

GEORGIAN MUHAJIRS' DESCENDANTS LIVING IN DÜZCE REGION  
(THEIR LINGUAL AND ETHNIC IDENTITY)

დუზჯეს რეგიონში მცხოვრებ მუჰაჯირ ქართველთა შთამომავლების  
სოფლები და ენობრივ-ეთნიკური იდენტობა

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**Abstract**

In our article we review a Georgian lingual and ethnic identity of the Georgian Muhajirs' descendants in Düzce, Turkey. All the research materials are obtained by us during the linguistic field works in Turkey, Düzce and Sakarya region. In the article, all the Illustrative phrases in Georgian are transcribed with specific Latin based transcription for Ibero-Caucasian Languages.

The most part of Muhajir Georgians' Düzce descendants have preserved the Georgian ethnical self-concept. Due to the code switching process going on during 140 years the historical mother tongue is only spoken by the older generation; their knowledge of the Turkish language is mostly poor. The people of middle generation are usually bilingual speaking both Georgian and Turkish. The younger generation speaks only Turkish, which they consider more prestigious than the mother tongue of their ancestors.

Based on our data, the identity of ethnic Georgians' new generation is determined by the Turkish citizenship: one part of Muhajirs consider themselves "Turkish". Such self-concept is conditioned by their free integration into the Turkish state through the Turkish language. Those who consider themselves Turkish are well aware of their Georgian origin.

**Key-words:** Georgians, Muhajirs, Turkey, Georgia, Düzce

მაკა სალია-ბეშიროდლუ

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### აბსტრაქტი

ჩვენს სტატიაში განხილულია დუზჯეში (თურქეთი) მცხოვრებ ქართველ მუჰაჯირთა შთამომავლების ქართული ენობრივ-ეთნიკური იდენტობის თავისებურებანი. მონაცემები შეკრებილია ჩვენ მიერ, 2021 წლის აპრილ-მაისში, დუზჯეს და საქარს რეგიონებში საველე-საენათმეცნიერო ექსპედიციის შედეგად. ყველა საილუსტრაციო ფრაზა წარმოდგენილია საგანგებო ტრანსკრიფციით, რომელიც შექმნილია ლათინურ გრაფიკაზე დაყრდნობით, იბერიულ-კავკასიურ ენათათვის.

დუზჯეში მცხოვრებ ქართველ მუჰაჯირთა შთამომავლებს, მეტწილად კარგად აქვთ დაცული ქართული ენობრივ-ეთნიკური თვითშეგნება. თუმცა, ქართულ და თურქულ სამეტყველო კოდთა 140 წლიანი შერევა-აღრევის გამო, დედაენა შემოინახა ძირითადად უფროსმა თაობამ. საშუალო თაობა უმეტესად, მთლიანად ორენოვანია: თანაბრად ფლობს როგორც ქართულ, ისე - თურქულ ენას. ახალგაზრდა თაობა უკვე სავსებით თურქულად მეტყველებს. თურქულ ენას ისინი გაცილებით უფრო პრესტიჟულად მიიჩნევენ, ვიდრე წინაპართა დედაენას.

ჩვენი მონაცემების მიხედვით, დუზჯეში მცხოვრებ ქართველ მუჰაჯირთა შთამომავლების ახალგაზრდა თაობის იდენტობაზე დიდ გავლენას ახდენს თურქეთის მოქალაქეობა - მათი ერთი ნაწილი თავს „თურქად“ მიიჩნევს იმიტომ, რომ დაიბადა, გაიზარდა თურქეთში, ინტეგრირებულია თურქულ საზოგადოებრიობაში თურქული ენის მეშვეობით და ა.შ. თუმცა იმავდროულად, არ ივიწყებს ქართულ ფესვებსაც.

**საკვანძო სიტყვები:** ქართველები, მუჰაჯირები, თურქეთი, საქართველო, დუზჯე

### Introduction

Georgian population's migration to Turkey in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, known as **Muhažiroba** or Muhajir migration is considered as one of the greatest tragedies in the history of Georgia. Since then, that problem has never lost its urgency and the Georgian public has always taken lively interest in the fate of Georgian Muhajirs living in a foreign country. Moreover, Mujajiroba cannot be seen as only a Georgian tragedy, but it concerns the entire Caucasian region.

The issue of Muhajir migration is interesting from many perspectives – political, historical, ethnographic and linguistic. Hence, with time this event is gaining increasing interest and attention.

For a long time, the topic of Muhajir migration had been considered taboo. The existing circumstances did not allow for a careful examination of that issue. However, notwithstanding the great historical barriers, Georgians did not lose faith and hope that one day they would reunite to share the pain they had endured for centuries. Despite the difficulties, a number of Georgian and foreign scholars (M. Arif, E. Dalegio D'Alesio, P. Magnarella, Z. Chichinadze, G. Kazbegi, Sh. Putkaradze, T. Putkaradze, R. Topchishvili, I. Ghutidze, I. Rachvelishvili and others) still wrote works, studies and articles, published in the Georgian press during 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> centuries, about the life of Georgians scattered throughout Turkey.

There is a variety of information regarding the places Georgians settled in Turkey. It is generally known that they chose the places with forests, water and beautiful scenery, which reminded them of Georgia. **Düzce Province** in the Black Sea region was one of such places. It consists of eight districts. Although Düzce lies on the lowland area (as its name indicates), the descendants of Georgian Muhajirs live in upland villages, the places with mountains and lots of trees, which look like their native Achara – their Georgia.

### Methods

From 6<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> April and 9<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> May 2021, during the linguistic field works arranged in the West Black Sea coast of the Republic of Turkey – in the provinces Sakarya, Düzce and Zonguldak – we recorded many different stories from Georgian Muhajirs' descendants. They told us about their ancestors' adventures in the period when they were banished from their native country and had to settle down in the Ottoman Empire. It is remarkable that some of the narratives mostly coincide with the events in the history of Muhajirs (1877-1882), which are supported by historical evidence.

### Results and Discussion

#### 1. Düzce Region and Its Georgian Settlers (General Overview)

The districts of Düzce Province are **Akçakoca**, **Yığılca**, **Cumayeri**, **Çilimli**, **Gölyaka**, **Muncurlu**, **Kaynaşlı** and **Düzce**, which is the central district.

According to historical documents, in 1918 the total number of Düzce population made 60200. Among them were Turks (24723), Circassians (9813), Abazians (6914), Rumeli (4891),

(Crimean) Tartars (1242), Kurds (747), **the Laz and Gürcü (3225)**, gypsies (6405), Bosniaks (90) and Copts (705).

It is remarkable that the province was characterized by linguistic diversity, as, obviously, each ethnic group spoke its own language.

There are few Georgians residing in Düzce whose ancestors came there directly from Batumi or other parts of Achara - most of them at first arrived in Giresun or Ordu, and from there moved to Düzce, making it their home.

In his study, Professor Ali Ertuğrul discusses the historical data containing information about Düzce. The study also includes mention of the 1831 census data on the Laz and Gürcü inhabitants of Düzce, namely the village of Yığılca. Based on that data, a group of newcomers, who settled Kırık Köyü (Yığılca District), considered themselves Gürcü, but they, even the older generation, could not speak Georgian. Nor did they follow or remember any Georgian customs (Çelebi, 2018).

The documents drawn up in 1928 contain the following list of Georgian villages: Gürcü Hüseyin Ağa Köyü (Çilimli), Hamamüstü Gürcüler Köyü, Gürcü Asar Köyü, Gürcü Hisardere, Kirazlı Köyü.

In the center of Düzce, there is a mahalle, in the above documents mentioned by the name of **Gürcü Mahalles**. This place is still inhabited by many Georgian families and its old name is widely known.

Regarding the inhabitants of the villages of Akçakoca (Meseköyü and Laçna), the documents dated 1890, include mention of Georgians and Abazas, who had traveled from Batumi to Trabzon and further to Akçakoca.

The Georgian population of **Düzce Province** is mostly made of the descendants of Muhajirs who came from Keda, Khulo, Shuakhevi districts and Batumi.

Below are listed the villages inhabited by ethnic Georgians:

**Düzce District:** Aydınpinar (Achara)<sup>1</sup>, Asar (Achara), Gölormanı (Achara), Doğanlı (Achara), Yeşilçam (Achara), Muncurlu (Achara – Shuakhevi, Khulo), Musababa (Achara – Shuakhevi), Fındıklı-Aksu (Achara), Çakırhacıbrahim (Achara), Çiftlikköy (Achara – Shuakhevi, Khulo), Şımşır (Achara).

**Akçakoca District:** Doğancılar (Achara), Esmahanım (Achara), Melenagaz (Achara – Batumi), Uğurlu (Achara), Çiçekpınar (Klarjeti – Nigali).

**Çilimli District:** Yesil Mahalle (Achara – Machakheli), Yeşiltepe (Achara), Mahırağa (Achara), Hızardere (Achara).

**Gölyaka District:** Hamamusti (Achara – Keda), Hacı Yaküp (Achara).

**Yığılca District:** Kırık (Achara).

The term “Georgian village” is conventionally used to refer to those villages where ethnic Georgians compose the majority of population. However, sometimes Gürcü narrators stress

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<sup>1</sup>According to the narrators, the names of localities indicated in brackets are the places from which the mentioned population arrived.

that their ancestors were the first to settle down in a certain village and Georgians were the only people living there, until they mixed with Turks. Gürcü Çiftlik is one of such villages.

## 2. Georgian villages in Düzce İli

### Gürcü Çiftlik

is situated between Düzce and Yığılca. The settlers who had arrived from Georgia called the newly founded village Gürcü Çiftlik (a Georgian village/farm). According to the story of Selim Mahiroğlu, 80, who migrated to Turkey from the village of Maxo, Georgians sailed to Istanbul. A ship was waiting in Batumi with its anchor dropped near the beach for a month. During that period, those who wanted to leave Georgia, went on board, while others remained in Akho. The state had allotted land for newcomers in Adana, but they did not like that place and traveled to Düzce at their own expense. They liked the place and settled down there. Selim's father paid 60 pieces of gold for the land. Some of their relatives settled in İzmit and other villages, but, according to the narrator, they have remained in touch ever since.

### Muncurlu.

40% of the population are Georgians. The village of Muncurlu consists of 5 districts (mahalles): Besni, Şapsi, Işık Mahallesi, Elmalık Mahallesi and Esas Merkez Mahallesi. The Georgians living in Muncurlu originally come from Ghorjomi, Shuakhevi and Chvani.

### Çiftlikköy

is an Acharan village, whose inhabitants come from Shuakhevi, Akhaldaba, Keda, Chvana and Kobuleti. Their family names are: Mak'araže (Mak'arāšvili), Beriže, K'obalaže, K'irxveli. According to Mahmud Merçan (K'obalaže), there are forty Georgian households: şirinoğlu, Cesteroğlu, Xilaže, Kokoloğlu (Karcivaže), Astanoğlu, Kobalaže and Karaabdoğlu among them.

### Yeşiltepe

is 15 kilometers from Düzce. According to Tahsin Birinci, the population of his village are the people whose family names are Birincoğlu, Seidoğlu, Kasancoğlu, Karakosanoğlu, Kosanoğlu, and Savsetli. As the narrator remarks, these are nicknames of Georgian origin. "There are 106 households in the village of Iuzalti," he says, "We are Acharans, our fathers came from there." The names listed above are not real surnames, they are nicknames, which reveal their Georgian origin - each of them has its own "history".

### Mahırağa

There are about 70 households in the village, and 20% of them are Georgian. According to Hussein Geladze (Kurd) his people are said to have come from Batumi, Achara. Their names are Geloğlu, Odabasoğlu, Cesteroğlu, Helimoğlu and Bairak.

### Çiçekpınar

This village is situated in Akkoca İlçe, Düzce ili. Its population (about 80 households) do not speak Georgian.

### Eften

is the name given to the surroundings of the village of Hamamüstü and Hacıyakup. The majority of Georgians living in Efteni come from the village of Tsoniarisi by the river Acharistskali. Speaking about their origin, they also mention Zegani, Keda, Zvare, Loda, Gulebi, Vani and other places. Nobody knows for sure when Georgians settled in Efteni. Migrants from Tsoniarisi are said to have inhabited this territory in 1877-1878. According to their stories, these people were first taken to Istanbul, and then to Akçakoca, Sinop, Samsun, Ordu and Giresun. However, the reason of such movement was not a policy to scatter Georgians, but the plan to restore the ports linking Turkey with Batumi. The newspapers of that time (Kavkaz, Droeba, Iveria) read: "People sold their land and property at ridiculously low price and traveled to ports. They spent months waiting for ships and after some time many of them ran out of money, which put them in a difficult position." Some migrants from Tsoniarisi sailed to Giresun port aboard the ship Iavuzi and on their arrival started looking for the land in Kesapi İlçe to settle down.

The most common family names encountered in the village of Eften are: Çelebi – Çelebioğlu (Çelebaşe), Iavuzebi – Sakalar (Ismailaşe), Çakar – Yıldız (Kinzaşvili), Gogit'ize, Gulebi – Akabi (Gulaşvili – Kwirxilaze), Kiliç (Molaahmedize), Mezarcioğlu (Diasamize) and others. Ancestors of the people bearing those names liked this location and established a village.

However, they found themselves in the company of Circassians and local Turks living 10-15 kilometers from their new home. There were several Armenian villages as well, whose residents soon left the territory. At first the newcomers had conflicts with the indigenous population, but they managed to find a common language with the inhabitants of Ordu, Trabzon and Giresun, and with time it became possible for all of them to live in peace.

For the most part, the population of Bolu ili Georgian villages are descendants of the Georgians who came from Acharistskali and Tsoniarisi.

### **3. Georgian Muhajirs' self-perception in Düzce**

As regards to Georgian Muhajirs' self-perception, it is remarkable that in the materials we have collected, they openly declare themselves Georgian. They call themselves Gürcü as well as Muhajirs living in other regions. Their young generation is familiar with the terms "Kartveli" and "Sakartvelo". They consider Turkey as their birthplace, and Georgia as their motherland. Unfortunately, young Muhajirs do not speak Georgian. Some of them can understand, but not speak it. The level of their knowledge of Georgian differs across the province. However, their enthusiasm and willingness to learn Georgian makes us feel more optimistic. motherland

The interrelationship between language and nation has always been an urgent problem, and it gains urgency, when we start to analyze the Georgian language spoken by Georgians torn from their homeland. It is interesting what they think and how they feel about this problem and the narrators' stories are the best way of finding that. The recorded material can be divided into two periods. The texts that belong to the first period were recorded about 20 or 25 years ago, when the households speaking only Georgian were still to be found in some

Georgian villages of Düzce Province. Such households spoke no other language than Georgian. The heads of families did not speak Turkish; neither did preschool children. As for the schoolchildren and young people, who were studying and already spoke a little Turkish, they did not use that language at home. This is a story provided by a narrator: “The common language spoken by the whole family was Georgian. All the more so, our grandparents did not allow us to speak Turkish: once, when I was about six or seven, I saw a beautiful stone in the garden and ran to my grandmother to show it to her. “Look, what a beautiful taş I’ve got!” (“Taş” is Turkish for “stone”) I told her. Grandmother, looking offended, told me that in her garden that thing had to be called by its Georgian name - “kwa”. That was a hint that at her Georgian home I had to speak Georgian. All things there had Georgian names... They were proud to call themselves Gürcü and told many stories about the hard times they had gone through. They were terribly upset when young Georgians spoke Turkish. I remember our neighbor, a wise man aged 115, telling to us, a group of young people standing in the street: “Do not change, my children!” He meant our nationality, wanted us to remain Georgian. His eyes were full of sorrow and he spoke imploringly.

Despite the old man’s appeals, things changed with time. Gradually everyone and everything changed and many Georgians forgot their mother tongue. This is reflected in the recently obtained materials. We still hear “I am Gürcü” uttered proudly, but we also hear young people say: “My father is Georgian, my grandfather was Georgian...” but the speaker does not consider himself/herself Georgian. This can be explained by the fact that for that category to be Georgian means to speak that language, and those who cannot speak the Georgian language, are not (or cannot be) Georgian. Similar attitude is characteristic of the Georgians living in other regions of Turkey as well. In his work “Georgians in Turkey – the Linguistic Situation” I. Ghutidze writes: “Talented Georgians learnt Turkish very quickly, which really worried the older generation. “...has been at school for two days and look, he/she has turned into a Turk!” said they about their grandchildren. For them shifting to a different language meant giving up Georgian nationality (Ghutidze, 2016, 93). However, one will also hear: **“He’s a bad Gürcü. He cannot speak his own language. When you lose your language, you get lost too.** We are all Georgians, but our speech has changed. You speak good Georgian, but our Georgian is poor. We are different now” but they still say: “Our mother tongue is Georgian, we are Gürcü and Gürcü is our native language...” or “Turkey is our country, but Georgia is our motherland. We are Gürcü and Gürcü is our mother tongue...” “Mother tongue is your mother’s language, the language your mother spoke. If you love your mother, you should love your mother tongue as well and never lose it...” Indeed, families with Georgian mothers (housewives) are more likely to speak Georgian and follow the Georgian traditions than others. There are also cases when Turkish women married to Georgian men understand and speak some Georgian because they have learnt it from their mothers-in-law.

As we have mentioned above, time and environment are the factors responsible for the present situation. “We mixed with Turks and Circassians... Georgian population has declined. Our language has changed.”... “Čveneburi man would marry čveneburi woman, we would not let our daughters marry anyone else except čveneburis. It was a right thing to do. Now our

populations is declining”... As we have already said before, there were Georgian families that did not speak Turkish at all. Such lifestyle was significantly conditioned by social factors as well. Georgians living in Turkey did not get education, so they did not go to Turkish schools or colleges; they did not communicate with any ethnic groups except Georgian and did not integrate into the Turkish society. With time, the reform that made education compulsory accelerated the process of social integration. At first, the children brought up in Georgian families found it difficult to study at school, as they did not speak Turkish until the school age. Their parent were even shamed by schoolteachers. However, the period of alienation did not last long as the children learnt the Turkish language easily. Later, the talented and successful Georgians went to continue their studies in big cities, and separated from their Georgian environment gradually forgot the Georgian language, whose place was taken by Turkish.

As a result, today very few Georgians living in Turkey can speak their native language. The same is true of Düzce Province. The old generation of Georgians complain regretfully, **“we have forgotten our language; we have changed, now we are different Gürcüs... only few of us remained, so few Gürcüs are left”**; **“when we Gürcüs get together, we cannot speak our own language.”** Their words – **“the Gürcü language and traditions declined, disappeared...faded”** - express unfathomable pain, sorrow and grief.

Opening the Department of Caucasian Languages and Culture at Düzce University (2013), which along with Circassian offers a course in Georgian language and literature, is very important for preservation of the Georgian language. It is remarkable that students are also engaged in the search and study of dialect forms of Georgian still encountered in Düzce. The students learning literary Georgian at university find the word-forms heard from narrators interesting. We can bring the following example: a student will find it difficult to understand a narrator’s question რა იჯები (“How are you doing?” Tr. N). The student who is learning Georgian as a foreign language, knows the forms რას შვრები? რას აკეთებ? რას მოღვაწეობ? Meantime, the narrator claims that his Georgian is purer than the modern language, which has been changed. **It should be noted that many word-forms preserved in the speech of Düzce Georgians are really ancient and interesting from many points of view. Such forms are disappearing every day, so it is very important to record and study them.**

As it was mentioned above, the obtained materials could be roughly divided into two groups: the first group contains the records made in 1990s, while the materials belonging to the second group were recorded in the last year. It is very interesting two compare the two categories.

The materials recorded earlier are more informative and freer from foreign elements. The respondents of that period could speak Georgian fluently and expressed their opinions in an amusing manner. Narrators were eloquent and voluble, and many of them did not speak Turkish at all.

Today, the situation is the opposite of what it was in the past – all Georgian residents of Düzce Province speak Turkish and hardly anyone speaks Georgian. Those who can still speak it, complain: **“Old times were better; people stayed in and spoke Gurjuje at home.”**



#### 4. Guržijaj – the Georgian speech of Muhajirs' descendants

That is the language, which their mothers spoke and taught them to speak. The older generation uttered their first words in Georgian, which was the only language they spoke before going to school. They could not speak Turkish, as the only language their families used for communication was Georgian. At school, they started learning Turkish and in their first year, many of them found it difficult to understand their teachers and Turkish classmates. Georgian parents were often shamed by schoolteachers for not teaching their children to speak Turkish. However, Georgian children still managed to learn Turkish, completed school successfully, graduated universities with honors and made careers... Talented and successful Georgians were appointed to high-level posts. During their struggle to achieve success, they often had to move to big cities leaving their families, parents and Georgian environment behind. Meantime, they gradually forgot the Georgian language, as they had to speak Turkish all the time. There are some high-level officials, who still remember Georgian, but their number is very small.

The ethnic Georgians living in Düzce Province **today** can be roughly classified into several groups according to their knowledge of Georgian:

1. Those who know the Georgian language and speak it;
2. Those who know the Georgian language, understand it, but cannot speak Georgian;
3. Those who understand Georgian, but do not speak it;
4. Those who do not speak Georgian at all (children, also young and middle generations).

We could add one more, very interesting and important group of people who do not know the Georgian language, but considering the friendly relations established between Turkey and Georgia in the last years, are willing to learn it. In order to learn Georgian, they attend the Georgian language courses at Düzce Association of Georgian Culture. The total number of learners is 25 and their ages range from 6 to 72. There are young people as well.

Following the opening of Sarpi border and restoration of Georgia's independence, a new epoch started in Turkish-Georgian relations. The descendants of Muhajirs at last gained entry to Georgia, which was a significant event in their lives. They made their dream, or rather the dream of their ancestors, come true. Their mothers, fathers and grandparents had often asked them to visit their motherland just to look at its sky and smell its ground; Georgian Muhajirs had begged their descendants to embrace the land of their dreams for them. Čveneburis seem to have maintained contact with Georgia in their thoughts, which is the strongest link one may have. As we mentioned above, they knew no other language except Georgian, as they could not afford to get education and the whole households spoke Georgian. The dreams they had at night were Georgian, as well as their folklore, dances, songs, customs and traditions. It is true that with time, many things changed, but we hope that the restored contacts with Georgia will bring good results.

We have already mentioned the event that makes us thankful to Düzce government and glad at the improvement of Turkish-Georgian relations – it is the opening of the Department of Caucasian Languages and Culture (2013-2014) at Düzce University. This department offers a course in Georgian language and literature along with Circassian. Until

2016, students could only take a Bachelor of Arts degree course, but during 2016-2017, the Master's level course was added as well. The number of students studying the Georgian language and literature is growing every year, which means that the above specialty is in demand in Turkey. Scientific events like literary soirees, Georgian students' conferences and meetings are often organized at Düzce University. The annual competition in Georgian calligraphy plays a significant role in popularization of the Georgian language and literature; the symposium held in May 2017 in celebration of Shota Rustaveli's 800th anniversary was also an important contribution to that cause. With support of several organizations, Düzce University published the Proceedings of the Symposium. **We are putting so much emphasis on the above events, because cultural relations are very important for raising public awareness.**

Speaking about the friendly relations between Turkey and Georgia, we should also recognize the contribution of Düzce Association of Georgian Culture, thanks to which the Georgian folk music and dance circles function in Düzce Province. The Düzce Association of Georgian Culture is a place where Georgians and people interested in Georgian culture gather and many important events are held.

It should be noted that the linguistic situation is changing every day: the generation for whom Georgian was the only language for communication is dying away. There are very few old people who speak Georgian fluently. Their Turkish is also good, so they are practically bilingual, but they speak Turkish with noticeable Georgian accent. It is interesting to listen to their Georgian speech, particularly incantations, proverbs, fairy tales, legends and stories that they heard from ancestors or experienced themselves, but "the stories of Batumi" are the most interesting.

The purpose of our research is to save, record and study the above material, which is diverse and interesting from many points of view. This material reflects the history of one of the most painful periods for Georgia. They have preserved the rarest forms of the Acharan dialect and the old Georgian vocabulary, which cannot be traced in literary Georgian; the lexems, whose meanings have become vague in the Acharan dialect and are gradually forgotten. It is very important to observe how the language phenomenon is affected by time and space. That reminds us of the words said by a narrator: "It was a good time because we all spoke Gürcüce; now I am forgetting it too," and added, with tears in her eyes, "I wish I could see what Batumi is like now"... (the narrator was a 90-year-old woman). Her son, who had been listening to our conversation, offered to take her to Batumi: "I will drive slowly and make frequent stops, so that we can see Batumi". "We could go, but at my age I will not stand the joy of seeing it," answered the woman.

We think that the future generation and people of Georgia need to know the materials given in this article and the narrators who provided them.

## 5. Folklore

While the Georgians living in Turkey failed to preserve written culture, they still speak Georgian, although this language is close to extinction. In villages, Georgian folk poems and songs can still be heard. Some of them are given below:

ec'ers cexli ek'ideba, muxasac ebrialeba  
 ec'ers cexli ek'ideba, muxasac ebrialeba...  
 nenem ra mitxras unda da raper žoyapi miwce-nda,  
 nenem k'aba šimik'era, c'in kop'č'ebi dimik'era,  
 nenem k'aba šimik'era, c'in kop'č'ebi dimik'era...  
 tu gamatxows - gamatxows da zalwan war gač'iwrebuli  
 tu gamatxows - gamatxows da zalwan war gač'iwrebuli...  
 nin-nini, pacjaw, nin-nini!

[Etseri is in flames, oaks burning bright,

Etseri is in flames, oaks burning bright...

When Mother speaks to me, what shall I say?

She sewed me a nice dress with nice buttons,

She sewed me a nice dress with nice buttons...

I wish they found me someone I'd marry,

I wish they found me someone I'd marry,

Nini, Nini little, Nini Nini!]

Šamili cek'wops, kokdeba

cerze dadgeba, c'ordeba,

mis jars tu mošordeba,

wer icocxleps, mok'deba!

Shamyl starts dancing, swift and smart,

Stands on his toes, oh, what a start!

If with his love, he has to part,

This boy will die of broken heart!

According to the narrator, “this is a song of “dress men”, Gurjis also sing it, though”. The Georgian Muhajirs living in Sinop call Abkhaz, Abazginian and Circassian males “dress men”, because they used to wear long Chokhas (Chokha is a calf-length, wool coat worn by men in the Caucasus) while Muhajirs themselves wore short Chakuras. Unlike the previous song, the text of this song is original and its creation was probably conditioned by great popularity of North Caucasian music on the Black Sea coast of Turkey. It is worth noting that this song has a Turkish version as well:

Şamil dansa başladı,

İki yarını aradı,

Birisi ile dans etti,

Diğeri de terk etti!

[Shamyl started to dance,

He found two sweethearts,

He danced with one of them

And left the other one]

Similar verses for songs are widespread in Achara and outside it – in those parts of Turkey, which are settled by Georgian Muhajirs. It is noteworthy that the text of Saim Ozgun’s song is a mixture of two verses sung as separate songs.

### Conclusion

Based on the materials we obtained, it can be concluded that most Georgian villages in Amasya district are at risk of losing the Georgian language, although they have preserved the Georgian identity. Even those narrators who do not speak Georgian stress that neither they nor their descendants will ever lose the Georgian nationality and Georgian identity. However, they share this concern with us: **“We are like embers covered with ashes. The ashes are thicker in some places and thinner in others. Please help us, blow on us a little and do not give up on us. We are burning slowly, quietly... It burns and aches us to be Georgian. Blow on us, help us not to go out.”**

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