ERI-DIC: Step Forward To Integrate Local Technology

Written by Samrawit Efrem
Wednesday, 06 January 2010 10:10 - Last Updated Tuesday, 12 January 2010 11:18

Last month, an English-Tigrinya electronic dictionary (ERI-DIC) devised by Mr. Abrehe Yemane, a computer programmer, was inaugurated. The electronic dictionary comprising of around 24,000-words was published by Hidri Publishers and Awghet Book Shop. In an age of software technology the dictionary is expected to promote the local language and provide an easier access to dictionary. Such an initiative could also encourage other skilled young professionals to take similar innovative steps. Shabait interviewed Mr. Abrehe regarding his project, excerpts follow:

Would you please brief us with your background?

I was born in 1978 in Eritrea and went to Sudan with my family when I was 6 years old as a result of problems created due to colonialism. I pursued my education in Sudan till 10th grade and completed the remaining years of high school in Eritrea. Then I joined Asmara University with a 3.4 GPA. I graduated in 2002 in Mathematics as major and statistic as minor.

Why did you choose to study mathematics?

Mathematics has a variety of applications and I still want to pursue further education in the same field. At the same time computer science is interlinked with math. My interest in computer science developed after I graduated from the university and I began to upgrade my knowledge in the field by reading books.

Tell us about your recent innovation?

ERI-DIC is prepared based on the English-Tigrinya-Arabic dictionary published by the EPLF during the armed struggle. It has English electronic dictionary format.

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Is ERI-DIC up to international technical standards?

Yes, I believe ERI-DIC has the required standard. Any computer software device is tested for memory size, execution, which is its performance, and interface. ERI-DIC has 30MB memory size that could comprise about 20 other languages in a single CD, it is fast and the interface is attractive to the user.

How long did it take you to develop the software?

It took me a year and half. I spent the first six months in experiment and system analysis. Then I signed a contract with Hidri publishers and developed the device within a year.

What motivated you to come up with the idea of devising this electronic dictionary?

I always wanted to devise computer program. One day while I was watching "Hade Lbi" Eri-TV program, I saw children who grew up abroad struggling to speak in Tigrinya. Then the idea of inventing electronic local dictionary came in my mind and I saw the possibility of inventing electronic dictionary like the English electronic dictionary.

What do you think is the advantage of having such kind of electronic dictionary in local language?

It is easily accessible and time-saving for anyone who wants to learn or make a research. Especially for the children born abroad it would help them a great deal to confidently speak their mother tongue. Besides, it creates conducive grounds for developing and modifying our vocabulary. Furthermore, it's more convenient and easy to distribute electronic dictionaries at a time when computers have become imperative for daily work.

Can you tell us about your future plans?

I am planning to modify ERI-DIC to include a sound format and incorporate other local languages. I also want to pursue a career in computer science in earnest.

Any massage you want to convey?

I have observed that there are many talented young Eritreans and with this capacity we could at least satisfy the local demand for computer-related technology. This electronic dictionary could be taken as a successful invention and we should use the wide opportunity in computer

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