

KARACHAI

21 February International Mother Language Day

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Both my mother and my father were very fluent both in Karachai and Turkish languages. So are my brothers and sisters. We still speak Karachai at home. However, nowadays we increasingly insert Turkish words or speak in Turkish. We do not speak in Karachai with our nieces and nephews because mostly one of their parents is not Karachai.

I am happy to be able to speak my mother tongue. Although my parents were born in Turkey, our grandparents were born in Caucasus, currently the Independent Karachay Malkar Republic. We still have many relatives living there and they speak this language. We can communicate with them only in Karachai language.

Initially I didn't really care about knowing this language but now I feel very happy. Last year I was in Baku and the saleswoman at the Duty Free shop said "here is küzgü (*mirror*)". I felt very happy when I understood what she said. I can communicate with everyone from the Turkic republics with this language. I'd love Karachai to survive. Of course, I am aware that it cannot be a country-wide spoken language but there is a nation living in the Caucasus and speaking this language. We can develop our relations with them using this language. I'd very much like to see activities that would teach Karachai to the people who couldn't learn their mother language at home.