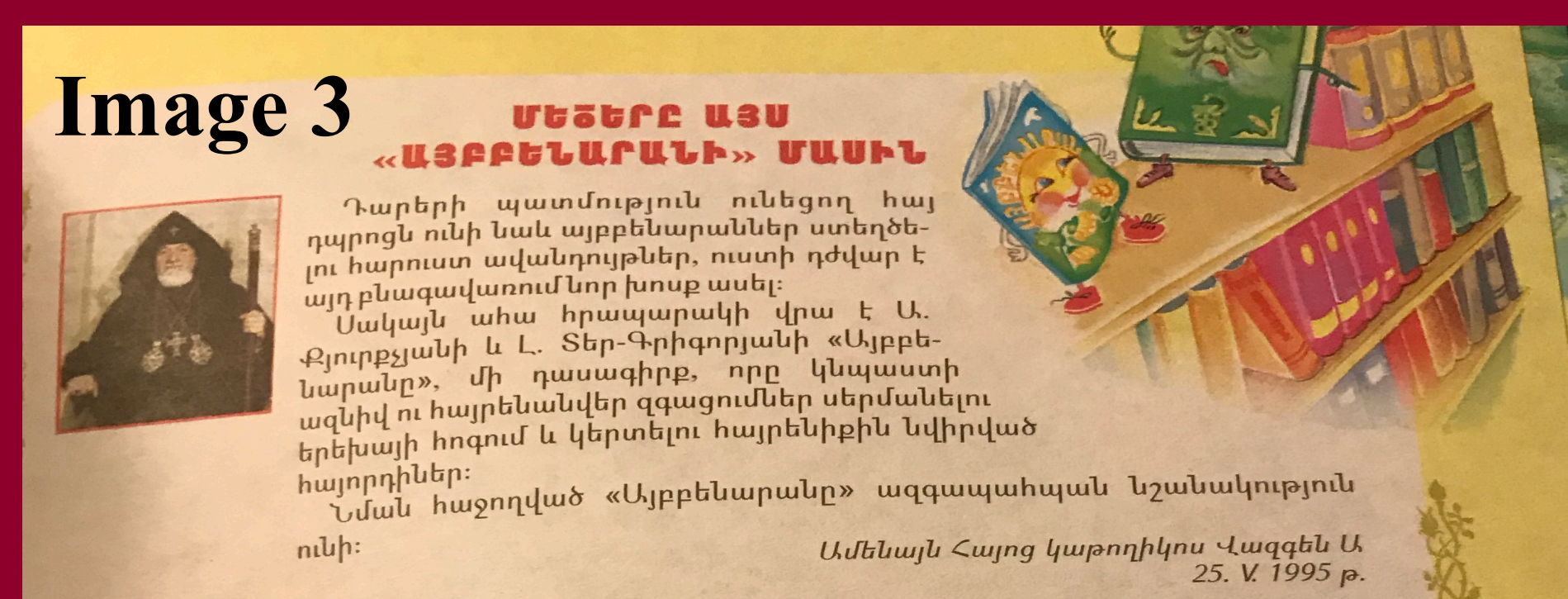
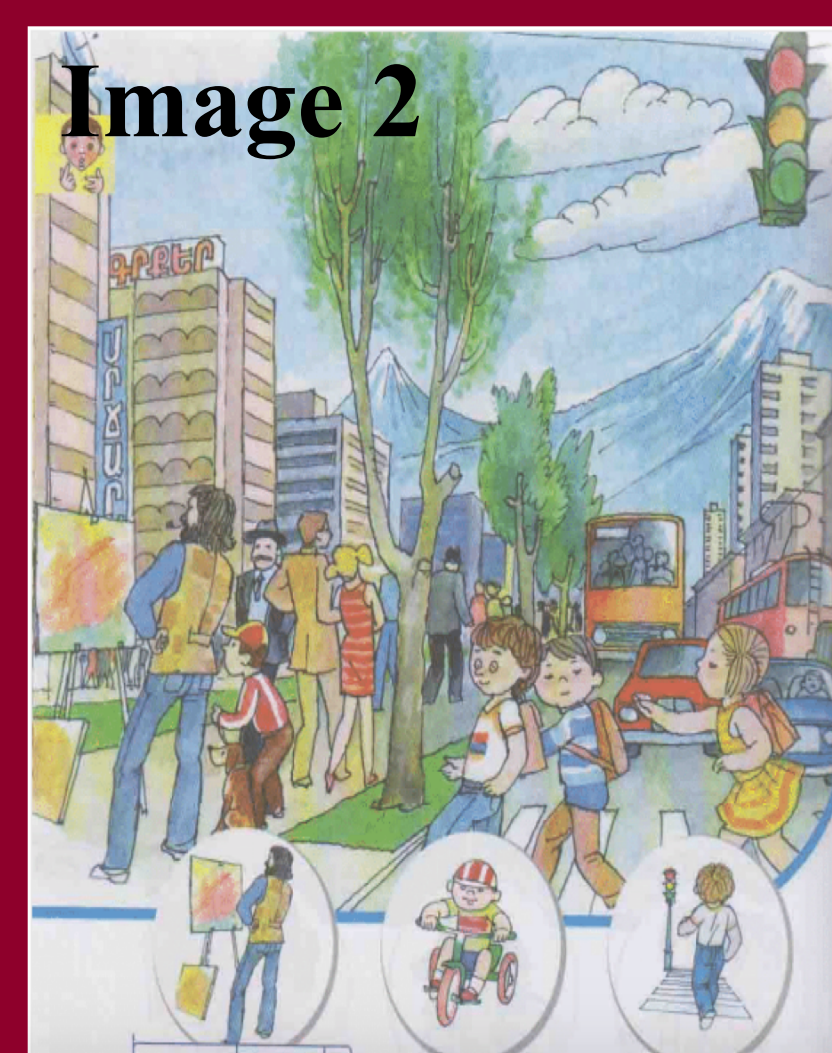


Table 1. *Aybenarans Examined in This Study*

No.	Date	Title of Textbook	Author(s)	Publishing company
1	1973	Aybenaran (alphabet book)	Ashod Der-Krikorian	Poligrafkombinak
2	1988	Arevig Aybenaran (sunny alphabet book)	Ashod Der-Krikorian	Koynavor Dbakrootyan Dbaran
3	1990	Aybenaran (alphabet book)	Ashod Der-Krikorian	Koynavor Dbakrootyan Dbaran
4	1991	Badgerazart Aybenaran (illustrated alphabet book)	Sona Dikranian	Mshagoyte Haygagan Font
5	2003	Zankag (bell)	Julietta Gyulameerian	Datev Gitakrddakan Hamaleer
6	2006	Aybenaran (alphabet book)	Angel Kyourkjian and Lilit Der-Krikorian	Edit Print
7	2010	Aybenaran (alphabet book)	Vachagan A. Sargisyan	Manmar
8	2017	Aybenaran (Alphabet book)	Angel Kyourkjian and Lilit Der-Krikorian	Edit Print



Introduction

Aybenarans (alphabet books) are not only a source of learning to read and write in Armenian, but also a window to understanding the construction of Armenian childhood. Instead of following a linear trajectory toward modernization and globalization, *aybenarans* offer empirical evidence of disruptions in Soviet representations of Armenian childhood in time and space, and the continuing socialist legacies coexisting with in post-socialist narratives. During post-Soviet transformation processes, international organizations recommended that Armenian policymakers adopt modernized curriculum and teaching practices to help facilitate Armenia’s transition to what experts suggested a “modern” (capitalistic) knowledge-based economy. On the other hand, Khachatryan et al. (2013) suggested that there was no concrete understanding of the reform: “no valid evidence indicating the education system is moving toward a specific well-defined goal, and ... no priorities identified that would result in improving the overall system” (p. 6). Such findings reflect the logic of coloniality present in post-Soviet knowledge production, or the post-Cold War East/West binary, where postsocialist reforms were expected to conform to “singular Western models, and abstract global universals...yardsticks for understanding postsocialist transformations” (Silova et al., 2017, p. S82).

Research Questions

1. How do Soviet *aybenarans* (re)define Armenian childhood in post-Soviet RoA?
2. How do post-Soviet *aybenarans* (re)define Armenian childhood in post-Soviet RoA?
3. Comparing Soviet and post-Soviet *aybenarans*, how does the construction of Armenian childhood reflect global concepts of what it means to be a child, as well as traditional Armenian values?

Proposed methods

- Using Fairclough’s (2012) approach to critical discourse analysis, this study will utilize the normative and explanatory critique to language studies which requires not only evaluation and assessment of where these cultural or political concepts hold in society but also application through explanation.
- This study will evaluate the relationship between official Armenian Ministry of Education & Science, which serves as the partly semiotic national structure, and the language of the texts in *aybenarans* used to justify the construction of Armenian childhood. (See Table 1 for list of *aybenarans*.)
- *Literacies of Post-Socialist Childhood* will guide the analysis of the findings and discuss how they relate to “being (re)imagined in the context (or absence) of neoliberal globalisation in the post-socialist space” (Mead & Silova, 2013, p. 201). Applying the framework developed by Mead & Silova (2013), I will explore two themes:
 - (1) *literacies of space*, includes landscapes, homelands, and ruptures in sociospatial discourses,
 - (2) *literacies of time*, includes Soviet futures and post-Soviet pasts, progress, nostalgia, and memory.

Hypothesis – expected (mixed) results

- A (re)turn to the national Armenian identity with symbols, poetry, and texts (see image 1, *I Love you, Armenian language/tongue*).
- A (re)turn to primordial or premodern with messages and symbols of globalization sprinkled throughout texts and images. (see image 2 with Mount Ararat in Urban scene and 3 introductory letter from Armenian Catholicos)

Contribution and Significance

This study joins other post-Soviet scholars who critique a taken-for-granted assumption and an implicit expectation that post-Soviet educational reforms would follow an (in)visible, linear path towards Western hegemonic and neoliberal ideals.

As educational reforms continue to be (re)shaped, this study aims to inform stakeholders of these findings, gaps, disruptions, and patterns in order to determine collectively how to improve or move forward.

This study will also help educators to reflect on the implications of educational policies and how these changes impact their classroom practices and teaching.

References

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