

## KARAY (KARAIM) LANGUAGE ONLINE CONVERSATIONAL COURSES FOR FOREIGNERS

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**Abstract:** This paper gives information on the purpose and the contents of the *Karay (Karaim) Language Online Conversational Courses for Foreigners*, held between September and December in 2022. This course was joined by around 45 voluntary participants from various countries in Europe, Asia, and the USA. Two native speakers of Karay also helped this course participants by providing them with the correct pronunciation of the Karay literary language.

**Keywords:** Karay (Karaim), online, conversations, literature, culture

When I attended the International Scientific Conference on the Karaim Language in Use dedicated to the memory of Simon Firkovič (1897–1982) and Aleksander Dubiński (1924–2002) on May 19, 2022, I made a presentation on the subject of this article. At the meeting, I announced my plans for launching a free online Karay (Karaim) conversational course for foreign volunteers. After making announcements on Facebook and other social media between June and August, ca. 76 volunteers from various countries, mainly Turkey, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Kazakistan, Kyrgyzia, Russian Federation (mainly Tataristan and Bashkiria), England, Japan, and the USA signed up for this course entitled “**Karajče Siožliejbiz**” [Qarayçe Sözleybiz / We Speak Karay / Karayca Konuşuyoruz]. This course started on Saturday, September 17, 2022, with its First Lesson “**Birinçi Üriatiuv**” [Birinçi Ürätüv / Birinci Ders]. Between September 17 and December 3, 2022, seven lessons were conducted and each was attended by between 30 and 45 people.

The two native Karay speakers and scholars Dr. Karina Firkavičiūtė and Dr. Halina Kobeckaitė have kindly contributed to editing these 7 Karay lessons and they have also attended the live online Karay courses by voicing the correct pronunciation of Karay words and phrases. Their voluntary help was appreciated greatly by the course participants.

## What was the purpose of starting these courses?

Karaim is one of the endangered Turkic languages as the number of its speakers is decreasing. My aim was to arouse interest in the Karaim language among speakers of different Turkic languages. These courses could help increase the number of volunteers who want to learn the Karaim language. I thought it would be easy to participate in these online and free courses from different countries. While 60 people attended the first live online lesson on Zoom, this number decreased to 25–30 people in the following lessons. However, 75–80 people watched the live broadcasts of this lesson on Youtube, and the number of viewers in the following weeks and months varied between 104 and 249 on the Youtube videos.

The basic requirement for these Karay online courses was that the participants should be fluent in one of the Turkic languages, at least Turkish, Azerbaijani, Uzbek, Tatar or Kazakh. The main instruction language on these online courses was Turkish with some English. Initially the course was planned as weekly for the total of 16 lessons. I was able to hold only 7 lessons between September 17 and December 3 2022. Due to my intense travels and various projects, I had to take a break from these Karaim courses for a few months. Starting from June, I plan to continue and conduct the remaining 9 lessons once a week on Saturdays. After these 16 online lessons the participants would be able to continue studying Karay by themselves.

## The contents of the lessons

The lessons aimed to introduce conversational phrases of the Karay language along with examples of poems written by the Karay poets (see the Appendix at the end of this article). The grammatical explanations were minimized and more time was given to the pronunciation of the conversational phrases. After the reading of the phrases by one or two native Karay instructors, the participants were asked to repeat them. The Karay instructors also made corrections when the pronunciation of the participants was not correct. Written homework was given to the participants after several lessons. The participants had two quizzes.

## Concluding remarks. *What is the next stage?*

The next stage is to establish a Facebook Group with the title “**Karajče Siožliejbiž**” [Qarayçe Sözleybiž / We Speak Karay] where members can post and share a picture, a poem, a shorth message, and comments in Karay only (bilingual texts in Karay and in Turkish, English, or in any other Turkic language would be allowed too). Since there is rich Karay literature between 1920 and 1940, the best examples of Karay poetry and prose, examples from the Karay literary heritage would also be posted on this Facebook Karay Group. I believe this Facebook activity will also increase the number of volunteers wishing to improve their knowledge of Karay. Initially there would be some mistakes on these posts, but other members would be able to correct them. Later a small group of Editorial Board might be formed for this particular Karay Facebook Group.

I would like to introduce Mrs. Fatma Duman Aydın who is one of the participants of these online Karay courses. Before she had no knowledge about the Karay language. After several lessons she started to write poems in Karay. I would like to give one example from her Karay poems:



Kujaşly bir kiuńdia kiel'giań  
Siuviar dostčamny izliejmiń  
Kačty džachtlej kuşlar kibik  
Da anyn jolnu tioziamiń.

Kiok altyjda jalhyz kalam  
Mieni sień-die izliars balam  
Kujaş tuvmasť, kiorksiuż bolam  
Kujaşymny tuvduř kolam.

Jamhur mienim kiožliarimdia  
Miń ataş bart üriagimdia  
Kiok kiokliardiań čypčych byla  
Uč sień javrunlaryma.

Kioźliarniń kiok kiokliardia  
Čypčychlar učadyrlar maja  
Sieni kioriaľmim dostčam  
Bulej mieńdiań sień jyrach.  
*By Fatma Duman Aydın (Sözden Saza)*

In English translation:



Coming on a sunny day  
I miss my lover  
flew fast like a bird  
I wait for his way

Let me be alone under the sky  
You miss me too my child  
If sun doesn't rise, I won't be pretty  
I want you to rise my sun, please

The rain is in my eyes  
There is a thousand fires in my heart  
With birds from the blue sky  
Come fly into my arms

From the sky of your eyes  
birds fly toward me  
I can't see you darling  
Because you are far from me  
*(English translation by Timur Kocaoglu)*

Fatma Duman Aydın was born in Ordu, Turkey. She received her undergraduate education in Sociology and Turkish Language and Literature. She studied teaching Turkish to foreigners. After her teaching carrier, she retired in 2019. She has been writing poetry and songs for the last 15 years. Her songs and lyrics are performed by various artists. She lives in Antalya, Turkey.

I am indebted to the two great Karay Hazzans and scholars Mykolas Firkovičius (1924–2000) and Markas Lavrinovičius (1938–2011), who have helped me a lot in my study of the Karays and the Karay language as well as for the continued help by Dr. Halina Kobeckaitė, Dr. Karina Firkavičiūtė, and Diana Lavrinovič. I would like to end my article with remembering the souls of my two dear friends in Karay:

*Mykolas Firkovičius da Markas Lavrinovičius*

*Džanlary Bah-Bostanda jaryhejlar,*

*Sahynčlary karaj ulusunda tiril'giejliar da syjly adlary sahynylhejlar!*

## Appendix

**Karajče Siožliejbiz** // Qarayçe Sözleybiz // We Speak Karay

**3. Üriatiuv** // 3. Üyrätiv // 3rd Lesson

(8 October 2022 Saturday, 19:00 İstanbul)

Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83792890833>

Live on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/kU-pAtLdSjc>

Phrases are from the book: The Trakay Dialect (München 2006)

Instructor: Dr. Timur Kocaoğlu

Editors: Dr. Karina Firkavičiūtė, Dr. Halina Kobeckaitė

The phrases were given in three lines: a) In Lithuanian Karay alphabet, b) Bold in Turkic transcription c) Italic in Turkish translation:

### Bazarda (Shopping)

037a: Bazarha barajych.

**037b: Bazarğa barayix.**

037c: *Alışverişe (pazara) gidelim.*

038a: Satuvču juvaš kiši édi.

**038b: Satuvçu yuvaş kişi édi.**

038c: *Satıcı nazik kişi idi.*

039a: Satynaluvčunun katy sioziunia bachmajyz!

**039b: Satın aluvçunun qatı sözünä baxmayız!**

039c: *Müşterinin bakmayınız! (aldırmayınız!).*

040a: Bunu niečiari satasyz?

**040b: Bunu néčäri satasyz?**

040c: *Bunu kaça satıyorsunuz?*

041a: Bahasyn jiebiersiejiž, mień bunu satyn alym.

**041b: Bahasın yéberséyız, mén bunu satınalım.**

041c: *Fiatını indirseniz, ben bunu satın alırım.*

042a: Ajahymnyn öłčiaviń alysyz-me?

**042b: Ayağımın ölçävin alısyz-me?**

042c: *Ayağımın ölçüsünü alır mısınız?*

043a: Bu étikliardiań ulannyn ajahyna bart-me?

**043b: Bu étiklärdän ulannın ayağına bart-me?**

043c: *Bu ayakkabılardan çocuk ayağına göre var mı?*

044a: Bu bitrach kysych. Bir numerlych ullurach (unlurach) kieriakli.

**044b: Bu bitrax qıysıx. Bir numerlıx ullurax (unlurax) kéréakli.**

044c: *Bu biraz dar. . Bir numara büyükçe gerek.*

045a: Bu étikliar ulla (unlu). Bir numerlych kiçiriak kolam.

**045b: Bu étikläř ulla (unlu). Bir numerlıx kiçiräk qolam.**

045c: *Bu ayakkabılar büyük. Bir numara küçüğünü rica ederim.*

046a: Bundan başcha nińdi rieńgliari bart?

**046b: Bundan başxa nińdi réngläri bart?**

046c: *Bundan başka hangi renkleri var?*

363a: Érkek kijitliari kajsy tarafynda?

**363b: Érkek kiyitläri qaysı tarafında?**

363c: *Erkek giyimleri hangi tarafta?*

364a: Bu kiebitıtia ojunčoçlar rejonu (ojun niersialiari) bart-me?

**364b Bu kébitte oyunçoçlar reyonu (oyun nérsäläri) bart-me?**

364c: *Bu mağazada oyuncaklar bölümü var mı?*

365a: Kancelarijanyn niersialiari nieçińçi katta?

**365b: Kantseläriyanın nérsäleri néçińçi qatta?**

365c: *Kirtasiye kaçınıcı katta?*

366a: Bu kiebit' niečiagia dieria ačychdyr?

**366b: Bu kébit néčägä dérä açıxdır?**

366c: *Bu mağaza ne zamana kadar açıktır?*

367a: Bu maldan başcha özgia tiurliuliari bart-me?

**367b: Bu maldan başxa özgä türlüläri bart-me?**

367c: *Bu maldan başka, deęişik türler var mı?*

368a: Mieñ bunu alyštyrma kliejm.

**368b: Mén bunu alıštırma kléym.**

368c: *Ben bunu deęištirmek istiyorum.*

Azych Kiebit' // **Azıx Kébit** // Bakkal, Market, mağaza

166a: Juvuchta azych kiebit' bart-me?

**166b: Yuvuxta azıx kébit bart-me?**

166c: *Yakında bakkal (market) var mı?*

167a: Maja kiebit'tiañ ét'miak kiel'tirialis-mie (kiel'tirmias-mie)?

**167a: Maya kébitten étmäk kéltirälis-mé (kéltirmäs-mé)?**

167a: *Bakkaldan ekmek getirir misin?*

168a: Bir kilo šiekier kliejm (kliejmiñ).

**168a: Bir kilo šékér kléym( kléymin).**

168a: *Bir kilo šeker istiyorum .*

169a: Jarym kilo saryjav kolam (kolamyn), bierijiz.

**169a: Yarım kilo sarıyav qolam (qolamın), bériyiz.**

169a: *Yarım kilo tereyağ istiyorum, veriniz.*

170a: Kilo un nietiek tijaat'?

**170a: Kilo un néték tiyet?**

170a: *Bir kilo un kaçā (ne kadar oluyor)?*

## Étçi // Étçi // Kasap

315a: Maja bir kilo kuzu ét' bierijiz.

**315b: Maya bir kilo quzu ét bériyiz.**

315c: *Bana bir kilo kuzu eti veriniz.*

316a: Ét' buzulmahan-me?

**316b: Ét buzulmağan-me?**

316c: *Et bozulmamış mı (taze mi)?*

317a: Ögiüz étiniñ kilosu nietiek tijiat'?

**317b: Ögüz étinin kilosu néték tiyet?**

317c: *Dana etinin kilosu ne kadar (kaçı)?*

318a: Étniñ jarymyn uvach tuvrama kolam.

**318b: Étnin yarımın uvax tuvrama qolam.**

318c: *Etin yarısını kıyma olarak rica ederim.*

319a: Buzov étı sizdia bart-me?

**319b: Buzov étı sizdä bart-me?**

319c: *Sizde sütdanası var mı?*

320a: Ét' siemiz tiuviu' bolsun, siuviakliariñ-die ajryryjyz!

**320b: Ét sémez tüvül bolsun, süväklerin-dé ayırırız!**

320c: *Et yağlı olmasın, kemiklerini de ayırın!*

## Čiečiakliar Kiebiti // Čečäklär Kébiti // Çiçekçi

095a: Énk juvuchrach čiečiakliar kiebiti kajda?

**095b: Énk yuvuxrax çeçekler kébiti qayda?**

095c: *En yakın çiçekçi nerede?*

096a: Bir giliaf bukietyñ hadirliamia kolam.

**096b: Bir gilef bukétın hadirlämä qolam.**

096c: *Bir buket gül hazırlamanızı rica ederim.*



097a: Bu čiečiakniń ady nedir? (Bu čiečiak niečik indialiat?)

**097b: Bu čečäknin adı nedir? (Bu čečäk nečik indälät?)**

097c: *Bu çiçeğin adı nedir (Bu çiçeğe ne denir?)*

098a: Bu kiorkliu čiečiakliar bizdia jochtur. Alarnyn adlary nedir?

**098b: Bu körklü čečäklär bizdä yoxtur. Alarnın adları nedir?**

098c: *Bu güzel çiçekler bizde yoktur. Onların adları nedir?*

099a: Tiuľpan sizdia bart-me?

**099b: Tülpan sizdä bart-me?**

099c: *Sizde lale var mı?*

## A poem



Simonas Kobeckas: 1911–1985

TIUŠ (1940)

Baz tiušiumdia kiordium sieni,  
Čiebiar bachtjy kiožliarimia.  
Kliagiejdim mień ojanmajyn,  
Giorgia diejiń bunu kiormia.

DREAM (1940)

*I saw you in my calm dream,  
You looked kindly to my eyes.  
I wanted without waking up,  
To see this until the grave.*

TÜŞ(1940)

**Baz tüšümdä kördüm séni,  
Çebär baxty közlärimä.  
Klägéydım mén oyanmayın,  
Görgä déyin bunu körmä.**

DÜŞ (RÜYA) / 1940

*Yine düşümde gördüm seni  
Güzel (hoş) baktın gözlerime.  
Dilemiştim ben uyanmayayım,  
Mezara dek bunu göreyim.*

• • • • •

Javrunlarda tuttum sieni,  
Ach, niñdi mieñ kutlu édim.  
“Siuviam sieni” – maja ajttyj,  
“Siuviam, siuviam” – karuv bierdim.

I kept you in my arms  
Alas, how happy I was.  
“I love you” – you told me,  
“I love you, I love you” – I replied.

**Yavrunlarda tuttum séni**  
**Ax, niñdi mén qutlu édim**  
**“Süväm séni” – maya ayttyj**  
**“Süväm, süväm” – qaruv bérdim,**

Kollarımda tuttum seni  
Ah, nice ben kutl edim  
“Severim seni” bana söyledin  
“Severim, severim” diye yanıt verdim,

• • • • •

Kaçty džachtlej, kaçty bary.  
Bu vacht édi kyscha astrı.  
Maja bundan ančech kaldy  
Tolu kiožliar jaşlar açy.

*Gone away hastily, run away everything.*  
*This moment was very short.*  
*From this only these left at me*  
*Eyes with tears, tears with pain.*

**Qaçtı caxtlej, qaçtı barı.**  
**Bu vaxt édi qısxı astrı.**  
**Maya bundan ançex qaldı**  
**Tolu közlär yaşlar açı.**

*Kaçtı hızla, kaçtı hepsi*  
*Bu zaman çok kısa idi*  
*Bana bundan ancak kalan*  
*Dolu gözler acı yaşlar.*

• • • • •

Tiek sahyşym mienim tolu,  
Ki sieñ mieñdiañ hanuz kaçmas  
Da inanam, bolum kutlu,  
Balkyr bižgia jarych kujaş.

*My single thought is enduring,*  
*That you haven't gone away yet*  
*Thus I believe, I will be happy,*  
*The bright sun shines to us.*

**Ték sağışım ménim tolu,**  
**Ki sén méndän hanuz qaçmas**  
**Da inanam, bolum qutlu,**  
**Balqır bizgä yarıx qujaş.**

*Benim tek düşüncem dolu*  
*Ki sen venden henüz gitmedin*  
*İşte inanırım, olurum mutlu,*  
*Parlar bize aydın güneş.*

Simonas Kobeckas 1911–1985: The poem taken from the book: *Čypčychlej učma Trochka* (Vilnius, 1997). The translations in English and Turkish by Timur Kocaoglu.