

ON TEACHING OF PERSIAN LANGUAGE IN ARMENIAN SCHOOLS OF IRAN IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE 19TH CENTURY AND THE FIRST HALF OF THE 20TH CENTURY*

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Abstract

In the article, the activities of Armenian schools in Iran in the second half of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century, and the teaching of the Persian in those schools are addressed. The purpose of the study is to examine the teaching of Persian in Armenian schools. For conducting the research historical and comparative-historical methods have been used. In the second half of the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century the Armenian schools of Iran were influenced by the Armenian schools of the Caucasus. They often brought educational literature from Tbilisi to Iran and sometimes invited teachers from there. Along with foreign languages, Persian was also taught at Armenian schools in Iran. During the years of the constitutional movement, the classes of Persian language became more widespread in Armenian schools. During the reign of Reza Shah, the management of all schools in the country came under the control of the state, and the teaching of Persian became mandatory in all schools. Thus, in the second half of the 19th century the teaching of Persian facilitated the integration of students into economic and social life, but after educational reforms and standardization of school curriculum, the teaching of Persian gradually became mandatory and standardized in all Armenian schools of Iran.

Keywords: Iran, community, Armenian Schools, Persian, teaching, aim, the Caucasus, diaspora, pedagogy, teacher, curriculum, timetable, schedule.

Within the framework of the article as a historical review the activity of Armenian schools in Iran in the second half of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century, and the teaching of theq Persian language in those schools are addressed. For the purposes of the study, attention was paid to schedules, timetables, teaching plans (curriculum) of some schools, the material used during teaching, and also the teaching staff. During the research, we relied on the example of the Armenian schools of New Julfa, Tabriz, Tehran, and diocesan central school of Atrpatakan¹, and used historical and comparative-historical methods. It should be noted that we have little information about some Armenian schools in Iran, and we know the place and date of establishment of some schools. Sometimes there is no complete information about the material or textbooks used in some schools, but

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¹ Historical region in northwestern Iran which is called Azerbaijan. Armenians call it Atrpatakan.

the combination of the material provided by different sources allows us not only briefly introducing the activity of Armenian schools in Iran during certain historical periods, but also to revealing the goals, perceptions and concepts of teaching of the Persian language in those schools.

Armenian colonies appeared in Iran in the 3rd-4th centuries. A big emigration of Armenians was organized in the 4th century as a result of the invasion of Sasanian King Shapur II in Armenia. According to the Armenian historians, between 3rd and the 5th centuries they made about one hundred thousand Armenians immigrate to Iran. New Armenian settlements were established in the Northern part of Iran in the 11th century as a result of Seljuks' invasions. And finally, new Armenian settlements were created in Iran as a result of the deportation of Armenian people organized by Safavid Abbas I (Abbas the Great) at the beginning of the 17th century [14: 193-194; 5: 13-15; 20: 41-61; 22: 22-25; 22: 248-253]. Abbas I settled the Armenians in Isfahan; however he allowed them to choose any place they would like to live in [9: 26]. Historically, Armenians lived in Tabriz, Salmast, Urmia, Gharadagh, Maragha, Maku, Ardabil, New Julfa, Kyarvand, Peria (Fereydan), Charmahal, Masjed Soleyman, Aghajari, Abadan, Khoramshahr, Ahvaz, and Shiraz etc. [24: 30-41; 13: 132-141]. Until the mid-40s of the 20th century, the Armenian community in Iran was conditionally divided into two parts: Northern part (with Tabriz as the center) and Southern part (with New Julfa as the center) [15: 150-151].

The education in Iran until the 70s of the 19th century had a scholastic nature [34: 5]. In 1854 the Ministry of Education was established in order to regulate educational process in the country. Intellectuals began to discuss the issue of the "Europeanization" of the educational system. The issue of creating new books for secular schools also became subject to discussion. Public activist and writer Mirza Melkum Khan (1833-1908) insisted on the implementation of the European educational system in Iran [33: 10-12; 33: 47-49]. Next to the mosques there were schools called *madrassa* in Iran. In those schools the Muslim priests taught the learners to read and write. European-type educational institutions were established in Iran due to efforts of Naser al-Din Shah Qajar in the 70s of the 19th century. In honor of Qajar prince Muzaffar ad-Din, the theological schools in Tabriz were called *Muzafferiye*. Soon many schools were opened in Tehran, the most famous one being "Dār ul-Funun" where the students were taught physics, algebra, geography, history, arithmetic, French, etc [35: 155-160; 34: 8-10; 34: 30-31; 25: 211-213]. The higher schools where Persians received religious education were called *talabiyeh* [25: 215-220].

In 1828 Eastern Armenia was annexed to Russia under the Treaty of Turkmenchay, and about 45 thousand Armenians from the Northern provinces of Iran moved to Yerevan and Nakhichevan [14: 196]. During the reign of Naser al-Din Shah, some decrees were published, which forbade forced religious conversions of Armenian people and put an end to the restrictions on Armenians [24: 9]. The existence of Armenian schools in Iran was allowed by proclamations

of shah, and at the beginning of the 20th century it was allowed by the constitution. Until 1936 Armenian schools in Iran had autonomy; they organized teaching in their native language and with their preferred curriculum. The curriculum of those schools was mostly the same as in Armenian schools in the Caucasus [16: 58].

In the 12th-13th centuries, there were schools called “khalfa” in the Armenian community of Iran: those schools were located in churches and monasteries. The students used to sit on the ground, and the priest taught them to read and write. The purpose of “khalfa” schools was to teach literacy, and those schools had religious nature. In the Armenian community of Iran secular schools were formed in the first half of the 19th century [24: 179; 25: 120].

In the first half of the 19th century, on the example of Armenian educational and cultural centers in the Caucasus the first schools in the Armenian community in Iran were established. The first schools were opened in New Julfa, Tabriz, and Tehran [25: 120].

In the middle of the 19th century, Armenian Catholicos Nerses Ashtaraketsi put the basis of regular primary schools in Armenian community of Iran. The first centres of Armenian education were established in Tabriz and New Julfa [25: 106-107]. Those schools were under the attention of the Persian state; it is no coincidence that the Qajar Mozaffar ad-Din Shah with a special *farman*² granted Armenians the privilege to open Armenian schools [see the full text of the decree 25: 109].

Armenian schools had the function of protecting and preserving Armenian language and cultural heritage; however the study of different languages, including Persian, at schools, facilitated the further integration of students into the social and economic life of Iran, and also offered opportunities for them to be engaged in science. In Middle Ages, when many people had no opportunity to study at school, Armenian merchants considered it important to give education to their children [6: 61-66; 1: 5-6].

It is interesting to mention that in 1750, an Armenian resident of Madras city in India Petros Voskanyan bequeathed money to open a school in New Julfa: that school intended to teach Armenian, Persian and Latin [1: 7]. The project to establish the school was not fulfilled, but it is interesting to pay attention to the choice of the languages they intended to teach at that school.

Armenian priest Yedgaryan mentioned in his book dedicated to Charmahal province of Iran that although the Armenians of Charmahal tried to preserve their mother tongue, they also studied Persian, Turkish, and Luri [9: 30].

² FARMĀN (OPers. framānā, Mid. Pers. framān; Arabized pl. farāmīn), decree, command, order, judgement. In historical as well as contemporary administrative and political usage the term often denotes a royal or governmental decree, that is a public and legislative document promulgated in the name of the ruler or another person (e.g., prince, princess, governor) holding partial elements of sovereignty [44].

It is mentioned in the book of Yedgaryan (published in 1963): “Over 50 years ago, in the Armenian villages of Charmahal only 6-7 people could read Farsi: those people were considered to be outstanding individuals and favored among the population in the province.” [9: 60]. Yedgaryan noted: “...reading and writing Persian was a necessity: for instance, the children of modern village headmen always deal with Persian village heads, governors and other Iranian officials, thus they [Armenian village headmen] have to teach their sons Farsi. However, this had its effect on the society; the villagers become jealous, and many people do the same thing [learn Persian]. Thus, the number of people who learn Farsi in the province is increasing every day.” [9: 60-62].

Since the beginning of the 17th century, New Julfa has become the main cultural center of the Armenian community in Iran. The first Armenian schools were opened here in (or near) the churches and monasteries. Those schools were exclusively religious until the first half of the 19th century [25: 106, 25: 110]. The Armenians of Julfa were not only good craftsmen, but also successful traders. It is noteworthy that the merchants considered it important to provide education to their children [6: 61-66; 1: 5-6]. In 1630, the first school was established in Amenaprkich Monastery. In 1710, Muradian Surb Hakob (St. Hakob) and Surb Stepanos (St. Stepanos) schools were opened [10: 6-7]. In the 17th-18th centuries the most famous school of Julfa was that of monastery Surb Amenaprkich (St. Amenaprkich): that school was often called University [26: 335; 19: 116-117; 16: 5; 35: 387-500]. In the 19th century schools of monasteries Surb Astvatsatsin (St. Astvatsatsin), Surb Minas (St. Minas), and Surb Stepanos were famous [16: 7].

In 1830s a school named Amenprkchyan Seminary was opened due to the support of Grigor Samyan, an Armenian philanthropist from Madras [16: 8; 13: 210; 35: 133]. The school provided its students with proper education which fully met the requirements of that time. This was probably due to the fact that the school curriculum was based on that of Lazaryan Seminary in Moscow [34: 55]. In 1837, this school was closed, but it was reopened in 1840. In this school, Armenian grammar, arithmetic and calligraphy, history, English and Persian were taught. The school continued its activity until 1853. Then, thanks to the financial support of the Armenian philanthropist Margar Sukiasyan, Samyan school functioned for 30 more years, until it merged with the National Central School of Julfa [1: 17; 35: 588-590]. In 1840, a school was opened in the courtyard of Astvatsatsin Church in Maidantagh district of New Julfa due to the financial aid of Harutyun Abgaryan, an Armenian merchant living in Calcutta (India). In 1843 a two-story building was built for the school that was later named *Haykian hayrenasirakan usummaran* (lit: Haykian Patriotic Seminary) [16: 7; 13: 210]. This school functioned for 40 years. At school, the Armenian young people of Julfa studied religion, elementary arithmetic, Armenian and Persian [1: 10; 23: 271; 35: 590-591].

In 1834, Karapet Sarafyan, an Armenian merchant living in Tehran, wanted to bequeath 1.000 tumans to Surb Amenprkich Monastery of New Julfa in order to open a school for twelve adopted children and teach them Armenian, Russian,

Persian and French. However, because of his bankruptcy, the plan to build the school was not realized [1: 17; 35: 592-593].

In 1841, a Frenchman, named Bori, taught Armenian, Persian and French at the school he founded in New Julfa [1: 8]. Due to the dispute between followers of Catholic and Armenian Apostolic churches, Bori closed the school, left the country, went to Istanbul and opened another school there [35: 591-593].

In 1853, in New Julfa the school of Surb Minas Church was opened with the financial means of Mariam Harutyunyan and Taguhi Manukyan, two Armenian sisters who lived in Java [1: 15-16]. In 1858, a girls' school was opened next to the Katarinyan nunnery in New Julfa. It was the first girls' school in Iran [13: 210; 16: 20; 1: 24; 25: 110].

In the 19th century, in New Julfa, the Persian language was taught along with other subjects [16: 57-58]. In the 1880s, 3 schools in the courtyards of the three churches in New Julfa were merged, and the National Central School of Julfa was established [10: 7; 16: 9-16; 1: 19; 13: 210-211].

After the schools were united and made more regular, textbooks were brought from Tbilisi, then books were published in New Julfa and Tabriz: they used to teach French, Russian, and Persian [16: 61]. In the curriculum and schedule of the Armenian schools of New Julfa introduced by Minasyan among different subjects, one can see the Persian language as well [16: 63-66]. New teachers and educators arrived to Armenian schools of Iran from the Tbilisi. They modified the old ways of teaching, renovated educational methods and adapted them to foreign educational methods. The subjects included in the curriculum were: religion, the Armenian language and literature, Grabar³, Persian, history of Persia and geography, foreign language, Armenian history, general history, geography, arithmetic, algebra, geometry, cosmology, accounting, physics, chemistry, natural sciences, healthcare, pedagogy and psychology, use of visual aids, painting, song-recording, and handicrafts [see the distribution of subjects in different grades in [16: 65-66].

Armenian educational institutions in Iran enjoyed not only the patronage and care, but also the control of the government. In the sources where the names of Armenian teachers are mentioned one can also see the names of Persian male and female teachers who worked in Armenian mixed-gender schools of New Julfa [16: 113-127]. It is noteworthy that at the beginning of the 20th century, young people from Charmahal and surrounding villages as well used to come to New Julfa to continue their education [20: 551-553].

It is worth mentioning that between 1901-1905, due to Varvare Kananyan, a girls' school and a kindergarten named Gevorg Kananyan were established in New Julfa (in memory of Varvare Kananyan's husband, Gevorg Kananyan who had been an Armenian merchant in Moscow). Kananyan School was founded at a time

³ Classical Armenian.

when Armenian schools were being closed in the Russian Empire as a result of Golitsyn's⁴ anti-Armenian policy [13: 211; 1: 36-38; 1: 40-46; 16: 25; 25: 111].

The Armenian population of Tabriz mainly lived in two districts: Ghala (or Berdatagh) and Lilava (or Leylabad) [25: 23]. Armenians of Iran consider the beginning of the history of modern school education to date 1835. It is the year when Aramyan school in Tabriz was established. At first, it was situated in several rooms in an old building of the prelicity in Tabriz. In 1850s the separate building of the school was built [13: 211]. Until 1875, the school was called Nersisyan (in honor of Nerses Shnorhali), and later it was called Aramyan (in honour of the Armenian philanthropist Aramyan) [24: 199-200; 25: 107; 25: 114].

In August 1879, a girls' school was established in Ghala. In 1883, the Tumanyan brothers (members of Tumanyan trading house) bought a new building for the Ghala school. It was not suitable for classes, and so it was demolished. In 1887 a new one was built and was called Annayan. After several years Aramyan school moved there and became a mixed-gender school. Then the national school of Ghala was called Aramyan-Annayan. Soon, thanks to Tumanyan brothers, the two-story building of Haykazyan School was built in Lilava district [24: 200; 11: 138; 13: 211]. In 1882, Haykazyan male school was established, and in 1895 Tamaryan School was opened in Tabriz [24: 200-201; 13: 211-212]. The curriculum of Aramyan school was in Armenian and included the teaching of foreign languages (Persian, Russian and French). Initially, it was a male school, but in 1887, after moving to the new building of the Annayan school by Tumanyan family, the school was merged with the girls' school and became a mixed-gender school named Aramyan-Annayan National School. Aramyan school played a key role in the education of Armenians in Iran. It had around 1.300 graduates until 1936, when Shah Reza Pahlavi banned the teaching of the Armenian language in the country and ordered to close national schools [11: 138]. It is known that in 1896 Aramyan and Haykazian-Tamaryan schools were united, but in 1897 they were separated [24: 201].

During the constitutional movement the central diocesan secondary school was founded in Tabriz in 1909, and Haykazyan-Tamaryan schools became elementary schools [23: 210-213]. The diocesan central school of Atrpatakan, founded in 1909, later became a role-model not only for Armenian schools in Iran, but also for Iranian schools. In the 1920s, the cultural influence of the Caucasus and Russia was great on Armenian schools of Iran. In those years, teachers came to Iran from the Tbilisi, and brought educational literature. The teaching was based on the curriculum of Nersisyan School of Tbilisi, which was adapted to local needs and conditions [12: 179]. Among the 36 weekly hours provided by the curriculum, 15 were for language learning. It was distributed as follows: 5 hours for the

⁴ Grigory Golitsyn was a Russian general and statesman. In 1896 he was appointed commander of the Caucasian military district. Grigory Golitsyn was one of the initiators of the adoption of the law on the closure of Armenian schools.

Armenian language, 4 hours for Russian, and 3 hours for Persian, 3 hours for French [18: 87-90]. They tried to use the curriculum of the Armenian schools in the Caucasus in the Armenian school of Tabriz, and also to invite teachers from Tbilisi [18: 80; 25: 109]. In one of sources regarding the teaching of languages in the Armenian diocesan school of Atrpatakan, it is mentioned that the Persian teacher came and taught for an hour per day. The girls did not learn Persian; they learned needlework instead [18: 21].

In the 1911-1912 school year, the total number of students in the Armenian diocesan school of Atrpatakan reached 74. The students of the school were mostly former graduates of Aramyán and Haykazyan-Tamaryan schools of Tabriz who had completed a six-year course of education. During the first four years of the school's activity the number of subjects taught was doubled. In the 1915-1916 school year, the school was closed and did not function; in the 1916-1917 school year, the school was reopened [18: 63-66]. It is interesting that the role of the diocesan school of Tabriz is great in the disappearing of the old Armenian dialect of Tabriz. Thousands of boys and girls stopped speaking their dialect, because they learned the literary language at school, and also took the literary language home. Except for languages, all subjects were taught in Armenian [18: 26, 18: 66].

In the 1916-1917 school year, in the schedule for the 4th and 5th grades, a person named Mirza Jafar is mentioned as the teacher of the Persian language. In the 4th and 5th grades, they studied Persian 3 times a week. It was mentioned that in the 1917-1918 school year, Mirza Jafar taught Persian in all grades [18: 77, 1818: 81]. On September 21, 1917, the educators of the school discussed the issue of textbooks or notebook-textbooks. However, in the source it is not mentioned what kinds of textbooks would be used for teaching Persian [18: 82]. There were mentioned different books for teaching different subjects in the 1918-1919 school year, but nothing was noted about textbooks for teaching the Persian language [18: 89-90].

The first Armenian residents in Tehran were 7 families who were brought as hostage by Agha Muhammad Khan from Karabakh. They lived in the district called Darwaza-Ghazvin, located in the western part of Tehran. In 1790-1795, Armenians built Surb Gevorg (St. Gevorg) Church. Later Fath-Ali Shah Qajar brought 10 other Armenian families who were glassmakers from New Julfa. They settled in the Darwaza-Shah-Abdul-Azím district in the south of the city and in 1908 they built Surb Tadevos and Bardughimeos (St. Thaddeus and Bartholomew) Church [3: 394]. In 1870 Usumnasirats Miutyun was established in Tehran which in the same year established Haykazyan school in the Darvaze Ghazvin district of Tehran [3: 396]. The school used the curriculum of Caucasian schools, but from time to time it was subject to change. In Haykazyan school the educational process was organized according to the educational methods of the time, and the classrooms were equipped with new tables and chairs for the students [38]. In the 1930-1931 curriculum of Haykazyan mixed-gender school in Tehran the number of English and Persian lessons increased [29].

As mentioned, the first public school called Haykazyan was opened in Tehran in 1870. However, before that, since the 1850s, the children of Armenian community of Tehran had been attending the “khalifa” schools located in the churches. In the beginning, the Haykazyan school was also located in the church. In 1884 Usumnasirats Miutyun constructed a new building for the school [24: 192-193].

In 1903, in the northern part of Tehran, in Hasanabad district, a building was made and three classes were opened as a branch of Haykazyan school in Darvaze Ghazvin. Until 1906-1907 Haykazian schools in two districts of Tehran were male, but there were also separate classes for girls. Soon, thanks to the efforts of the teachers and the trustees, the female students stopped wearing *chadras*, the classes were combined, and the school was declared to be mixed-gender [24: 193]. In 1910, the new Haykazyan school was built in the Hassanabad district of Tehran [13: 212].

Until 1890, mainly Armenian teachers from Iran and Turkey taught in Haykazyan school, but later Armenian educators from the Tbilisi were also invited. Starting with January 1892, Hovhannes Khan Masehyan, a well-known diplomat, the first ambassador of Iran to Japan, who also taught Persian and French, was supervising the school. Hovhannes Khan Masehyan taught Persian until the relevant textbooks were compiled [21: 10-12], and after that, a Persian teacher was invited to teach the Persian language. Here they used to teach Armenian, Armenian grammar, Persian, French, geography of Armenia, general geography, Armenian history, general history, algebra, music; since 1892 they also taught gymnastics [30: 227-228]. In 1891-1892, the first Armenian school for girls was founded in Tehran. In 1891, the National School was opened in Darvaze Ghazvin district, and in 1903 another school was opened in Darvaze Dovlat district [13: 212-213]. In 1932-1933, Armenian philanthropist from India Davit Davtyan visited the Davtyan mixed-gender school in Terhan, where the students were taught Persian. Before the closure of the national schools in 1936, the teaching process was organized in Armenian, and after the schools were again opened, the teaching was conducted in Persian [12: 184].

In the provinces of Iran Armenian schools were established in the last quarter of the 19th century [24: 202]. In 1881, in Salmast the basis of regular school was laid [25: 120]. In the villages of Gharadagh and its surroundings the first schools were opened in the 1890s. Maragha school was founded in 1880s, but back in 1876 some large rooms of a number of houses in the city were used as classrooms [24: 202-203]. In 1889-1900, due to the efforts of the Armenian women’s charitable society of Tabriz, some schools were opened in Urmia, Maku, Gharadagh, Baranduz, among other places [13: 211-213]. In the 1920s, there was an Armenian school in Vanak village near Tehran, where Persian was also taught [12: 184]. In 1923, Persian was also taught in the Armenian school of Ghazvin [12: 185-186]. In 1931, in Armenian National School called Surb Lusavorcyan (St. Lusavorcyan) and established in Hamadan some subjects taught in Persian increased from 30 and

reached to 70 [27]. In the 1850s, an Armenian school was founded in Khoysan⁵. The school was next to the church and had 2 rooms, but in 1896 it was renovated; an attic and a large room was built. Then an Armenian teacher was invited from New Julfa to teach Persian and English [17: 241].

It was mentioned in the sources that in the 19th century secular schools were established in Tabriz and New Julfa, under the influence of the Armenian cultural centers of the Caucasus. Before and after 1905 under the influence of the first Russian revolution school education found its way to the remote regions of Iran. In 1904, an Armenian school was established in Hamadan, and in 1905-1909, Armenian schools were established in Ghazvin, Mashhad, Sultanabad (Arak), Resht, and Enzeli. There were few Armenian schools in Peria province, and there were few Armenian schools in Burvari, Gyapla, Kamara and Kazaz provinces, which were around Arak [13: 212]. Persian was also taught in the Armenian school of Gerdabad village, in Khoysan school (founded in 1850), in Surb Minas school (opened in 1896), in the school of Boloran (founded in 1892), in the Armenian school of Rasht, in the school of Arzrukh village, and in National School of Karun (established in 1931) in Ahvaz [12: 195-196; 7: 98; 17: 241]. In the 1932-1933 school year, in Armenian school of Sultanabad among 230 hours, 57 were distributed to teaching Persian, which later increased and reached to 81 hours [26; 28]. In 1923, Armenian students in Vardanyan school in Ghazvin had Persian classes [39]. The curriculum of Ghazvin school did not correspond to the program of the public schools, and graduates could not hold positions [12: 186]. Very often Persians also studied in Armenian schools. For example, in 1924, there were 3 Armenian and 9 Persian students in the school of village called Nerkin Chanakhchi (in Gharaghan province) [12: 187; 191]. In 1923, there were 7 teachers in Rasht National School called Mkrtich Avetis Hordananyan [40]. In 1936, 5 Armenian and 3 Iranian teachers worked in the old Armenian National School (established in 1924) Arian of Kermanshah. There were 8 Armenian and 2 Persian teachers in the Armenian school founded in 1908 in Sultanabad. There were 230 weekly hours for classes in the school of Sultanabad: 157 hours of classes were in Armenian, 57 hours in Persian, and 16 hours in English [12: 190-193].

In the 19th and 20th centuries, European and American missionary schools had a great influence in Iran [12: 179; 12: 182-183; 34: 12-15]. The French carried out even wider missionary activities. They opened schools for Armenians and Assyrians in Tehran, Tabriz, New Julfa, Isfahan and Salmast. The French Catholic Mission Saint Lazare and Sisters of Charity together opened 76 schools. The Protestants also had missionary schools in Julfa. In the 1920s, in Iran's educational system schools were separated from the church, and the influence of missionaries on the country weakened [1: 30-32; 1: 54-55; 25: 111-112; 25: 117]. Though Armenian students attended missionary schools, we have not studied the issue of the teaching of Persian in missionary schools.

⁵ Khoysan is an Armenian village in Iran, situated 140 kilometres northwest of Isfahan.

It is interesting that when the Iranian government did not aim to level the schools or to implement one common program in all schools, different classes of the society did not always warmly accept the study of Persian by Armenians. Armenian priest Yedgaryan mentioned in his work: “It is necessary to bear in mind that Armenian people who know Persian are persecuted by the ignorant Persian people in their province, with the argumentation “why a nation with a different religion could speak their language and use their script.” With such perceptions, the son of the village head of Ahmadabad, young man Hovsep, was killed by the Persians from the neighboring village about 50 years ago and was thrown into the well next to the mentioned village. After 5-6 days, they could barely find him, take him out and bury him. However, these and similar prohibitions and persecutions do not stop the process; the educated Armenian people of the province are thriving towards enlightenment and development with increasing momentum.” [9: 60-62].

It is interesting that over time girls also started learning Persian in Armenian schools and it was not only for boys. It is mentioned that at the beginning of the 20th century, there was also a vocational school in Masjid-Suleiman, where girls not only learned to weave carpets, but also studied the Persian language [12: 200].

During 1905-1911, the constitutional movement in Iran, there was a debate for creating relevant Iranian education system. Articles 18 and 19 of the Constitution accepted accepted by Majles⁶ stated the need to establish a secular educational system under the supervision of the Ministry of Education. In 1911, a law on education was passed, according to which elementary education was declared mandatory [36: 343].

At that time theoretical subjects prevailed in Armenian schools, which is why often parents preferred non-Armenian schools for their children. Thus, Armenian schools tried to make education and knowledge more practical. In the 1930-1931 school year, in Haykazyan mixed-gender school, they paid more attention to teaching natural subjects and allocated more hours to those subjects, and the number of the classes of Persian and English increased [12: 182].

Besides that, in one of sources there is information about the classes of the 1926-1927 school year in Armenian school of Atrpatakan. There was the list of classes the students studied. The following subjects were mentioned: Geography of Armenia, History of Armenian Literature, Armenian Language, and *ashkharabar*⁷. Persian was not in that list [18: 173-175]. In the educational bulletin of teaching program of the 1919-1920 school year of the Armenian diocesan central school of Atrpatakan it is mentioned that the parents requested to add English classes in addition to French. It was also mentioned about looking for a new teacher of Persian. Famous Armenian linguist Hrachya Acharyan was the teacher of French in that school [18: 105-106].

⁶ Islamic Consultative Assembly.

⁷ Language of Armenian literature in the 19th century.

Among the biographies of Armenian teachers of the Armenian diocesan central school of Atrpatakan, the biography of the teacher of the Persian language Jafar Akhgari was also mentioned. In 1920-1921 Jafar Akhgari was invited as the teacher of the Persian language and taught in that school until 1935-1936. After Armenian schools were closed, he worked for some time in the Armenian Prelacy of Atrpatakan as the person in charge of paperwork in Persian [18: 121-122].

Before the implementation of the state program in all schools, Armenian girls generally did not learn Persian; instead they practiced needlework and crafts during the class hours when boys studied Persian [18: 125]. After Qajar dynasty, in 1925, Reza Pahlavi was declared Shah in Persia. An educational reform was carried out during his reign. According to the reform, the administration of all schools had to be transferred from the religious class to the state. In the 1927-1928 school year, with the implementation of the program developed by the Ministry of Education, the class hours for a more profound teaching of the Persian language were increased. For example, Armenian schools were instructed to substitute Russian classes with Persian ones in Armenian schools of Gharadagh [18: 173-176].

In 1927, because of the demand of the Ministry of Education, the lessons of the Persian language were to be increased. In the 1927-1928 and subsequent school years, they had to include the history of Persia and Persian geography in the curriculum [18: 172]. In 1934, the Iranian government demanded the implementation of state educational program in all schools with a special calendar [12: 200]. In 1934, a decree was received according to which the state program had to also be used in diocesan school and all subjects had to be taught in Persian. All grades of the schools had to have 160 hours (for languages) per week: 67 hours were for Persian, 57 hours for Armenian, and 36 hours for French. Persian was to be taught using textbooks determined by the Ministry of Education [18: 189-191]. A committee was created under the Ministry of Education, and a special program for Armenian schools in Iran was developed. Iranian state educational program (first to sixth grades) defined 36 class lessons per week, with every class lesson lasting for 40-45 minutes for Armenian elementary schools. According to the timetable, 121 class hours were allocated to subjects taught in Persian, and 95 class hours were allocated to subjects taught in Armenian [12: 201; 43]. In this pretext, Armenian priest Yedgarian mentioned that after those reforms "...the Armenians were able to speak the language of the country better with their Persian neighbors." It was also mentioned that after that program people of Charmahal province, both male and female, became literate [9: 32].

In 1935, national schools adopted the common educational program of the state. Armenian schools were closed all over Iran. the state education program penetrated into Armenian schools: they used to study religion or Armenian language once or twice a week, in mixed groups (classes) with Persian children [16: 39, 16: 47, 16: 66].

Starting from the 1935-1936 school year, only those national schools could continue their existence in Iran which would operate according to the educational

program arranged by the Ministry of Education and would have inspectors who had graduated from secondary school and knew Persian very well: the mother tongue would be taught out of the frames of the educational program, 10 hours per week. Armenian schools, unfortunately, had serious staff problems because of those regulations and requirements. There was a shortage of Armenian teachers with even a sixth grade certificate, and Armenian schools were closed [16: 48]. Armenian students had to attend other schools where “everyone was Armenian, but they did not learn the Armenian language” [2: 41].

In 1936, Reza Shah ordered Minister of Education Mulla Tadayon to develop an educational program and instructed Armenian schools to be guided by that program. That meant that teaching in Armenian schools would be held in Persian [8: 293]. In 1936, Armenian schools lost the right to autonomy. All Armenian schools were closed, the buildings and property of those schools were confiscated [24: 190]. In 1936 Armenian diocesan central school of Atrpatakan was also closed [18: 193]. In 1936, Armenian schools in Tabriz were also closed. The buildings of Armenian schools were used for Persian schools. In 1956 after the the national schools⁸ in Iran were reopened, those buildings were not returned to the Armenian schools [24: 201].

In response to the personal request by Archbishop Melik Tangian, on December 20, 1941, Reza Shah gave permission to teach the Armenian language in the Armenian schools of Iran [4: 29].

With the implementation of the new educational program, the Armenian language and religion were taught for 1 or 2 hours per week, and with great difficulty, because it was done in one class mixed with non-Armenian children. This continued until the re-nationalization of schools in 1955. After the re-nationalization of schools, along with state educational program, subjects in Armenian were also taught in Armenian schools (8-10 hours in lower grades and 4-6 hours in higher grades). Apart from the 2 hours of religion class per week, these classes were out of the curriculum, but traditionally fit into the timetable [16: 55; 7: 70-75].

After the Islamic revolution on November 11, 1981, the 20-point circular was published by the Ministry of Education of Iran: according to that, in schools it was banned to teach subjects in Armenian, but later, in the 1994-1995 school year, it was allowed to teach Armenian for 2 hours in the 4th grade of secondary school and four hours in 1st, 2nd and 3rd grades each [7: 60-62].

Thus, in the second half of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century, the Armenian schools of Iran were influenced by the Armenian schools of the Caucasus, the curriculum was formed in accordance with the requirements of the time, and the teaching of the Persian language facilitated the integration of men into economic and social life. Men were engaged in crafts and trade, active not

⁸ National schools of national minorities.

only in the community but also outside the community. Until the beginning of 20th century, studying the Persian language was not mandatory for girls in Armenian mixed-gender schools, because women lived an intra-community life and were not active outside the community. At the beginning of the 20th century the Armenian schools of Iran were under influence of the Armenian schools of the Caucasus and the methods used there. During that period, they began to bring educational literature from the Caucasus, and would sometimes invite teachers from Tbilisi. The Persian language continued to contribute to the future social and cultural integration of the Armenian students into social and economic life: very often Persian teachers were involved in teaching Persian at Armenian schools. In 1905-1911, during the the constitutional movement there was debate regarding the formation of the Iranian relevant educational system, and Persian language classes became more widespread in Armenian schools. During the reign of Reza Shah, an educational reform was carried out in the country. The management of all schools in the country came under the control of the state, and the teaching of Persian gradually became mandatory in all Armenian schools of Iran. Soon, Reza Shah authorized that Armenian language could be taught in Armenian schools of Iran. After the Islamic revolution, subjects taught in Armenian were banned, but later it was allowed to teach Armenian in secondary schools.

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19-ՐԴ ԴԱՐԻ ԵՐԿՐՈՐԴ ԿԵՍԻՆ ԵՎ 20-ՐԴ ԴԱՐԻ ԱՌԱՋԻՆ ԿԵՍԻՆ ԻՐԱՆԻ ՀԱՅԿԱԿԱՆ ԴՊՐՈՑՆԵՐՈՒՄ ՊԱՐՍԻՑ ԼԵԶՎԻ ԴԱՍԱՎԱՆԴՄԱՆ ՇՈՒՐՋ

Թերեզա Ամրյան

Բանալի բառեր՝ Իրան, համայնք, հայկական դպրոցներ, պարսկերեն, ուսուցում, նպատակ, Կովկաս, սփյուռք, մանկավարժություն, ուսուցիչ, ուսումնական պլան, ժամանակացույց, դասացուցակ:

Հոդվածում անդրադարձ է կատարվել 19-րդ դարի երկրորդ կեսին և 20-րդ դարի առաջին կեսին Իրանի հայկական դպրոցների գործունեությանը և այդ դպրոցներում պարսկերենի ուսուցմանը: Հետազոտության նպատակն է քննու-

թյան առարկա դարձնել այդ ժամանակահատվածում պարսկերենի ուսուցումը հայկական դպրոցներում: Հետազոտության իրականացման համար կիրառվել են պատմական և պատմահամեմատական մեթոդներ: 19-րդ դարի երկրորդ կեսին և 20-րդ դարի սկզբին Իրանի հայկական դպրոցները կրում էին Կովկասի հայկական դպրոցների ազդեցությունը: Հաճախ Թբիլիսիից ուսումնական գրականություն էր բերվում Իրան, երբեմն էլ ուսուցիչներ էին հրավիրում: Իրանի հայկական դպրոցներում այլ օտար լեզուների հետ մեկտեղ նաև պարսկերեն էին դասավանդում: Սահմանադրական շարժման տարիներին հայկական դպրոցներում պարսից լեզվի դասաժամերն ավելացան: Ռեզա շահի օրոք երկրի բոլոր դպրոցների տնօրինումը անցավ պետության վերահսկողության ներքո, և բոլոր դպրոցներում պարսկերենի դասավանդումը դարձավ պարտադիր: Այսպիսով, 19-րդ դարի երկրորդ կեսին պարսկերենի ուսուցումը նպաստում էր ուսանողների ինտեգրմանը տնտեսական և հասարակական կյանքին, սակայն կրթական բարեփոխումներից և դպրոցական ծրագրի ստանդարտացումից հետո Իրանի բոլոր հայկական դպրոցներում պարսկերենի ուսուցումը աստիճանաբար դարձավ պարտադիր և ստանդարտացված: