

HOMSHETSI

21 February International Mother Language Day

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I was born in Hopa Kemalpaşa. My name is Hikmet, my family name is Akçiçek,

I am Makaroğlu. We are Hamshenis. In the years I was born, the children in Hopa first learn Homshetsi and as they start elementary school gradually learn Turkish. I learned Turkish as I am 5-6 mostly at school.

We call our language Homshetsi. Then we heard that our language is identical to those of Armenians. We also heard that there are Hamshenis in Abkhazia and Russia and they also speak the same language, but we are Muslim, they are Christian.

We have never seen an Armenian before and did not have the chance to hear the language. Now, after the Sarp border gate is open we came to know many Armenians and start talking to them. We made friends in Abkhazia and Armenia over the web.

We have an inner pain, the pain of having a language that is in extinction.

Everything happened gradually, first tea gardens replaced cornfields, and then trucks replaced the cattle sheep. We have abandoned the villages and migrated to the cities. Now there is neither voluntary cooperation nor wedding ceremonies in the front garden. We are having weddings at wedding halls, organ and dancing replaced shepherd's pipe and horon; and thus Turkish replaced Hamshetsi.

The one whose mother tongue is Turkish when came to the city is transformed to be polite and does not sing folk songs but pop and rock. The Hamshenis let alone singing do not even speak the language once in the city.

Turkish replaces Hamshenit. Then the children do not learn the language. When they do not learn the language, it is bound to die. Our coming together is to prevent this sound from being the last, and this fire from extinguish, our language from drowning; let it live with us forever, like any other language.