observation of an event including backstage rehearsals and the culture exposition. Although this was sufficient to answer the research questions of the study, there are several limitations that should be taken into consideration. Because this case study examined one ethnic cultural center of a certain ethnic minority group, the study results might not be related to other ethnic centers and ethnic groups of Kazakhstan. The study involved the vulnerable population, ethnic minorities, who might consider maintaining their native language and culture as a sensitive topic. Therefore, there is a possibility that some of them did not share some details about this topic. As I do not speak Armenian, it might have created some obstacle in establishing contact with other community members with limited Russian and gaining more meaningful insight during the observation.

**Implications to the Existing Knowledge**

This qualitative case study of an Armenian ethnic cultural center has also contributed to the existing knowledge in several ways. It has revealed the case of the historically forced migrants, who are now the citizens of the country, living in a unique multilingual context, where the titular, majority language, Kazakh, has been marginalized in the past and now is undergoing the process of revitalization. The study identified the specific practices of the community center to help Armenians maintain heritage language and culture, and defined how each of those practices influence the language and culture maintenance. Finally, the study displayed the importance of the ethnic centers for ethnic minorities in Kazakhstan.

**Implications for Further Research**

For the further research on the maintenance of heritage language and culture in Kazakhstan a longitudinal study with extensive observations is needed. The future research might be designed as a multiple case study so that the cases of Armenian ethnic centers from other parts of Kazakhstan could be studied and compared to each other. Moreover, in the future the help of an Armenian-speaking research assistant should be considered, especially when it comes to the observations. Consequently, studies on community centers of other ethnic minority groups can be conducted in order to identify the employed socio-cultural practices, challenges encountered by these centers and the center attendees' perceptions about the work of those centers.

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*Appendix A: CITI training certificate*

**COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI PROGRAM)**  
**COMPLETION REPORT - PART I OF 2 (COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS)**

NOTE: Scores on this Requirements Report reflect quiz completions at the time all requirements for the course were met. See list below for details. See separate Transcript Report for more recent quiz scores, including those on optional (supplemental) course elements.

Name: Kamila Kozhabayeva (ID: 5912308)  
 Email: kamila.kozhabayeva@nu.edu.kz  
 Institution Affiliation: Nazarbayev University (ID: 2428)  
 Institution Unit: School of Education

- Curriculum Group: Students conducting no more than minimal risk research
- Course Learner Group: Students - Class projects
- Stage: Stage 1 - Basic Course
- Description: This course is appropriate for students doing class projects that qualify as 'No More Than Minimal Risk' human subjects research.

• Report ID: 21183284  
 • Completion Date: 17-Oct-2016  
 • Expiration Date: 17-Oct-2019  
 • Minimum Passing: 80  
 • Reported Score: 100

REQUIRED AND ELECTIVE MODULES ONLY	DATE COMPLETED	SCORE
Belmont Report and CITI Course Introduction (ID: 1127)	17-Oct-2016	3/3 (100%)
Students in Research (ID: 1321)	17-Oct-2016	5/5 (100%)
History and Ethical Principles - SBE (ID: 490)	17-Oct-2016	5/5 (100%)
Informed Consent - SBE (ID: 504)	17-Oct-2016	5/5 (100%)
International Studies (ID: 971)	17-Oct-2016	3/3 (100%)

For this Report to be valid, the learner identified above must have had a valid affiliation with the CITI Program subscribing institution identified above or have been a paid Independent Learner.

Verify at: <https://www.citiprogram.org/verify/?aad91289-ae2a-424e-8e06-f98b0e164d09>

**CITI Program**  
 Email: [support@citiprogram.org](mailto:support@citiprogram.org)  
 Phone: 888-529-5929  
 Web: <https://www.citiprogram.org>

Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative

**COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI PROGRAM)**  
**COMPLETION REPORT - PART 2 OF 2**  
**COURSEWORK TRANSCRIPT\*\***

**NOTE:** Scores on this Transcript Report reflect the most current quiz completions, including quizzes on optional (supplemental) elements of the course. See list below for details. See separate Requirements Report for the reported scores at the time all requirements for the course were met.

**Name:** Kamila Kozhabayeva (ID: 5912306)  
**Email:** kamila.kozhabayeva@nu.edu.kz  
**Institution Affiliation:** Nazarbayev University (ID: 2428)  
**Institution Unit:** School of Education

- **Curriculum Group:** Students conducting no more than minimal risk research
- **Course Learner Group:** Students - Class projects
- **Stage:** Stage 1 - Basic Course
- **Description:** This course is appropriate for students doing class projects that qualify as 'No More Than Minimal Risk' human subjects research.

• **Report ID:** 21183284  
 • **Report Date:** 17-Oct-2016  
 • **Current Score\*\*:** 100

REQUIRED, ELECTIVE, AND SUPPLEMENTAL MODULES	MOST RECENT	SCORE
Students in Research (ID: 1321)	17-Oct-2016	5/5 (100%)
History and Ethical Principles - SBE (ID: 490)	17-Oct-2016	5/5 (100%)
Belmont Report and CITI Course Introduction (ID: 1127)	17-Oct-2016	3/3 (100%)
Informed Consent - SBE (ID: 504)	17-Oct-2016	5/5 (100%)
International Studies (ID: 971)	17-Oct-2016	3/3 (100%)

For this Report to be valid, the learner identified above must have had a valid affiliation with the CITI Program subscribing institution identified above or have been a paid Independent Learner.

Verify at: <https://www.citiprogram.org/Verify/2aa091299-ae2a-424c-8e06-b98b0e134d09>

Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI Program)  
 Email: [support@citiprogram.org](mailto:support@citiprogram.org)  
 Phone: 888-529-5929  
 Web: <https://www.citiprogram.org>

*Appendix B: Interview questions**Background questions*

1. What languages do you speak? How well do you speak these languages? In what situations (domains) do you usually speak each of them (home, work, school, with friends, with relatives, with children, praying, entertainment - reading/TV/internet, everyday life – shop,)?
2. How did you find out about the Armenian ethnic cultural center?
3. How many years have you been participating in the activities of the Armenian center?
4. What was/were the initial reason/reasons for joining the Armenian center?
5. Did you take part in any activities of the center in particular? If yes, what kind of activities? What was your role?
6. Do you have any friends or relatives who attend the Armenian center too?

*Socio-cultural practices*

7. What are the activities that the center presents? How would you describe them?
8. What events does the center organize? How would you describe them?
9. Is there anything else that the Armenian center does, that was particularly helpful to you or the people you know?
10. What expectations of the center have been met?
11. Can you think of a situation when attending the center benefited you and helped you learn something new about Armenian culture? Describe it.
12. Can you think of a situation when attending the center benefited you and helped you learn/improve Armenian? Describe it.
13. (For Participants 3 and 4 only) What was the most helpful (activity/practice) when you just started attending the center?

14. (For Participants 3 and 4 only) What was the least helpful (activity/practice) when you just started attending the center?

***The challenges faced by the center***

15. What do you think the center lacks? What expectations of the center have not been met?
16. What would you change in the work of the center?
17. What are the three things that should be improved to make the center more effective?
18. (For administration only) What center activities require extra efforts from the center administration? Why?
19. (For administration only) What center activities are the least challenging to organize? Why?
20. What do you wish the Armenian center would look like in the future?
21. Given any possible opportunities (time, money, human resources) how would you change the center?

***Perceptions of the center attendees about the center, the reasons why they continue attending the center***

22. Are you planning to continue attending the Armenian ethnic center? Why or why not?
23. What changes has the Armenian center brought to your life?
24. What changes do you expect the center to bring to your life in the future?
25. (Depending on the person's self-evaluation of the Armenian proficiency) Has the Armenian center changed your knowledge of the Armenian language? Have you improved your Armenian?
26. Has the Armenian center changed your knowledge of the Armenian culture? Have you learned something new in terms of culture?

27. How would you assess the role of the Armenian ethnic center?
28. How would you assess the role of Kazakhstani ethnic centers in general?
29. Should other countries adopt Kazakhstan's practice of establishing ethnic centers for ethnic minorities? Why or why not?
30. If you were to describe the work of the center to an Armenian person, who does not attend the center yet, how would you describe it?
31. What are the three benefits of the center that you can think of?
32. (For Participant 4 only) Would you recommend to attend the Armenian center to a non-Armenian person? Why/Why not? If yes, how?

### **Вопросы интервью**

#### ***Общие вопросы***

1. На каких языках Вы говорите? Как хорошо Вы владеете этими языками? В каких ситуациях Вы используете эти языки (дома, на работе, на учебе, с друзьями, с родственниками, с детьми, для молитвы, для развлечения – книги/ТВ/интернет, в повседневной жизни – в магазине, т.д.)?
2. Как Вы узнали об армянском культурном центре?
3. Сколько лет Вы уже посещаете центр?
4. Почему Вы изначально пошли в армянский центр?
5. Вы принимали участие в каких-либо конкретных мероприятиях, устроенных данным центром? Если да – в каких именно? В качестве кого?
6. Посещают ли данный центр Ваши родственники и/или друзья?

#### ***Социальные и культурные мероприятия***

7. Какие мероприятия/возможности предоставляет центр? Опишите их.

8. Какого рода мероприятия организовываются в центре? Опишите их.
9. Как еще, помимо этих мероприятий, армянский центр был полезен Вам/людям, которых Вы знаете?
10. Какие ожидания о работе центра оправдались?
11. Можете ли Вы описать ситуацию, когда благодаря центру Вы углубили свои знания об армянской культуре?
12. Можете ли Вы описать ситуацию, когда благодаря центру Вы углубили свои знания армянского языка?
13. (Только для Участников 3 и 4) Какое мероприятие/возможность, предоставленная центром, было/-а наиболее полезна для Вас?
14. (Только для Участников 3 и 4) Какое мероприятие/возможность, предоставленная центром, было/-а наименее полезна для Вас?

***Трудности в работе центра***

15. Как Вы думаете, чего не хватает центру? Какие ожидания о работе центра не оправдались?
16. Что бы Вы изменили в работе центра?
17. Что должно быть изменено в работе центра для повышения его эффективности?
18. (Только для администрации) Какие мероприятия требуют от Вас особенных усилий? Почему?
19. (Только для администрации) Какие мероприятия требуют от Вас наименьших усилий? Почему?
20. Каким бы Вы хотели видеть центр в будущем?

21. Если бы у Вас были неиссякаемые возможности (время, деньги, работники/помощники), как бы Вы изменили центр?

***Мнение членов центра и причины, по которым они продолжают посещать центр***

22. Вы планируете продолжать посещать центр? Почему?
23. Как армянский центр изменил Вашу жизнь?
24. По Вашему мнению, как армянский центр изменит Вашу жизнь в будущем?
25. (В зависимости от того, как участник оценивает свое знание армянского языка) Как посещение армянского центра повлияло на Ваше знание армянского языка? Улучшился ли Ваш армянский?
26. Как посещение армянского центра повлияло на Ваше знание армянской культуры? Узнали ли Вы что-либо новое об армянской культуре?
27. Как бы Вы оценили роль армянского центра? Как бы Вы оценили роль этнических центров Казахстана в целом?
28. Стоит ли другим странам перенять опыт Казахстана и основать этнические центры для различных этносов? Почему?
29. Если бы Вам пришлось описать работу центра армянину, который не посещает его, как бы Вы это сделали?
30. Назовите три основные преимущества посещения этнического центра.
31. (Только для Участника 4) Вы бы посоветовали посещать армянский центр человеку другой национальности? Почему? Если да - как бы вы это сделали?

**Appendix C: Interview protocols**

<b>Interview protocol</b>	
<i>Heritage language and culture maintenance in Kazakhstan: A study of Armenian ethnic cultural center</i>	
Participant: _____ Date: _____ Start Time: _____ Meeting Location: _____ Elapsed Time: _____ Agreed to be recorded? ___ yes ___ no	Gender: _____ Marital Status: _____ Occupation: _____ Note: _____ _____ _____
<b><i>Introduction</i></b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Greet participant; <input type="checkbox"/> Introduce myself; <input type="checkbox"/> Thank for participation; <input type="checkbox"/> Highlight the study purpose, emphasize the confidentiality; <input type="checkbox"/> Emphasize his/her rights as participants: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To refuse to answer certain Qs;</li> <li>▪ To ask the interviewer the Qs;</li> <li>▪ To withdraw from the study at any point;</li> </ul> <input type="checkbox"/> Ask if Participant agrees to be recorded; <input type="checkbox"/> Hand out consent form; <input type="checkbox"/> Ask a participant to review, ask any questions, and then sign the consent form; <input type="checkbox"/> Take the signed consent form; <input type="checkbox"/> Give a copy of the consent form to participant; <input type="checkbox"/> (if P agreed to be recorded) Turn on the dictophone
<b><i>Background questions</i></b>	
<b><i>Socio-cultural practices</i></b>	
<b><i>The challenges faced by the center</i></b>	
<b><i>Perceptions of the center attendees about the center, the reasons why they continue attending the center</i></b>	

<b>Conclusion</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Ask Participant if he/she has any questions; <input type="checkbox"/> Turn off dictophone <input type="checkbox"/> Thank participant
<b>Интервью протокол</b>	
<i>Сохранение культуры и языка культурного наследия в Казахстане: Исследование на базе Армянского культурного центра</i>	
Участник: _____ Дата: _____ Время начала: _____ Место проведения: _____ Продолжительность: _____ Согласился/-лась на запись? ___ да ___ нет	Пол: _____ Семейное положение: _____ Род занятий: _____ Примечание: _____ _____
<b>Введение</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> поприветствовать участника, представиться; <input type="checkbox"/> Поблагодарить за согласие участвовать; <input type="checkbox"/> Рассказать о цели исследования, подчеркнуть меры безопасности; <input type="checkbox"/> Подчеркнуть права участника: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Отказаться отвечать на определенные вопросы;</li> <li>▪ Задавать вопросы интервьюеру;</li> <li>▪ Отказаться от участия в любое время;</li> </ul> <input type="checkbox"/> Спросить, согласен ли участник на аудио-запись интервью; <input type="checkbox"/> Отдать участнику форму информационного согласия; <input type="checkbox"/> Попросить его/ее прочесть, задать вопросы по форме, а затем подписать ее; <input type="checkbox"/> Забрать форму информационного согласия; <input type="checkbox"/> Отдать участнику его/ее экземпляр формы информационного согласия; <input type="checkbox"/> (если участник согласился на аудио-запись) Включить диктофон;
<b>Общие вопросы</b>	
<b>Социальные и культурные мероприятия</b>	
<b>Трудности в работе центра</b>	
<b>Мнение членов центра и причины, по которым они продолжают посещать центр</b>	

<i>Завершение интервью</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Спросить участника, есть ли ко мне вопросы; <input type="checkbox"/> Выключить диктофон; <input type="checkbox"/> Поблагодарить участника.
----------------------------	---

*Appendix D: Observation protocol*

<b>Observation protocol of a public event, organized by the Armenian ethnic cultural center</b>	
<b>Date:</b> (not revealed)	
<b>Event:</b> “The Day of Language, Culture, and Traditions of the People of Kazakhstan, dedicated to the 25 <sup>th</sup> anniversary of the independence of Kazakhstan”	
<b>Organized by 8 centers:</b> Armenian, Greek, Georgian, Polish, Uighur, Karakalpak, Jewish, Azerbaijani	
<b>Culture expo</b>	
Culture expo – each center has a table with ethnic food, books and magazines in their language, elements of traditional clothes, jewelry, dishes, etc.	Three center attendees stand next to the table and greet the audience, people who approach the table, answer questions about certain artifacts on the table, tell people what some of them mean  -The center attendees speak Armenian to each other, they code-switch to Russian  -They answer questions in Russian
<b>Concert</b>	
- Each ethnic center - two performances - Language of the concert – Kazakh and Russian - Emphasis on <u>Kazakhstani</u> community: “we are Kazakhstani”, “people of Kazakhstan”, “not dividing into Russians or Greek or Jewish, we are Kazakhstani”  Performances of the Armenian center: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Armenian traditional song in Armenian;</li> <li>▪ Kazakh modern song in two</li> </ul>	Guests – opera singer from another city, akim, the heads of 8 centers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Each head of the center gives a speech before the performances of his/her center: achievements of the center, why the center is important to the ethnic group, goals for the next year</li> </ul> The head of Armenian center <u>spoke in Kazakh and Armenian</u> language <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 2 participants – lower proficiency of</li> </ul>

languages: Armenian and Kazakh	Armenian (others code-switch, translate the words, teach the words) ➤ The older women – special role (“our older generation”) – ask their opinion, evaluate the performance, are interviewed by local TV reporters
<b>After the concert</b>	
Coffee break – a table with food of 8 different ethnic groups	Participants of various ethnic center speak Russian language to each other

*Appendix E: Consent forms*  
**INFORMED CONSENT FORM**

**Heritage language and culture maintenance in Kazakhstan: A study of Armenian ethnic  
cultural center**

**DESCRIPTION:** You are invited to participate in a research study on the maintaining heritage language and culture in Armenian ethnic cultural center. You will be asked to answer interview questions about your experience of attending Armenian ethnic cultural center, and its role in maintaining heritage language and culture. Your responses will be audio recorded with your permission. The recording will be kept in a secured online password-protected server and will be deleted after the study is done. The findings of the study will be used in a thesis for completing the Master's degree program.

**TIME INVOLVEMENT:** Your participation will take about 30-45 minutes.

**RISKS AND BENEFITS:** There is limited risk associated with this study. However, your identity and the name of the city will be kept confidential.

The benefits which may reasonably be expected to result from this study will be as follows:

The proposed study will add to the existing knowledge of heritage language and culture maintenance and provide the case of Armenian language maintenance in multilingual and multiethnic Kazakhstan; the study will identify the successful socio-cultural and linguistic practices being used to maintain heritage language, shed light on the perceptions of the center attendees about the work of the center, and investigate the challenges faced by the center. This knowledge can be then applied in other Kazakhstani ethnic cultural centers as well as community schools in other countries.

**PARTICIPANT'S RIGHTS:** If you have read this form and have decided to participate in this project, please understand your participation is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. The alternative is not to participate. You have the right to refuse to answer any questions. The results of this research study may be presented at scientific or professional meetings or published in scientific journals.

**Language of interview:** You have a right to choose the language of interview between Russian, Kazakh, or English. Please, tick the appropriate:

\_\_\_ Russian

\_\_\_ Kazakh

\_\_\_ English

If you want to choose a language that is not on the list, please write down the language, and a researcher will make sure to provide an interpreter: \_\_\_\_\_

**CONTACT INFORMATION:**

**Questions:** If you have any questions, concerns or complaints about this research, its procedures, risks and benefits, contact the Research Project Supervisor for this student work, Assistant Professor Nettie Boivin, [nettie.boivin@nu.edu.kz](mailto:nettie.boivin@nu.edu.kz).

**Independent Contact:** If you are not satisfied with how this study is being conducted, or if you have any concerns, complaints, or general questions about the research or your rights as a participant, please contact the NUGSE Research Committee to speak to someone independent of the research team at +7 7172 709359. You can also write an email to the NUGSE Research Committee at [gse\\_researchcommittee@nu.edu.kz](mailto:gse_researchcommittee@nu.edu.kz)

Please sign this consent form if you agree to participate in this study.

- I have carefully read the information provided;
- I have been given full information regarding the purpose and procedures of the study;
- I understand how the data collected will be used, and that any confidential information will be seen only by the researchers and will not be revealed to anyone else;
- I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason;
- With full knowledge of all foregoing, I agree, of my own free will, to participate in this study.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**The extra copy of this signed and dated consent form is for you to keep.**

**According to the law of the Republic of Kazakhstan an individual under the age of 18 is considered a child. Any participant falling into that category should be given the Parental Consent Form and have it signed by at least one of his/her parent(s) or guardian(s).**

## ФОРМА ИНФОРМАЦИОННОГО СОГЛАСИЯ

### **Сохранение культуры и языка культурного наследия в Казахстане: Исследование на базе Армянского культурного центра.**

**ОПИСАНИЕ:** Вы приглашены принять участие в исследовании на базе Армянского этнического центра о сохранении языка культурного наследия. Вам будет предложено ответить на вопросы интервью про Ваше мнение о роли языка культурного наследия, Ваш опыт посещения Армянского культурного центра и его роли в сохранение культуры и языка культурного наследия, а также о том, что помогло Вам сохранить знание культуры и языка культурного наследия помимо центра.

С Вашего согласия Ваши ответы будут записаны на диктофон. Все записи будут храниться на онлайн сервисе, защищенном паролем, и будут стерты после проведения исследования. Результаты исследования будут использованы для написания магистерской диссертации для получения степени магистра полиязычного образования Высшей Школы Образования Назарбаев Университета.

Ваше имя и личные данные являются сугубо конфиденциальной информацией, доступ к которой будет иметь только исследователь, ответственный за проект, Камила Кожабаева, [kamila.kozhabayeva@nu.edu.kz](mailto:kamila.kozhabayeva@nu.edu.kz), сот. ном. +77071410046. В рукописи исследовательской работы Ваше имя будет заменено на псевдоним. Город и название культурного центра также будут храниться в тайне.

**ВРЕМЯ УЧАСТИЯ:** Ваше участие потребует около 20-30 минут.

#### **РИСКИ И ПРЕИМУЩЕСТВА:**

Риски, связанные с исследованием минимальны. В качестве ожидаемых преимуществ в результате исследования можно рассматривать следующие:

Исследование внесет вклад сферу изучения сохранения языка культурного наследия, предоставляя пример сохранения Армянского языка в полиязычном и поликультурном Казахстане;

Исследование определит эффективные социо-культурные и лингвистические практики, направленные на сохранение языка культурного наследия. Эти знания впоследствии могут быть использованы другими этническими центрами Казахстана наряду с общинными школами в других странах.

**ПРАВА УЧАСТНИКОВ:** Если Вы прочитали данную форму и решили принять участие в данном исследовании, Вы должны понимать, что Ваше участие является добровольным и что у Вас есть право **отозвать свое согласие или прекратить участие в любое время без каких-либо штрафных санкций**. В качестве альтернативы можно не участвовать в исследовании. Также Вы имеете право не

отвечать на какие-либо вопросы. Результаты данного исследования могут быть представлены или опубликованы в научных или профессиональных целях.

### **КОНТАКТНАЯ ИНФОРМАЦИЯ:**

**Вопросы:** Если у Вас есть вопросы, замечания или жалобы по поводу данного исследования, процедуры его проведения, рисков и преимуществ, Вы можете связаться с куратором исследовательской работы, доктором Нетти Бойвин, [nettie.boivin@nu.edu.kz](mailto:nettie.boivin@nu.edu.kz).

**Независимые контакты:** Если Вы не удовлетворены проведением данного исследования, если у Вас возникли какие-либо проблемы, жалобы или вопросы, Вы можете связаться с Комитетом Исследований Высшей Школы Образования Назарбаев Университета по телефону +7 7172 70 93 59 или отправить письмо на электронный адрес [gse\\_researchcommittee@nu.edu.kz](mailto:gse_researchcommittee@nu.edu.kz)

Пожалуйста, подпишите данную форму, если Вы согласны участвовать в исследовании.

- Я внимательно изучил представленную информацию;
- Мне предоставили полную информацию о целях и процедуре исследования;
- Я понимаю, как будут использованы собранные данные, и что доступ к любой конфиденциальной информации будет иметь только исследователь;
- Я понимаю, что вправе в любой момент отказаться от участия в данном исследовании без объяснения причин;
- С полным осознанием всего вышеизложенного я согласен принять участие в исследовании по собственной воле.

Подпись: \_\_\_\_\_

Дата: \_\_\_\_\_

*Appendix F: Sample of data and coding*

Transcript	Codes
<p><b>Interviewer (I):</b> Can you think of a situation when attending the center benefited you and helped you learn something new about Armenian culture?</p> <p><b>Participant 1 (P):</b> Actually, there are many situations of this kind.</p> <p><b>I:</b> Maybe there was a particular one that you want to highlight?</p> <p><b>P:</b> Oh, yes! This happened several times. I personally find it very interesting to <u>talk to older people about culture</u>, about politics, about what traditions can be changed and modernized, and which ones should stay. I also really like asking how things worked in the past, what they know about our ancestors. Like, for example, <u>I married a Russian girl</u>, and my parents at first said that <u>it would be very difficult for us to understand each other</u>, because we belong to different cultures. At first, my father did not understand me. He really <u>wanted his daughter-in-law to be Armenian</u>. He kept on saying that Armenians have always married only Armenians and so on. So, <u>I then began to ask old ladies in the center</u>, I think it happened during the Christmas celebration, how marrying a person of other ethnicity was perceived in the past, was it accepted in community or not ...</p> <p><b>I:</b> What did you find out?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Intergenerational communication</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Example</p>

**P:** It turned out that it was very common in the past too. It also was very much welcomed. Interestingly, all our grandmothers responded positively to this question. I told this to my parents.

**I:** Did it convince them?

**P:** Of course! You can't argue with the elder! See, we raise children to respect the elder since they are very little. Everyone in the community respects the older. When I am not sure what I should do, I ask my parents for advice. If after that I still have doubts. Yet, I can always ask someone who is older than parents. They know better.

**I:** So, does it mean that to your parents the opinion of older generation is a huge influence?

**P:** Of course! You might even get a chance to our elder center participants. You'll see, how much they are respected in the center. People often ask advice from them.

**I:** Advice on traditions and customs?

**P:** Yes, I mean you can't even tell what else, advice and opinion about everything. All people ask different things.

**I:** And what about the Armenian language?

**P:** Well, about the language... I mean, they [the older] are not teachers, they're not trying to teach us or anything. They do not technically teach. No. But we certainly can learn from them a lot.

**I:** I see. Have you ever learned something from the elders, without asking for it, occasionally?

Importance of the opinion of the older

<p><b>P:</b> Sure, it happens often. For example, I recently learned that there is an Armenian word for "computer". We keep using "computer" - "computer", plus it sounds the same in Russian and in Kazakh. So, I and my friend talked about computers and Internet during one of the gatherings at the center, an old lady approached us and told us what is <u>the word for the "computer" in Armenian. It turns out, it's "hamakargic"</u>.</p> <p><b>I:</b> Interesting! And you did not hear that before, right?</p> <p><b>U:</b> No, never. But after I found out I always use this word instead of saying "computer".</p>	<p>Language development</p>
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Транскрипт	Коды
<p><b>Интервьюер (И):</b> Можете ли Вы описать ситуацию, когда благодаря центру Вы углубили свои знания об армянской культуре?</p> <p><b>Участник 1 (У):</b> По идее, таких ситуаций много.</p> <p><b>И:</b> Может была такая, которую хочется особо выделить?</p> <p><b>У:</b> О! Это случилось несколько раз. Мне вот лично очень интересно <u>разговаривать с пожилыми людьми</u> о культуре, о политике, о том, что стоит менять и что нет. И мне очень нравится спрашивать, как раньше было, как наши предки жили. Я же <u>женился на русской девушке, и мои родители поначалу</u></p>	<p>Общение между поколениями</p>

<p><u>говорили, что нам будет очень сложно понять друг друга</u>, потому что у нас разные культуры. Отец вообще поначалу меня не понимал. Он очень <u>хотел, чтобы невестка была армянка</u>, якобы испокон веков армяне женились только на армянах и так далее. Так вот, <u>я начал потом спрашивать у бабушек в центре</u>, кажется это было на Рождество, ну там, как раньше смотрели на такой вопрос, было ли принято...</p> <p><b>И:</b> Что вы узнали?</p> <p><b>У:</b> Оказалось, что очень даже распространено это было, и очень даже приветствовалось. Что интересно, все наши бабули ответили положительно на этот вопрос. Я это рассказал родителям.</p> <p><b>И:</b> Это их убедило?</p> <p><b>У:</b> Конечно! <u>Против старших не погрешь!</u> Просто видите, у нас с детства воспитывается уважение к старшим, поэтому так это и работает: я спрашиваю совета у родителей, а если я сомневаюсь, как поступить, <u>то всегда есть люди старше. Они рассудят.</u></p> <p><b>И:</b> А для родителей получается мнение еще более старшего поколения – это авторитет?</p> <p><b>У:</b> Конечно! Вы даже может еще попадете на какую-нибудь встречу, где будут наши старшие. К ним у нас очень уважительно относятся, всегда спрашивают совета.</p> <p><b>И:</b> Советы по поводу традиций, обычаев?</p>	<p>пример</p> <p>Авторитет старших</p>
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<p><b>У:</b> Да там и не разберешь, в принципе обо всем. Все люди по-разному.</p> <p><b>И:</b> А по поводу армянского языка?</p> <p><b>У:</b> Ну насчет языка нет, наверное... в смысле, они же не учителя, они там не пытаются преподавать язык или что-то еще. Они не ведут уроки. Нет. Но они, безусловно, многому могут научить.</p> <p><b>И:</b> Да, понятно, конечно. А бывало такое, что вы чему-то просто научились от старших, не спрашивая специально?</p> <p><b>У:</b> А такое точно случается. Недавно вот я узнал, что есть перевод слова “компьютер” на армянский язык. Мы же все время говорим “компьютер”- “компьютер”, потому что так и на русском и на казахском. А на одном из вечеров центра мы обсуждали с другом компьютеры, интернет, и тут к нам подходит одна женщина и говорит, как <u>будет “компьютер” на армянском.</u></p> <p><u>Оказывается, “хамакаргич”.</u></p> <p><b>И:</b> Интересно! А вы до этого не слышали, да?</p> <p><b>У:</b> Нет, конечно. Зато после этого случая всегда использую это слово.</p>	Развитие языка
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*Appendix G: A photo of the Armenian installation for the culture exposition*

