

OSSETE

21 February International Mother Language Day

Majority of Ossetians living in rural areas, had migrated to urban areas to work and send their children to school. Children, who were born and grew up in cities, could not learn their mother language and the ones who knew, forgot their mother tongue in time for not being able to speak it for a long time.

Mutlu ÖĞÜN

Istanbul - BIA News Center

21 February 2012

According to 2009 UNESCO report, Ossete language, is on the list of the languages in danger of disappearing. This report sheds light to some facts.

In our country, Turkey, Ossete was one of languages that people were hesitant to speak during the "Speak Turkish" campaigns of the State.

OSSETIANS live not only in Ossetia but also in many other countries. Since the 1865 migrations, they had settled in the villages of Kars, Muş, Kayseri, Sivas and Yozgat of Turkey. In some of these villages they lived together with other ethnic groups which caused their language change, influencing each other. In the villages where the Ossetians were majority, they were able to protect their language.

I regard myself as lucky. I was born in 1945 in the village called Bozat of Sarıkamış, Kars. Everyone, including my family, was talking Osset in the village. I lived there until 12 years old. My Turkish was not as good. People were mocking at me because of my Turkish when I began the middle school in Istanbul on 1957-1958.

That's why I neglected my mother language in order to improve my Turkish. Some members of my family were still living in our village, and I was staying with my aunt in Istanbul. My aunt's husband is not Ossetian, that's why it was not spoken so much in home. Generally, we were speaking Turkish.

In 1970's I started to live with my mom and my two sisters, while working as a public servant. We were speaking Ossetic at home. My mom is a traditional woman and her Ossetic is very good. But as the inter-marriages increased, the mother tongue was not the language in the home. That also was the case with our family. Now my mom's grandchildren do not know Ossetic.