

## THE TURKEY NOGHAY, AN ENDAGERED LANGUAGE: A DOCUMENTATION AND ATTITUDES STUDY

The Noghays mainly inhabit the Caucasian region and in scattered diasporas in Romania and Turkey due to enforced migrations. Some scattered and smaller populations of the Noghays have also been documented in European countries (Karakoç 2013). The Noghay language with its close resemblance to Kazakh and Karakalpak belongs to Kipchak–Noghay branch of Kipchak Turkic. The Noghay language has three main dialects that differs from one another with minor differences. It is clear from the features of the language used by the Turkey Noghay community who migrated to Anatolia (Turkey) in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries that there appear to be speakers of the three different dialects of the Noghay language in Turkey. After three hundred years of the latest wave of migration, Oghuz features appear to have been added to the language spoken by the Turkey Noghays (Çelik Şavk 2015).

This study aims to undertake two independent field studies into the Turkey Noghay language that has been evolved through a ‘dialect contact’:

### **Documentation;**

The first field study will involve identifying and documenting grammar features and vocabulary of the Turkey Noghay language among the Noghays who reside in villages *Kırkkuyu*, *Boğazören*, *Ağılbaşı*, and *Seyitahmetli* of Kulu, a province of Konya; villages *Akın*, *Şeker*, and *Doğankaya* of Şereflikoçhisar, a province of Ankara (Jankowski, 2000); the *Paşadağ* region of Afyonkarahisar; *Ceyhan*, a province of Adana; and *Nurdağı*, a province of Gaziantep. Informants will be contacted via initial contacts of members of the project team who are of Noghay origin.

Audio and visual data will be presented online both in their fully transcribed forms and in a processed form that will be produced through a special indexing and concordancing software. The software indexes words and affixes in an alphabetical order and provides frequencies of use as numerical data. Further, the software can also perform operations of concordancing. The emergent corpus will remain active and open for further data feeds that will make it possible to compile a comprehensive corpus of the Noghay language.

### **Attitudes towards the mother tongue;**

There has recently been a considerable increase in the mother tongue awareness of speakers of the Noghay language, who have been under an intensive influence of Modern Turkey Turkish. Such awareness appears to have been accelerated through community association and seems to be especially popular among university students or graduates. The awareness appears to be ever increasing. A preliminary study that was conducted online (Çelik Şavk ve Özkan: [www.onlineanketler.com](http://www.onlineanketler.com)) reveals some important information on the attitudes of the Noghay language speakers towards their mother tongue. However, the study is, unfortunately, limited in size and scope.

Therefore, this project aims to undertake a large scale study to expand our understanding of the phenomena.

Identifying endangered languages and dialects, determining the degree of the danger, protection of languages, documentation and revitalisation efforts have formed a prominent field in contemporary linguistics. A considerable number of publications and projects have been done with regards to endangered languages. Similarly, there have been some individual studies and a limited number of projects on endangered languages in Turkey. One of the projects that is of relevance to this theme is the Endangered Languages Project, (Tehlikedeki Diller Projesi), details of which can be found at [www.tehlikedekidiller.com](http://www.tehlikedekidiller.com). Published within this project, Journal of Endangered Languages (Tehlikedeki Diller Dergisi) has dedicated its second issue for the Noghays. It became clear in the articles that appeared in this issue that studies on the Noghays in general and the Turkey Noghays and their language are scarce and inadequate. It has also been emphasized that the Noghay language, now enlisted in UNESCO's list of endangered languages, needs to be investigated systematically (<http://dergi.tehlikedekidiller.com/index.php/TDD/issue/view/2>). The project proposed in this application form aims to address this necessity and fill the evident gap in our knowledge of the Turkey Noghays and their language.