

Idioms and idiomatic phrases

Some idioms are so rooted in the Tigrinya speaking culture that in order for the reader/listener to enjoy such poems and texts fully, s/he needs to know the traditions first. Such poems are written almost invariably by the erudite. Thus, to get the best of that genre, a significant knowledge of Tigrinya vocabulary and its traditions are vital.

A good example of such poems is the lyrics (New 3, 1998, No. 6) of Feven Tsegay, an Eritrean singer. http://ericclubs.com/song_listen_604_1.html/ Since the author of the lyrics is not disclosed, it is plausible to assume that the singer, Feven Tsegay herself wrote it.

Exercise:

1. Listen to the song from http://ericclubs.com/song_listen_604_1.html/
2. You are required to answer the questions below. The Tigrinya lyric is given in case you don't hear some of the words in the song.

Instructions:

Read this text as you listen to the song and

- 1) Identify the idioms and/ or idiomatic phrase in each of the 9 lines below.
- 2) Explain your understanding of them
 - (a) As common vocabulary of everyday Tigrinya (1 or 2 lines each)
 - (b) Their implications in traditional terms (3 to 5 lines each)

Text:

1. ጥሪ መጸኣ ደግይ ክትገብር: ደግይ ሂወተይ:
2. ብርኪ ወጺኤ ክሰናብቶም: ንስድራ ቤተይ:
3. ሉል መሲላ ይጽብለኹ: ምስ ኩሕለ-ምሕለይ:

4. ቅድሚያ ጓይላ ክትፍታሕ ኢላ፣ እዛ ቅናተይ።
5. ድጉል ፍትወተይ ተነቓኒቹ ካብ ሱሩ፡
6. ሰቲን ሮማዲን ተነሳኒሱ፣ ገዛን ገበላን ሸሻይ ፈሰሱ
7. ዋና ረኽባ እዛ ኮቦሮ ጥሪ ክንጽበስ መጸኣ ድሮ
8. ሓንሳብ ጽንሕኒ፣ በይነይ ክድብል፡
9. ይትረፍ ግደፍ፣ ዕሰለዮ ንበል፡