

Simon Ghilamichael Transcription

“The Importance of Language”

My name is Simon Michael. I am originally from Eritrea. I am interested in speaking different languages because I am a traveler of the world. I speak the languages that are in my country: Bilen, Tigrinya, and Tigre.

Belin is my native language. Tigrinya is the official language that I learned in school and Tigre only I learned from my neighborhood. The Belin and Tigrinya people study Tigrinya language in the elementary school.

Tigre speaking people are a Muslim people, and they have their own schools. They start elementary school by learning Arabic language and they also learn Tigrinya. After elementary school, no more Tigrinya and Arabic. All Eritrean people study in English from middle school through high school and university.

When I first started school, it was difficult for me because I didn't know anything of Tigrinya language. One thing that I remembered on the first day of school, my teacher asked me one question: why are eyes important ? which means “*Ayni Ni Mintay Yitiqmena*” and I didn't answer it. The answer was our eyes are used to see. When I didn't answer the question, no one laughed at me because they understood me as I do not speak Tigrinya. But the teacher said to me some word “*Himak*” which means bad, and then I cried a little bit.

Some examples of word that I like in Belin when my mom calling me, “*Menbu Shifu.*” It means honey. Some examples in Tigrinya, “*Kufue*” or “*Resah*” which means ugly and dirty. Most people use these words in chatting and joking. Tigre are the funniest people in Eritrea. My favorite music is Tigre in my country. I like very much

Tigre songs, poems, drama, and film. They like drama very much. To create poems is easy for them about love and singing. Some for example: if they see a large person they call "*Derat*" and "*Deratit*" for him or her. It means is a large person. They never call your name, they keep calling you by "*Derat*." Another example is when they don't believe in someone who talks too much. They call you *Al Jazeera News*.

I left my home country because of political reasons and hardship. While I was in my country, the situation was hard to live there. The government was taking students from school to the army. Those who have turned eighteen must go to the army and stay a long time in the army, sometimes their whole life. Also, we work for as little as a dollar a month.

When I went to Sudan, I lived there one year and a half. I also lived in Egypt for a few months, so I am able to speak Arabic. The word sound that I like in Arabic is "*Habibi*" and "*Habibt*." Its meaning is for a beloved. "*Habibi*" is for a boy and "*habibt*" is for a girl. It is an easy word to say to people, "*selam habibi*" for a boy, "*selam habibt*," for a girl. it's like hi friend. The people in Sudan and Egypt like to use these words.

From Egypt I went to Israel and lived there five years. I worked in a restaurant in Tel Aviv for five years, so I am able to speak Hebrew and to read Hebrew. The way that I learned how to read Hebrew was from others. I asked my co-worker the alphabet and he gave me the letters, and then I started reading them when I had time. When I knew the letters, I was very comfortable about that because they helped me to get more jobs and increase my wages. I studied English in elementary school in my home country up to grade seven. So I also spoke in English at my work in Israel.

I came from Israel to the USA to live with my brother. He applied for a visa for me to enter the USA. My brother was lonely. Also, when I was in Israel, I had a bad condition because the government could deport me to my home country at any time. When I came to the USA, first I started to read the driver's license book, and I passed in one month and fifteen days. I was very excited about it because I wasn't able to speak English nor understand written English. I had another language to learn. I enrolled at Hubbs Center to learn English, and I have been a student one year and seven months. I have improved my level of English more than what I have had before. I took many classes like ELL6, ELL 7, Math 3, Writing 2. Recently, I am taking classes including Writing 3, Social Studies, and Science 1. I also took class ServSafe for three months. I received a ServSafe certification after I studied a lot. I am very excited to have a ServSafe Certification because it has increased my wages. Right now, I am working as a cook in a restaurant at Old Country Buffet.

Next, I am interested in speaking Spanish. I am trying to speak with a classmate at school, and at my job with co-workers. They are Spanish. I am also searching words on the Internet for what I need to say.

Learning different languages is important because language can help me to be successful. Also, it may help me in different ways. For example, if I travel in the world, I can meet with different people, communicate with others, and interpret for different language speakers. Knowing languages is important for me in the global world.