

Western Armenian

International Mother Tongue Day, February 21st

“O Armenian, perfect language” ... Thus begins one of the most celebrated songs in Armenian music, emphasizing the excellence of Armenian language.

Talar Silelyan

BIA News Center

21 February 2012

“O Armenian, perfect language”... Thus begins one of the most celebrated songs in Armenian music, emphasizing the excellence of Armenian language.

I believe that its beauty and richness is indeed indisputable, not because of nationalism, but because of the inexplicable bond that has existed between me and my mother tongue since birth. Armenian is my mother language. I have constantly heard my mother, father, grandmother, grandfather and other relatives speak Armenian. So much so that I've been used to speaking Armenian since I was little, it's always felt natural to express myself in the language. Unfortunately however, today other languages have taken the place of Armenian in our homes. Armenian is not even close to being the second spoken language. As a result, children start school without being familiar with their mother tongue. The saddest part is that even people who can speak Armenian very well prefer to use other languages to express themselves. Yet how much we have sacrificed for our language; our ancestors have fought so hard to save it from a potential extinction. After all their sacrifice, the situation today can be considered as nothing but ingratitude. Will Armenian eventually be a language found only in encyclopedias? Surely if we continue to disregard the danger our language is facing, it will inevitably become extinct.

I feel extremely lucky to be part of a family that valued Armenian and constantly spoke the language. Naturally, aware of the importance of my mother tongue, I have taken part in many activities involving Armenian (translating books, joining Armenian choirs, teaching Armenian, etc.) Even though from time to time I fall into despair and the indifference of some Armenian people leads me to be pessimistic, me, my family and like-minded friends are determined to continue to fight for our language, by speaking Armenian, reading Armenian and teaching it to others. Because language is integral to the survival of a people.