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The Agents (Students, Parents and Teachers)
of Multilingualism in Oromia, Ethiopia

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Thesis for obtaining a PhD degree at the Multilingualism Doctoral School of
the University of Pannonia

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Veszprem, 2025

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ABSTRACT

Historically, multilingualism as a form of living and socialization has existed and has been documented since biblical times. Ethiopia's rich ethnic diversity and constitutional commitment to multilingualism, particularly in the Oromia region, underscore the crucial roles of Afan Oromo, Amharic, and English in education and social interactions. This study examines multilingual agency in educational settings by analyzing the language use, proficiency, attitudes, and multilingual personality traits of students, teachers, and parents. Based on survey data from 200 participants in public and private schools—including high school students, parents, and teachers—the research maps linguistic profiles to understand Ethiopia's officially endorsed multilingualism policies.

Using a comprehensive questionnaire, the study assesses participants' self-reported language abilities (following Clark's CAN-DO test), language use patterns across different contexts and interlocutors (Stavans et al., 2009), attitudes toward each language, and multilingual personality traits. Descriptive statistical analysis confirms widespread multilingualism, with students exhibiting the highest multilingual engagement, while teachers and parents show varying reliance on Amharic and English. The findings align with existing research on multilingualism, language hierarchy, and the sociocultural impact of education.

Significant differences emerge between public and private schools, with private school participants demonstrating higher English proficiency and usage. The study highlights the cognitive, social, and economic benefits of multilingualism and stresses the importance of inclusive language policies that uphold linguistic diversity. While strong support for multilingualism is evident, variations in multilingual personality traits—especially in cultural empathy and adaptability—are noted among different groups.

These results emphasize the complex relationship between institutional language policies, educational and societal language practices, and individual linguistic agency. The study also sheds light on challenges faced by minority languages, reinforcing the need for equitable language education. Finally, it underscores how educational environments shape language use, fostering linguistic adaptability and multicultural personality development.

Keywords: Multilingualism, agency, Ethiopia, Afan Oromo; Amharic; English; language education practices; family language policy

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ACTFL = American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages
BICS = Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills
CALP = Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency
CEFR = Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
Con = Unfavorable
DMM = Dynamic Model of Multilingualism
EPRDF = Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front
EU = European Union
FDRGE = Federal Democratic Republic Government of Ethiopia
FLP = Family Language Policy
IELTS = International English Language Testing System
L1 = Language one (typically first language)
L2 = Language two (another language – not necessarily their Second Language)
L3 = Language three (another language – not necessarily their Foreign/Second Language)
LL = Language Learning
LP = Language Policy
ML@H = Minority Language at Home
MoE = Ministry of Education
MPQ = Multicultural Personality Questionnaire
MTB-MLE = Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education
OPOL = One-Parent-One-Language
Pro = Favorable
R&W = Reading and Writing
RQ = Research Question
SNNPR = Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region
SPK = Speaking
TCKs = Third Culture Kids
TTCs = Teacher Training Center
TTIs = Teacher Training Institutions
UND = Understanding

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Framing the Study: Multilingualism and Educational Agents in Ethiopia

Ethiopia's linguistic diversity is both a historical reality and a contemporary challenge. With over 80 languages spoken across its regions, multilingualism is not a new phenomenon—it is a longstanding feature of everyday life, particularly in regions such as Oromia, where multiple languages intersect in education, family life, and public communication. This study was born out of both scholarly interest and personal experience with how language shapes social interaction and educational outcomes. As a researcher who has lived within this multilingual setting, I am deeply aware of the tensions between official language policy and local practice, and of the vital role that individuals—especially students, parents, and teachers—play in sustaining or resisting linguistic norms.

While Ethiopia's constitution formally recognizes linguistic equality, the reality on the ground often reveals a different picture. Language policy tends to be formulated from the top down, while language use in schools, homes, and public life is often shaped from the bottom up. This duality raises important questions: How do people engage with multilingualism in their daily lives? What role do schools play in enabling or constraining language development? And how do young people preparing to graduate from secondary school navigate the linguistic demands of their communities, their education system, and their futures? These questions, expose a deeply rooted combined perspective of multilingualism that permeates the social aspects of multiple languages in a country, community, school and family as well as the individual aspect that concerns the perception and practices carried out to generate this linguistic diversity.

This dissertation aims to explore such questions by focusing on three key agent groups—students in their final year of secondary school, their parents, and their teachers. These groups are seen not only as participants in the educational process but also as agents who are the outcome of the policies leading to multilingualism and have the role of shaping, driving and reflecting the multilingual practices in the region. The study examines language use, self-reported proficiency, language attitudes, and multilingual personality traits, with the goal of offering a nuanced profile of multilingualism as it is experienced and practiced in a specific regional and institutional context.

To address these issues, the dissertation is organized into six chapters: Chapter 1 introduces the rationale and background of the study, highlighting the significance of multilingualism in Ethiopia and framing the study's focus on educational agents in the Oromia region. It presents the research questions, objectives, and scope, providing the reader with a clear understanding of what the study seeks to achieve

and why it matters. Chapter 2 reviews the literature and provides the necessary conceptual and contextual grounding. It begins by discussing definitions and theoretical perspectives on multilingualism, then turns to the Ethiopian context—tracing the historical, political, and policy developments that have shaped the country’s multilingual landscape. This chapter also reviews previous research relevant to the study’s focus on agency, identity, and education. Chapter 3 outlines the methodology used to carry out the research. It describes the mixed-methods approach adopted in the study, the rationale behind participant selection, and the development and administration of the questionnaires. This chapter also reflects on ethical considerations and limitations encountered in the research process. Chapter 4 presents the results of the study. It offers a descriptive analysis of the multilingual profiles of each participant group, including data on language use, proficiency levels, attitudes toward languages, and self-reported traits associated with multilingual personality. Chapter 5 discusses these results in light of existing theories and prior findings. It compares and contrasts the experiences of the three groups, identifies patterns and anomalies, and reflects on what the data reveal about the alignment (or misalignment) between language policy and everyday linguistic practices. Chapter 6 concludes the dissertation by summarizing the key findings and their implications. It also offers suggestions for future research and reflects on how the findings could inform more inclusive and responsive language policy in Ethiopian education.

By linking policy and practice, institutional context and personal experience, this study seeks to contribute to the growing conversation about multilingualism in non-Western settings. It offers a grounded, agent-centered perspective on how multilingualism is lived, negotiated, and sustained—especially at a moment of transition for students preparing to enter the world beyond secondary school.

1.2 Background of the study

As a native of Oromia and a person who throughout his life and career has been a member in each multilingualism agent group, I have carried the typical daily lifestyle of this multilingual region. I was drawn and motivated to pursue the present study and will set out to showcase multilingualism as a worldwide phenomenon that has also taken roots in the African continent, specifically in Ethiopia.

Multilingualism has long been integral to the lives and livelihoods of both societies and individuals. While it is often linked to modernization and globalization, its significance lies not in whether it has facilitated diverse human communication—this has always been the case—but in its recent elevation to a societal “norm” rather than an exception, driven in part by technological advancements (Stavans & Jessner, 2022). Romaine (2017) argues that multilingualism has developed throughout history because human communities, with few exceptions in small, remote areas, have consistently interacted with others.

These interactions—rooted in the exchange of goods, information, marriage, and other social and economic connections—ensured that multilingualism became a natural condition of human life, likely dating back to the origins of the human species. In contemporary times, technology has amplified the visibility and importance of multilingualism. The growing need to communicate across borders, languages, cultures, and various spheres of life has made both spoken and written communication more immediate and interconnected. As a result, multilingualism transcends temporal and spatial boundaries, reinforcing its necessity and prominence in today’s world. In fact, as Stavans and Jessner (2022, 02) state:

The advances in technology, the ever-growing need of international communication and the readily accessible international mobility and recent migration waves have all led to the need for people to have command of more than one language and lately more pronouncedly more than two languages. The number of languages in the world is in constant flux as new languages are discovered every day and the ones known are themselves under constant changes as a result of their dynamic nature and the adaptations to changes imposed on people’s lives and needs of communication. Thus, multilingualism should come as no surprise and in fact mirror the linguistic reality in which we live, with 7099 languages (Ethnologue, 16.11.17) used in 204 countries in 6 continents, multilingualism comes as no surprise making it a fundamental human characteristic just as the ability to reason and to feel.

Multilingualism has been pivotal currency in the relationship among countries and continents contributing to the advancement of current sciences and technologies, and mediating communication among individuals and societies around the world (Stavans & Jessner, 2022) with a wider global significance than it did in the past (Aronin, 2019). In fact, multilingualism is as ancient as the biblical story of Babel (Stavans and Hoffmann, 2015), the Middle Ages when European scholars were instrumental translating Arabic and Greek texts into Latin for scholarly purposes (Cenoz, 2013), the Norman Conquest in England when most people spoke English but the clergy and military spoke Latin and the governing class spoke Norman French (Franceschini, 2013).

Ethiopia, well known for its multilingualism that has developed historically over nearly two centuries of remarkable linguistic diversity. Over 80 languages are spoken across the country (Azeb & Zelealem, 2023), most of which belong to the Afroasiatic (Semitic, Cushitic, and Omotic) or Nilo-Saharan (Nilotic) language families (Meyer & Moges, 2023). This diversity contributes to Ethiopia’s vibrant

multilingual society and presents a valuable context for understanding the relationship between language policy, education, and identity.

Despite Ethiopia's multilingual policies, implementation challenges lead to discrepancies between policy objectives and real-world practices. Studies on the linguistic landscape in Oromia towns reveal how language use in public spaces reflects these tensions, emphasizing the need to examine the roles of parents, teachers, and students in bridging policy and practice. In this context, studies show that the language policies of the country introduced in different government systems follow a top-down approach, and there is no study carried-out about the bottom community. By exploring how people view and interact with the language policy that advocates multilingualism offers important insights into their cultural attitudes, language preferences, and the larger societal factors that shape language use.

The present study examines multilingual profiles of important agents that propel such multilingualism to enhance the discussion on language diversity and its implications for personal and communal development. The Role of parents, teachers, and high school graduates in Multilingualism is explored. In their agency towards multilingualism, parents significantly influence the multilingual landscape through their choices of home language use and attitudes toward various languages. A study by Tebo and Arfasa (2018) in Southwest Ethiopia indicates that parental involvement correlates with students' academic performance, suggesting that parents' language choices at home can impact children's language acquisition and educational outcomes. In parallel, teachers as facilitators of multilingual competence, are central to implementing language policies in classrooms, facilitating the acquisition of multiple languages. However, they often encounter challenges such as insufficient training in multilingual pedagogy and limited resources. James (2018) discusses the awareness among teachers and education officials regarding the effectiveness of students learning in different languages of instruction, emphasizing the need for better support and resources. The last agent in the triangle are the 12th graders on the brink of graduating from the formal educational system into the workforce or higher education studies and will navigate the multilingual environment shaped by their schooling experiences and societal expectations. Their language choices reflect practical considerations for education and employment. A study on language use and cultural identity in Addis Ababa examines how urbanization influences language practices among students, offering insights into the evolving multilingual dynamics faced by 12th graders (Heyyi & Mekonnen, 2023).

Therefore, the roles of these agents are interconnected in shaping multilingualism. Parental involvement and teachers' support collectively influence students' academic motivation and language acquisition vis a vis the national and regional de jure declared language policy and the actual – de facto – language policy

that is reflected by the people. The sketched background information thus far sets the context for this study. Then, the statement of the problem followed by the research questions, the objectives of the study, concluding with the scope and social significance of the study set the stage for this exploration.

1.3 Statement of the problems

This study was motivated by a retrospection of my personal experiences and practices with multilingualism. It is typically accepted that the multilingualism of a nation or a person is not only determined by top-down processes of language policies or laws of linguistic rights, but also by the bottom-up processes driven by individuals and their communities (i.e., family, friends, and school). It is believed that the bidirectional participation of the community and government has a great role in the development and sustainability of multilingualism, especially in the design of the language policy of a country (Taylor-Leech et.al, 2014). People's language use, ideologies, practices and needs along with participatory opportunities both at the group and individual level should be taken into consideration while designing language policy that satisfies the interest of its people (Kennedy, 2011; Spolsky, 2005).

As mentioned above, in my lifespan I have “travelled” the agency groups of being a student, a teacher and a parent in Oromia who has been born and raised in a multilingual environment. I was born in a multilingual region of Ethiopia, where Afan Oromo is the dominant language and also the mother tongue of both my parents. Before entering formal education, I was exposed to Amharic informally through interactions within my extended family. In grade one, I began learning English as a school subject, and later, through work assignments in the Tigray Regional State, I acquired basic proficiency in Tigrigna. This linguistic journey, shaped by social environment, institutional exposure, and mobility, led me to identify myself as a multilingual, though not necessarily in the classical sense proposed by early theorists such as Bloomfield (1935) who claimed for a native-like control of the two languages of a bilingual or Ducrot and Todorov (1972) who stated that in order to “qualify as a bilingual, an individual needs to master two languages, both acquired as mother tongues, and needs to speak them perfectly well” (p. 83).

My professional experience further deepened my engagement with multilingualism. As a newly appointed lecturer at Adigrat University in the Tigray Regional State, I has to navigate an educational setting where Amharic was the de facto medium of instruction, despite English being the official language of instruction mandated by Ethiopian higher education policy. As I was truly motivated by a strong belief of linguistic inclusion, I attempted to explain lessons using multiple languages and allowed students to express themselves in the languages they were most comfortable with and then I required them to transcribe their responses

into English, to align with academic standards. Today these practices are considered translanguaging pedagogy (Canagarajah, 2013; García & Wei, 2014). This inclusive practice had a polarizing effect in my classroom. One group of students appreciated the opportunity to use their mother tongues, reporting that they felt empowered and more engaged. Several students later expressed their appreciation by stating that I was the first lecturer who permitted them to speak their native languages in class without the fear of penalty. By contrast, another group was suspicious of my approach, fearing that linguistic leniency could mask political or ethnic bias — a reflection of the broader tensions around language and identity in Ethiopian universities. By the end of the semester, even the skeptical students acknowledged the inclusive environment I had fostered, thanking me for treating everyone equally and respectfully regardless of language background. This experience served me as a personal confirmation of the pedagogical value of multilingual inclusion. Although I believe that treating students fairly is a professional obligation, their appreciation reaffirmed the impact of inclusive pedagogy. Throughout my academic career, I continued to implement multilingual approaches in my classroom. This commitment ultimately led me to pursue doctoral studies in multilingualism, allowing me to critically examine and expand upon the reality of multilingualism in Oromia and what it takes to carry it out.

Despite Ethiopia's constitutional commitment to multilingualism and the formal use of English as the language of instruction in universities, the actual classroom experiences often reflect tensions between policy, linguistic reality, and educational equity. There is limited empirical research on how lecturers and students negotiate multilingual repertoires in practice, and how such negotiations influence teaching, learning, and identity formation. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate these gaps by critically exploring the role of multilingual practices in Ethiopian as deployed by the three propelling agents – the students who ascertain the future of the nation, their parents who provide with the basic and supportive linguistic environment towards multilingualism, and their teachers who have been assigned to foster the language repertoire of their students in accordance with the language education policy and the national language policy. Thus, the gestation of this study is born out of both my personal lived experience and a broader concern for equitable, inclusive, and contextually responsive multilingual society.

To contextualize this motivation in a more formal manner, a brief description of the linguistic diversity of Ethiopia is necessary. More than 80 ethnic groups form the tapestry of language and culture in Ethiopia. Each of these ethnic groups has a cultural and linguistic heritage, and while this number is an estimate (Samuel & Tamiru, 2020), there are many languages used in the country. Yet, there is no clear and detailed language policy in Ethiopia, but a single general statement in the current constitution (Article 5) on the usage of language which allows the people to be

multilingual. The current constitution of Ethiopia's language policy was launched in the early 1990s after the military regime collapsed recognizing and allowing for the previously marginalized languages to be used in the main domains (e.g., at schools, at different government offices, media, research centers and more). A typical pattern of multilingual Ethiopia today is that the use of the mother tongue within the regions, Amharic at the federal level, and English for international purposes (Samuel and Wolde, 2015). While this constitutional allowance is the language policy de jure designed throughout different governmental systems, the language policy de facto is different in Ethiopia. The current policy is such that language is an instrumental political consumption (Smith, 2008), and language policy is imposed from top-down (McNab, 1990, Daniel & Abebayehu, 2006, and Alelign, 2013).

Top-down policies are often employed to drive social change. Education is widely recognized today as a key agent or instrument of social transformation and development (Bhata, 2016). Social change tends to occur when the current social system or network of institutions fails to meet human needs, or when new methods and resources offer improved ways of addressing those needs. While education plays a vital role in society, it is often assigned a conservative function, focusing on the socialization of younger generations and the preservation of social order. However, during periods of rapid social change, such as the latter half of the 20th century, education's role in serving national interests becomes more prominent. In times of economic prosperity, there is greater support for experimentation in education and the pursuit of idealistic goals, such as ensuring equitable access to educational opportunities. Education is particularly expected to lead in shaping ideological and moral frameworks. Social change often emerges in response to new possibilities presented by both social and environmental factors. By fostering a shift in outlook and attitudes, education can actively drive societal transformation. The relationship between education and social change is complex and multifaceted, rather than straightforward or unilateral as some might assume. Education serves a dual purpose: it is instrumental not only in driving social change but also in preserving the existing social order. In other words, education plays both a conservative and a transformative role, helping to maintain stability within the social system while simultaneously enabling its evolution. For a society aiming to modernize or transform itself, various tools, institutions, and agents must be utilized to achieve these goals, with education often being the most significant among them. It provides essential training in skills and occupations, ensuring the availability of competent professionals to sustain the specialized roles required in modern industries, businesses, educational institutions, and research facilities. Beyond this, education is also tasked with reshaping societal values and attitudes. As an instrument of national development and social change, it fosters individual creativity, maximizes potential, and equips people with the skills needed for personal growth and the

advancement of society. By doing so, education becomes a powerful force for both individual fulfillment and societal progress. Education has been accepted as one major agency of socialization, and teachers and educational institutions as socializing agents. In describing education as an instrument of social change, three things are important: the agents of change, the content of change, and the social background of those who are sought to be changed, i.e., students. Educational institutions under the control of different cultural groups reflect the values of those groups which support and control education. In this situation, teachers impart specific values, parents promote their beliefs, and children/pupils develop their aspirations. Within these social changes, this study places the situation of multilingualism in Ethiopia as a central issue around which social changes have taken place and remain vital for the development of Ethiopia as a nation.

The Oromia region – located in the center and southern part of Ethiopia - the largest and most populated of the eleven federal regions of the country. Spanning over 253,690 square kilometers and housing a population of more than 35,467,001 (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oromia>), is the territory of most Oromo people in Ethiopia (Marcus, 2002). Addis Ababa (Finfine), the capital of Ethiopia, was considered the regional capital of Oromia until 2000 when the Ethiopian government moved the capital of Oromia to Adama, located along a major road connecting the capital with other urban centers and the port of Djibouti. This was a highly political move interpreted by some as an attempt to separate the capital of the country from the Oromia region and its people. The government, on its side, assured that the Oromo language and culture, as stated in the new constitution, would be enhanced outside Addis Ababa. After the national elections' in 2005 the regional government of Oromia was moved back to Addis Ababa (Finfine). As one of the major and highly populated regions in Ethiopia, the status of the languages, their legitimacy and presence in the public space and institutions took a center stage position in the sociopolitical grounding of multilingualism in Ethiopia.

Afan Oromo, which was also known as Oromiffa, is the official language of the regional state of Oromia. Since 1991, under the new system of ethnic regions, Afan Oromo has been introduced as the language of instruction in elementary schools throughout the region and as a language of administration within the region. As the two largest languages of the country aside from Amharic, Oromo and Tigrinya occupied and still occupy a special place in the debate about language rights and language use in Ethiopia [...] Oromos and Tigreans were in the forefront of the demand for the use of their own languages in all the apparatus of modern life in Ethiopia. Language rights were conceived as one of the first and most tangible facets of the recognition of other ethnicities' rights. (Appleyard and Orwin, 2008: 277).

In light of the historical and political waves ensuing Amharic as the dominant language status, it is not unreasonable to expect that the declared newfound linguistic

rights in the new constitution will pave the road for a more divergent linguistic presence of the multiple regional languages. According to the Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic Government of Ethiopia/FDRGE/ (1994: 2), article 5 says: “(1) All Ethiopian languages shall enjoy equal state recognition, (2) Amharic shall be the working language of the Federal Government and (3) Members of the Federation may by law determine their respective working languages.” As the central agents responsible for the national multilingualism, the Oromia region (a region with the largest population that speaks the regional language Afan Oromo, and Amharic as the second language, and English as the major foreign) is at least trilingual if not beyond providing an ideal case study to profile the perceptions and practices that are pivotal to Ethiopian multilingualism. Higgins (2009) said that although Ethiopia does not have a colonial past, English (a language usually associated with globalization) is an official second language and thus has a prominent place in the linguistic profile of the country. Moreover, the Ministry of Education [MoE], (2007) stated that English is a cornerstone in the development of Ethiopia’s education, communication system, technology, and commerce. Articles 3.5.5, 3.5.7, and 3.5.8 of the Educational and Training Policy (1994) respectively state that English is the medium of instruction for the secondary and higher education and more specifically English is learned as a subject from nursery to grade eight.

As far as top-down official policy and provisions go, in Ethiopia, all citizens at schools (except Amharic-speaking communities) have the access to at least three different languages. This can create a better opportunity for students, teachers, and families to try to be multilingual. Yet, a close analysis of the bottom-up agents in the implementation and maintenance of the national multilingual policy depends to a great extent on the perceptions and practices of the students (e.g., who are the pivotal engine of multilingualism in a society), the teachers (e.g. who are the translators, carriers, and enablers of multilingualism maintenance) and the families (e.g. who are the backbone and incipient sources to propel multilingualism from the home to the community). Perception and practices play crucial roles for success in the social change to ascertain a vibrant multilingualism. It is not the only opportunity but also the realization of the ideology as shaped through the perception and practices that determine the level of success in being multilingual (Krizsan & Erkkila, 2014; Kimber, 2014). To the best of my knowledge, there are a few studies conducted on language policy and its practice related issues in Ethiopia. However, only five dissertations some bearings on the central issues in the current study. These are McNab (1989), Cohen (2000), Dereje (2010), Moges (2010), and Araya Zemaryam (2014). McNab (1989), dissertation on language policy and practice is the first of its kind that deals broadly with language policy and implementation in Ethiopia. More specifically, he deals with the formulation and implementation of language

policy during the Dergue regime focusing on the linguistic development and endorsement of the then government's socialist ideologies in the formulation and implementation of Amharic as the language of all formal social services and administrative activities.

In contrast, this study wishes to explore the agency of a multilingual Ethiopia through three key actors in the educational system. Cohen (2000) dissertation investigates attitudes towards the introduction of local languages as medium of instruction in primary education in the SNNPR focusing primarily on participants from minority groups. In contrast, the present research concerns the educational agents responsible in shaping the development of multilingualism in Ethiopia's Oromia region. More relevant to the current study is Dereje's (2010) dissertation on how teachers, students, parents, and institutions appraise the Oromo language as a medium of primary education in Oromia. Dereje's study describes the attitudes of teachers, students, and parents towards the use of the Oromo language as medium of primary education. The current study differs from Dereje's in that its concerns the attitudes and perceptions, and practices of educational agents about their multilingualism as it is understood from their specific agentive role in the educational system.

Moreover, methodologically, both studies employed qualitative methods, whereas in this research both quantitative and qualitative methods were used. Moges (2010) study, similar to Dereje's study is a critical appraisal of the implementation of mother tongue education in the Harar region. Unlike Dereje's study, Moges also examines the challenges of offering primary education in several indigenous and exogenous languages such as Amharic, Arabic, English, Harari, and Afan Oromo as experienced by policymakers, school directors, teachers, and parents. This study differs from Moges's research not only in terms of the linguistic repertoire but also the triangulation of the perception of the three agents in the educational system focusing on 12th graders as representing the "end-state" where educational language policy has a cumulative impact in shaping multilingualism.

Araya Zmaryam (2014) dissertation explored educated adults who are active in the social, educational, economic, political and cultural arenas of their communities across Ethiopia. Araya Zmaryam explore the attitudes towards and discourses about opportunities and challenges of the present language policy and practice for national unity and development specifically different L1 speakers' attitudes towards the role of employing numerous languages as media of instruction, administration, and mass communications on national unity and development as well as towards the use of Amharic only as a federal working language. In contrast to Araya Zmaryam, the present study explores the "threshold-stage" of Oromia on the verge of exiting the compulsory national education system just before they are integrated in higher education, vocational training or the job market. The participants

in this study reflect the actual educational policy and practices of the nation of Ethiopia.

In sum, the earlier mentioned studies address different perspectives of national language policy and planning, its impact on society and educational policies taking into consideration select studied populations, language and regions which stand in contrast to the current study. The current study explores: the age group of 12th graders who are about to graduate the educational system (both private and public schools); the triangulation of related agencies of this age as represented by the parents (the non-formal environment of multilingual development) and the teachers (the formal providers of multilingual education) and the pupils (the bearers of the outcome of both formal and non-formal multilingualism); perceptions and practices as reflected in the same exploratory tools (background, productive and informational questionnaires/interview protocols and tasks); in an area/ethnic groups constituting one of the largest communities in Ethiopia (Oromia). The study aims at exploring both bottom-up and top-down agencies of multilingualism. At the national level (top-down), there are hardly any systematic studies inquiring about what people in the country feel about their languages (i.e., the national, ethnic or international languages of the country) in their coexistence in the public and private space. As multilingualism is pivotal to the growth and sustainability of the country in the current globalized world, a study on the perception and practices at school and at home/ community is timely to shed light on the potential of the development of multilingualism. Besides, as Franceschini (2013:52) states “[e]xploring all facets of multilingualism is at its infancy.”

This study aims at profiling the multilingual practices and perceptions of the three major agents of individual and societal multilingualism in the Oromia region of Ethiopia. More specifically, the agency of education as an engine to promote and legitimize multilingualism – de facto— in Ethiopia. The study explores the outlook on multilingualism (from different perspectives) by students, teachers, and parents of 12th graders in public and private schools. The study focuses on pupils, teachers and parents of 12th graders who will soon complete their basic schooling and will be “launched” into the professional or vocational training and/or workplace (most likely in Ethiopia initially). The profiles of multilingual practices were assessed using different forms of questionnaires. These tasks aim at gathering different aspects that will construe the agents’ profiles. First, a general multi-section “background questionnaire” was used to collect information on the individual agent’s language repertoire history, language use, and attitude towards the language(s) and their contribution to multilingualism of the individual as well as the society. The second type of information concern “performative tasks” including a subjective assessment of language proficiency (i.e., the CAN-DO task inspired by Clark, 1978), a questionnaire profiling personality features that are conducive to multilingualism

(Deweale & van Oudenhoven, 2009; Dewaele & Stavans, 2014; Dewaele & Wei, 2013).

1.4 Research Questions

In this study, the research questions are formulated to examine participants' perceptions and practices toward multilingualism. By addressing key themes such as attitudes, behaviors, and the socio-cultural contexts surrounding multilingualism, these questions aim to illuminate the complexities of engaging with multiple languages.

The following research questions have been carefully designed to guide the inquiry and achieve the study's objectives. RQ1 and RQ2 pertain to the profiling of the multilingualism characterized by different features of each agent group (irrespective of school type association).

RQ1: Which features characterize the profile of the agent groups in terms of demographic (age, languages, education), linguistic repertoire, proficiency in the language/s (can-do and general), language/s use with interlocutors (intimate and formal) for different purposes (entertainment, sustainability and business), attitude towards mono/multilingualism and personality traits?

RQ2: Is there a difference among the agent groups means of the characterizing features? If so, which specific characterizing feature of the agent groups differ from each other?

RQ3 and RQ4 address the association of the agents to a specific school type, examining the differences in the characterizing features within each agent group either in private or public school. RQ5 then seeks to compare the characterizing features of each agent group in the private schools with their cohorts in the public schools.

RQ3: Is there a difference in the characterizing features among the agent groups that are associated with the Private schools? If so, which specific characterizing feature of the agent groups differ from each other?

RQ4: Is there a difference in the characterizing features among the agent groups that are associated with the Public schools? If so, which specific characterizing feature of the agent groups differ from each other?

RQ5: Is there a difference in the characterizing features of each agent group separately when comparing its members associated with Private versus Public

schools? If so, which specific characterizing feature of the agent groups differ from each other?

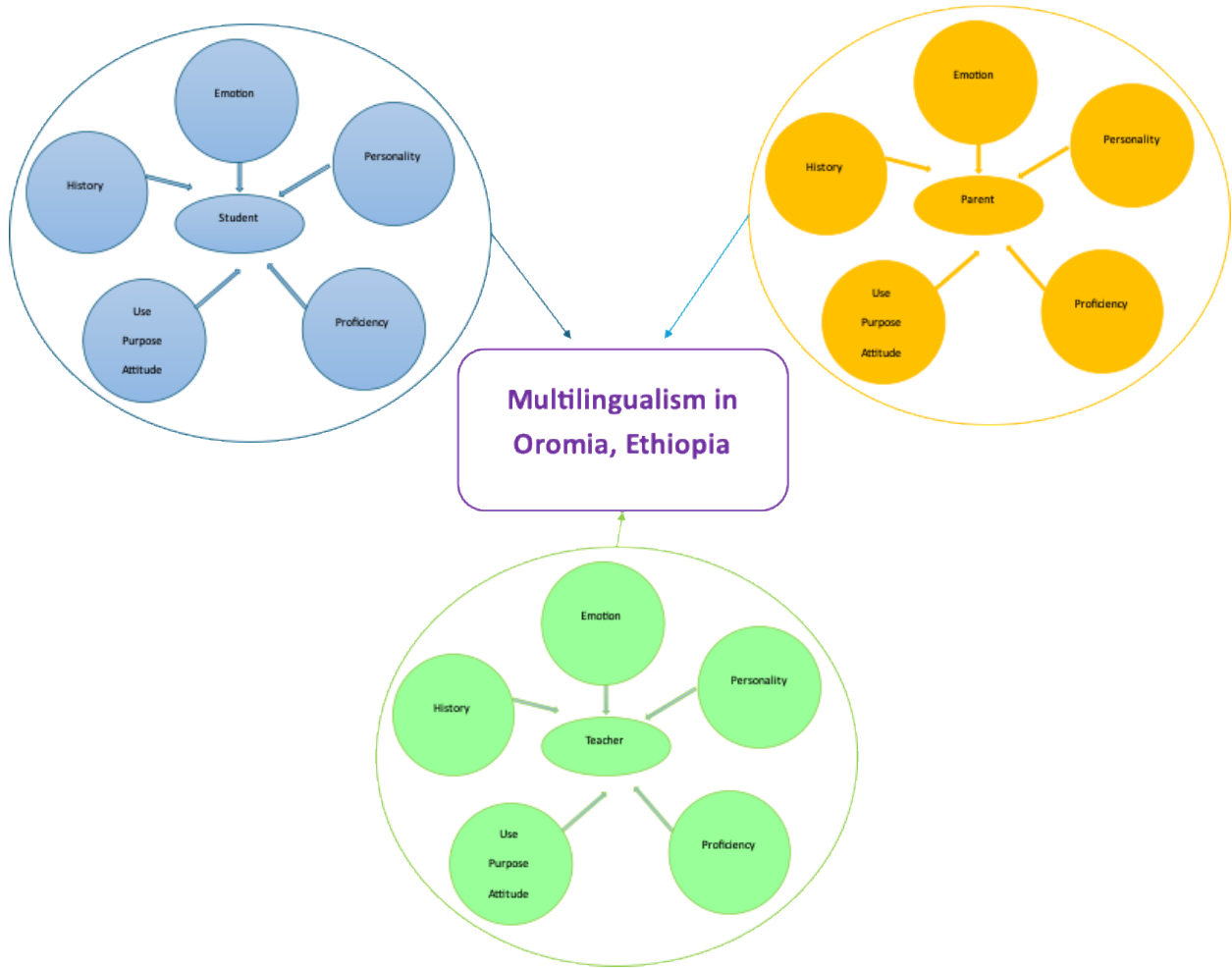
Last, RQ6 explores which characterizing feature is associated with another feature in each agent group as a whole.

RQ6: Which multilingual characterizing features are related to each other within each agent group (irrespective of school type)?

1.5 Objectives of the study

The overarching objective of this study was to investigate how Grade 12 students, their parents, and their teachers in public and private schools in Ambo Town, Oromia, Ethiopia, perceive and enact multilingualism. These three groups—students, parents, and teachers—serve as key social agents in translating Ethiopia’s constitutional commitment to multilingualism into everyday linguistic practices and identity expressions. The study examined their perceptions of multilingualism, including their attitudes, beliefs, emotions, personality traits, language proficiency, language use, and linguistic histories, to understand how these dimensions shape their engagement with multilingual realities. Furthermore, it explored the extent to which multilingualism is supported, practiced, or constrained in both educational institutions and home environments. Through a comparative analysis of the three agent groups, the study aimed to illuminate variations in the profiles of the multilinguals’ perceptions and practices, thereby offering insight into how multilingual policy is interpreted, negotiated, and realized at the grassroots level by those most directly involved in language socialization and education. Figure 1 depicts visually the design of the study.

Figure 1: The triangular features of the multilingual agents



1.6 Scope and significance of the study

The scope of this study is on the perception and practices of multilingualism of the three agents - pupils, teachers and parents - in the educational public and private system in the Oromia region in Ethiopia. The study places a special focus on the agency of 12th graders in both public and private schools as these pupils are in their last year of schooling with an outlook towards engaging in post-scholastic education or the workforce. Hence, the years of multilingual education as deployed by the education agents each from a different perspective (i.e., the pupil's outlook to his/her future and opportunities, the teachers as facilitators of multilingualism through pedagogy, and the parents the agents of multilingualism in the non-formal education environment) are at their completion in this particular age group. Moreover, special attention is drawn to the two types of schools systems in the region studied which will also shed light on the perceptions and practices of multilingualism that develop

in the different educational systems on their divergent quality instruction, methods, materials, and educational ideologies. These differences may have an impact not only on the type of multilingual that emerge from the different educational systems but also their abilities to maintain, practice, and move forward a sustainable multilingualism to the advancement of the nation.

The Oromia Region offers a particularly rich linguistic context for this investigation. Home to nearly 40% of Ethiopia's population, Oromia is the stronghold of Afan Oromo, the most widely spoken mother tongue in the country. In addition, schools in the region routinely engage with three primary languages—Afan Oromo (medium of instruction from kindergarten to Grade 8 and again at college level), Amharic (taught from Grade 5 through 12), and English (taught from early grades and used as the medium of instruction from Grade 9 onward). The formal presence of these three languages in the education system, along with many others used informally, constitutes the baseline multilingual reality of the region. Ambo Town, located in the Western Shoa Zone of Oromia, approximately 114 kilometers from the capital city Addis Ababa (Finfinne), serves as the study site. As a linguistically and religiously diverse urban center, Ambo represents both the demographic and sociolinguistic characteristics of Oromia at large. Its role as a hub of commerce, education, and migration has contributed to its dynamic language ecology. Schools in Ambo operate under the curriculum and supervision of the Oromia Regional Education Bureau, creating a consistent yet contextually grounded educational environment for this investigation.

The findings generated by this study serve as grassroots information for policy makers, stakeholders, educators, parents and other agents of multilingualism. The contribution and significance of this study is multilayered in term of: a) *Policy and Practice Interface*: The study highlights how multilingualism is enacted on the ground by those directly involved in implementing, sustaining and spreading Ethiopia's multilingual policy. It examines how national language policy is interpreted and expressed by students, parents, and teachers in their everyday linguistic decisions; b) *Pedagogical and Curricular Implications*: Findings may inform improvements in language pedagogy, teacher training, and the development of multilingual curricula and educational materials, particularly within Ethiopia's unique sociolinguistic context; c) *Educational Equity and Language Rights*: By illuminating how multilingual practices vary across school types and social groups, the study may help address linguistic inequalities and promote the inclusion of marginalized languages in formal education; d) *Cultural and Sociopolitical Relevance*: The study contributes to broader debates on the role of multilingualism in fostering social cohesion, reducing conflict, and legitimizing linguistic diversity within institutional settings; e) *Research Contribution*: It fills a gap in existing research on multilingualism in non-Western, African contexts, particularly within

Ethiopia—a country with one of the most multilingual populations in the world; and
f) *Community Awareness and Engagement*: Finally, the study offers valuable insights for parents, teachers, and community leaders by enhancing their understanding of multilingualism, language ideologies, and strategies for maintaining and promoting minority languages.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews the key theoretical, conceptual, and empirical foundations that inform the present study on multilingualism in the Ethiopian context. It begins by establishing a conceptual framework for understanding multilingualism through a survey of definitions, historical developments, and scholarly perspectives. This is followed by a contextual analysis of language and multilingualism in Africa, leading into a detailed examination of Ethiopia as a linguistically diverse federal state. The chapter then turns to the factors influencing multilingualism among parents, pupils, and teachers—the primary agents in this study—including language use, proficiency, attitudes, and motivation. Subsequent sections explore the role of multilingual personality traits and the implications of multilingualism in educational settings, with particular attention to translingual and translanguaging pedagogies. The chapter concludes by synthesizing the reviewed literature into a conceptual model that guides the study's research questions and methodological approach. Overall, this literature review aims to establish both the theoretical significance and the local relevance of multilingualism as a dynamic and socially situated phenomenon.

2.1 Multilingualism: Definitions and Conceptual Frameworks

Multilingualism, the ability to communicate effectively in multiple languages, is a key component of globalization, cultural exchange, and education in diverse societies. As the world becomes increasingly interconnected, the importance of multilingual practices and perceptions has grown, shaping individuals' identities, social interactions, and professional opportunities. Understanding how people perceive and engage with multilingualism (the use of multiple languages by an individual or within a society) provides valuable insights into their cultural attitudes, linguistic preferences, and the broader societal factors influencing language use. The present study aims to explore participants' perceptions and practices toward multilingualism (the use of multiple languages by an individual or within a society), shedding light on their lived experiences, the motivations behind their linguistic choices, and the challenges they face in navigating multilingual environments. By examining these aspects, the study seeks to contribute to the discourse on language diversity and its implications for personal and communal development. In what follows, I will describe the phenomenon of multilingualism (the use of multiple languages by an individual or within a society) and survey its historical conceptualization along the way it has been defined by leading scholars. Then, I will describe the languages of Ethiopia and its speakers concluding this section with a brief contextualization of multilingualism (the use of multiple languages by an individual or within a society) in the Ethiopian context.

2.1.1 Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on Multilingualism

Historically, multilingualism (the use of multiple languages by an individual or within a society) as a form of living and socialization has existed and has been documented since Biblical times (Stavans & Hoffmann, 2015) with the mobility of speakers of different languages across geographic regions in pursuit of food, territory or trade, bringing peoples from different geographical and ethnic backgrounds together. This movement of groups, or "relocation" in modern terms, created numerous opportunities for cross-linguistic interaction. Indeed, human mobility has long been a driving force behind multilingualism, encompassing people from all walks of life—both educated and uneducated, wealthy and impoverished, in rural and urban settings, and across various regions. Kimber (2014: 150) stated that: “[th]e times we live in are characterized by the movement of people, ideas, goods, and services across the globe; language skills are thus necessary to confront the challenge of maintaining order and positive relationships between people of all backgrounds and cultures.” Similarly, Stavans & Jessner (2022: 1) have argued that this human mobility required that people needed to function in more than one language to sustain a community and hence “[l]anguages [had to] become “currencies” that have different and changing “exchange rates” in different spheres of human interaction in the “communication market” at different times, in different places, and for different purposes.” As language(s) become the greatest invention of mankind and a precious property that connects people of the world together (Deutscher, 2005), it also became a catalyst agent in propagating multilingualism and multilingual societies (Blackledge & Creese, 2010), making “[t]heir multilingualism eventually ... a marker of their identity” (Stavans & Hoffmann, 2015:11).

The origins and expansion of multilingualism are rooted in factors that have transformed monolingual and bilingual societies into multilingual ones. These factors are often shaped by political, historical, educational, and economic dynamics, unfolding across different times and places, either sequentially or simultaneously. Regions like Asia and Africa have long embraced multilingual traditions, while Europe largely adhered to a monolingual, nation-based approach until the formation of the European Union (EU). The EU's establishment became a pivotal moment, highlighting and accelerating the evolving linguistic diversity of recent decades. Consequently, it is often argued that multilingualism is now the global norm rather than an exception. Scholars have explained this linguistic reality as a result of several factors such as globalization, technology, mobility, language policy, internationalization, geopolitical and economic forces, recognition of linguistic minorities, and education (Cenoz, 2013; Stavans & Hoffmann, 2015). As argued by Alshenqeti and Alsaedi (2012:1), “[w]hen considering the enormous number of

different living languages spoken around the world, one can definitely presume that interacting between individuals from different linguistic backgrounds is common.” The number of languages worldwide is constantly evolving due to new discoveries about languages, their distinct features, and their interactions. These changes necessitate that people adapt to shifting linguistic realities, communication methods, and sustainable forms of social interaction in their daily lives. Multilingualism is far from unusual—it mirrors the linguistic landscape we inhabit, with more than 7,000 languages spoken across the world. It has become a fundamental aspect of human existence, akin to our ability to think and feel.

Scholars have quibbled with this phenomenon for several decades and have provided multiple perspectives on the interpretation and understand of what multilingualism is. The concept of multilingualism has been defined and interpreted in different ways over time, reflecting shifts in linguistic theory, cognitive science, and sociolinguistics. Early definitions were largely structuralist and focused on the functional use of separate linguistic systems. Weinreich (1953) provided one of the earliest definitions, describing multilingualism as "the practice of alternately using two or more languages," which framed multilingualism as a switch between distinct language systems. Building on this, Haugen (1956) defined multilingualism in terms of the ability to understand and speak two languages fluently, reinforcing the idea that multilingualism involved competence in distinct systems. This view was later challenged by Macnamara (1967), who introduced the notion that even minimal competence in a second language qualifies as multilingualism.

By the 1980s, a psycholinguistic perspective emerged, particularly through the work of Grosjean (1982), who argued that "multilinguals are not the sum of two or more monolinguals" but possess a unique linguistic configuration that reflects the interaction of their languages. This shifted the focus from separate language systems to an integrated linguistic repertoire. In the 1990s, Cook (1992) introduced the concept of multicompetence to describe the distinct cognitive state of a multilingual mind, emphasizing the interconnected nature of language knowledge. At the same time, Edwards (1994) highlighted the societal dimension of multilingualism, defining it as the coexistence of multiple languages within a community. De Houwer (1995) extended this sociolinguistic view to the family context, defining multilingualism as the use of more than one language in everyday life, particularly within the family and broader social environments.

In the early 2000s, scholars moved toward dynamic and sociocultural models. Jessner (2006) proposed the Dynamic Model of Multilingualism (DMM), viewing multilingual competence as an adaptive and interactive system where the knowledge of one language influences the acquisition and use of others. Similarly, De Bot (2004) framed multilingualism as a dynamic cognitive process influenced by neurological and social factors. The concept of translanguaging emerged as a key

framework in this period, with García (2009) defining multilingualism not as the sum of separate languages but as "the integration of diverse language practices" within a single linguistic repertoire. Lanza (2007) contributed to this sociolinguistic shift by examining how multilingualism operates within family and social contexts, showing that language use is shaped by communicative goals and social norms.

In the 2010s, Canagarajah (2013) introduced the notion of translanguaging practice, where multilinguals creatively and flexibly navigate linguistic resources depending on the communicative context. Emotional and psychological dimensions of multilingualism were also explored during this time. Dewaele (2010) defined multilingualism as an emotional and social resource that shapes how individuals express feelings and navigate interpersonal relationships. In parallel, Cenoz and Gorter (2011) stressed the importance of context in defining multilingual competence, recognizing that proficiency varies depending on communicative needs and settings. More recently, Li Wei (2018) advanced the translanguaging framework, arguing that multilingualism reflects the strategic and fluid use of linguistic resources, rather than the compartmentalized use of separate language systems.

A notable contribution to the understanding of multilingualism comes from Stavans and Hoffmann (2015), who proposed that multilingualism involves the strategic and purposeful use of multiple languages to achieve communicative, social, and cognitive goals. Stavans and Hoffmann emphasize that multilingual speakers are not merely passive users of multiple languages but active agents who strategically select and deploy linguistic resources depending on the communicative context. Their model combines cognitive, social, and functional dimensions, reinforcing the idea that multilingualism involves both competence and communicative strategy.

These evolving perspectives reflect a broadening understanding of multilingualism, shifting from a structuralist, system-based view to a dynamic, integrated, and socially embedded understanding of multilingual practices. Over time, multilingualism has come to be seen not just as a cognitive and linguistic phenomenon but also as an emotional, strategic, and social resource. The key trends that emerged were either a: structuralist definition (1950s–1960s) focused on proficiency in distinct language systems; a psycholinguistic model (1970s–1980s) emphasized cognitive processing and language modes; a cognitive and societal perspectives (1990s) explored interconnected language systems and social contexts; a dynamic and translanguaging models (2000s–2010s) shifted toward a fluid, adaptive, and socially embedded view of multilingualism; an emotional and contextual dimensions (2010s) added complexity by considering the psychological and situational aspects of multilingual communication; or strategic models (2015 onwards) highlighted the purposeful and goal-directed use of language resources

(Stavans & Hoffmann, 2015). Table 1 provides an integrated historical and theoretical overview of how multilingualism has been defined, evolving from early structuralist models to dynamic, strategic, and socially embedded frameworks.

Table 1 – in appendices

2.1.2 Terminology: Bilingualism, Multilingualism, and Plurilingualism

The terminology that has been intrinsically related – bilinualism, multilingualism and plurilingualism – has been under the limelight in the past three decades as the above survey suggests. Early definitions of bilingualism and multilingualism had several limitations, as they were based on monolingual frameworks (Dewaele, 2015), which are now considered outdated in modern definitions. These early definitions expected native-like proficiency (Bloomfield, 1933) from bilinguals and multilinguals, assuming they should perform equally well in all known languages. Dewaele argued that these definitions suffered from both methodological and theoretical issues. They were overly exclusive, setting criteria focused solely on linguistic skills while ignoring other linguistic and non-linguistic factors.

Scholars such as Grosjean (2010) have demonstrated that bilingualism and multilingualism are not simply the sum of monolingualism. They go beyond the ability to know two or more independently identifiable languages. Bilingualism and multilingualism encompass a complex and multifaceted field that includes the knowledge and usage of two or more languages (Bhatia, 2006). Bilingualism and multilingualism refer to the coexistence and use of more than one language within a single mind. Moreover, anyone who can use more than one language, regardless of skill level, proficiency, or the status of the languages (e.g., variety, dialect, majority or minority language) (Dewaele, 2015; Cenoz, 1998), can be considered bilingual or multilingual.

Many scholars use the terms "bilingualism" and "multilingualism" interchangeably. This is because both are defined as the ability of an individual to use at least one language in addition to their mother tongue or the language of the community in which they live. However, similarity does not equal identity (Cenoz & Gorter, 2008). Despite the many shared characteristics between bilingualism and multilingualism, key differences remain. Bilingualism is typically defined as the use of two or more languages or dialects in everyday life, whereas multilingualism refers to the presence of several languages within a given space, independently of those who use them (Council of Europe, 2007). Importantly, multilingualism is not simply bilingualism +1. It represents a more dynamic, complex, heterogeneous, and multidimensional process involving learning, use, processing, and maintenance of multiple languages across different modalities, ages, and contexts (Stavans & Jessner, 2022). Cenoz (1998) differentiates between bilingual and multilingual

education. While both involve using more than one language as a medium of instruction, multilingual education presents greater challenges for both learners and teachers.

2.1.3 Typologies and Classifications of Multilingualism

There are different types of bilingualism. Weinreich (1953) classified them into compound, coordinate, and subordinate bilingualism based on how codes and meanings are organized in the mind, although Haugen (1987) did not adopt these terms. Skutnabb-Kangas (1981) distinguished between elite and folk bilingualism, based on the social status of the languages. McLaughlin (1984) introduced simultaneous versus successive bilingualism, depending on when the languages are acquired. Lambert (1985) identified early versus late bilingualism, focusing on the age of acquisition. Finally, Romaine (1995) distinguished between balanced and dominant bilingualism, which reflects proficiency levels in each language. These classifications also apply to multilingualism.

When discussing multilingualism and plurilingualism, multilingualism generally refers to a social phenomenon, while plurilingualism refers to an individual's linguistic repertoire (Council of Europe, 2007). Plurilingualism reflects an individual's ability to use multiple languages according to context and importance (Beacco, 2005). It also plays a key role in language learning and intercultural relationships, where the linguistic and cultural competences acquired through one language influence the others, contributing to greater intercultural awareness and competence (Cenoz & Gorter, 2008). Furthermore, plurilingual individuals tend to have more complex personalities, greater capacity for learning additional languages, and an open-minded approach to experiencing new cultures (Council of Europe, 2007).

2.1.4 Sociolinguistic vs. Psycholinguistic Perspectives

Definitions of multilingualism have been mostly split into the societal outlook and the individual outlook onto multilingualism. Over decades of research into multilingualism, a conflation of terms has emerged, particularly within the sub-fields of applied linguistics, sociolinguistics, and psycholinguistics. The study of multilingualism is most prominently situated within socio- and psycholinguistic contexts, where the primary focus is on both individual and societal multilingualism. On the one hand, sociolinguistic studies examine the presence, use, deployment, and institutional power of languages within communities, societies, nations, or groups. On the other hand, psycholinguistic research focuses on the acquisition, learning, usage, and identity associated with languages at the individual level. Despite these distinct focuses, the two areas are deeply interconnected. As Romaine (2013) notes, it is nearly impossible to study individual multilingualism without considering its

societal dimensions, just as understanding societal multilingualism requires attention to its impact on individuals. This interdependence underscores the intricate relationship between the personal and collective aspects of multilingualism (Aronin, 2019; Stavans & Hoffmann, 2015).

Societal multilingualism refers to the coexistence and use of multiple languages within a society. It occurs when more than one language is spoken and/or written and officially recognized within a particular community, region, or nation. This concept encompasses various aspects, including language policies, language education, language attitudes, and language practices. It explores how different communities, organizations, and groups use language in terms of context, circumstance, order, manner, and routine (Aronin, 2019). Societal multilingualism is shaped by historical, political, and economic dynamics, such as imperialism, colonialism, and immigration, which have often led to power struggles over the presence, revival, or preservation of minority languages versus dominant majority languages. The imposition of colonizers' languages has significantly influenced societal multilingualism (Stavans & Hoffmann, 2015). These historical and sociopolitical factors are fundamental to the development and maintenance of multilingual societies (Cenoz, 1998). There are different types of societal multilingualism, including additive vs. subtractive bilingualism (Lambert, 1975), elite vs. folk bilingualism (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1981), and majority vs. minority language dynamics. Societal multilingualism can be classified as either *additive or subtractive* (Cenoz, 2013). *Additive multilingualism* occurs when new languages are introduced into a society without diminishing the status or usage of existing languages. It enriches the linguistic repertoire of individuals and society by supporting the continued use of native or dominant languages while fostering proficiency in additional ones. It promotes communication and cultural understanding without devaluing any language within the linguistic ecosystem. An example of additive multilingualism is when a first language receives formal recognition and support, such as being used as a language of instruction in education (Richards et al., 1995). Canada's bilingual policy, recognizing both English and French while supporting Indigenous languages, exemplifies additive multilingualism. *Subtractive multilingualism* occurs when a dominant language leads to the displacement or devaluation of minority or heritage languages within a society, causing linguistic diversity to diminish over time (Lambert, 1980). This is common when migrants adopt the dominant language of their new environment, abandoning their native languages. Colonization has historically led to subtractive multilingualism, such as the decline of Indigenous languages in Latin America due to the dominance of Spanish.

Ethiopia exemplifies both additive and subtractive multilingualism, though the situation is complex. Ethiopia is known for its rich linguistic diversity, with over

80 distinct languages from Semitic, Cushitic, Omotic, and Nilo-Saharan families (Meyer & Moges, 2023). In terms of *Additive Multilingualism*, Ethiopia's language policy promotes additive multilingualism by recognizing multiple languages in governance and education, granting all ethnic groups the right to develop and promote their languages, though Amharic remains the federal working language. The educational system encourages mother tongue-based multilingual education (MTB-MLE) at the primary level, improving access to education and literacy in indigenous languages while English is taught as a foreign language, adding to the country's linguistic diversity. Policies under the Derg and EPRDF governments supported additive multilingualism by introducing domestic languages alongside Amharic in schools while at the same time making provisions for Amharic speakers to become bilingual due to exposure to other – additional - languages in education and administration. Cultural expressions, including literature, music, and theater, reflect the linguistic diversity of Ethiopia's ethnic groups. In terms of *Subtractive Multilingualism*, historically, the dominance of Amharic under the Amhara-centered Abyssinian Empire marginalized other languages. The internal migration and urbanization have increased the dominance of Amharic and English, leading to language shift and the marginalization of minority languages; resulting in further political marginalization of ethnic groups such as the Oromo and Tigray for whom suppression of the use of their languages in governance and education was imposed. Although language rights are constitutionally guaranteed, practical implementation remains inconsistent, contributing to the erosion of minority languages.

Skutnabb-Kangas (1981) distinguishes between *elite and folk bilingualism*, highlighting disparities in linguistic privilege. *Elite Multilingualism* refers to bilingualism or multilingualism among individuals in positions of power, influence, and privilege. These individuals often have access to education, economic resources, and social networks that facilitate multilingual proficiency in dominant or prestigious languages (e.g., English). Examples include political leaders, diplomats, and business executives who benefit from language skills in governance, commerce, and international relations. *Folk Multilingualism* refers to bilingualism or multilingualism among the general population, particularly marginalized or minority communities. Folk multilingualism arises from sociocultural, historical, or economic factors rather than privilege. In Ethiopia, elite multilingualism is reflected in: a) Government and administration (i.e., Amharic remains the language of government, but elites are often proficient in other languages for diplomatic and professional purposes); b) Education (i.e., Elites have better access to education in English and Amharic through private and international schools); c) Foreign affairs (i.e., Language skills in English and other global languages enable elites to engage in diplomacy, trade, and scholarship); d) Urban and professional sectors (i.e., Elite multilingualism facilitates communication and networking in diverse linguistic

environments); e) Cultural events (i.e., Elites contribute to literature, media, and academia using multiple languages, enhancing Ethiopia's cultural output). Folk multilingualism in Ethiopia is characterized by: a) high linguistic diversity and multilingual communities (i.e., more than 80 languages spoken resulting in cultural diversity and multiple language use for communication); b) code-switching and mixing is common; c) trade and commerce as well as internal migration for sustainability purposes result in the need to learn and use multiple languages; d) cultural folklore requires linguistic diversity.

One of the most prominent social multilingualism type is that of *majority and minority* languages. *Majority societal multilingualism* occurs when one or a few languages are spoken by most of the population and hold official status in government, education, and media. Whereas *minority societal multilingualism* occurs when no single language dominates numerically or politically. Language policies in minority contexts aim to protect and promote the use of minority languages in education, governance, and public life. In Ethiopia, Amharic functions as the majority language because it serves as the lingua franca and the official language of administration, education, and media. Regional languages like Afan Oromo and Tigrinya have official status in their regions. The language education policy promotes instruction in both majority and regional languages. By contrast, minority multilingualism is reflected in the recognition of regional languages under the Ethiopian Constitution allowing for language rights for minority ethnic groups and establishing multilingual education policies aimed at preserving indigenous languages at the elementary school level.

Societal multilingualism in Ethiopia reflects a dynamic interaction between historical, political, and sociocultural factors. While additive multilingualism is promoted through education and language policy, subtractive multilingualism persists due to the dominance of Amharic and limited resources for minority languages. Elite and folk multilingualism highlight disparities in linguistic access and opportunity, while majority and minority multilingualism reflect Ethiopia's complex language dynamics. Addressing linguistic inequalities and promoting language rights remain key challenges for inclusive development and social cohesion.

Individual multilingualism, refers to an individual who can communicate in more than one language, whether actively (through speaking and writing) or passively (through listening and reading), is considered multilingual (Li, 2008). Aronin (2019) defines individual multilingualism as the ability to acquire, master, and use multiple languages in both private and public life for various purposes and with different interlocutors in diverse communicative contexts. This capacity extends to individuals with different cognitive and physical abilities (Stavans & Jessner, 2022). Individuals can become multilingual at different times and in

different ways. Lambert (1985) differentiates between early and late multilingualism based on when languages are acquired, while McLaughlin (1984) distinguishes between simultaneous and sequential multilingualism based on how languages are learned. Romaine (1995) further categorizes multilingual individuals as balanced or dominant based on their proficiency levels in each language (Aronin, 2019).

Early multilingualism occurs when a person acquires multiple languages from infancy or early childhood, typically through exposure at home or in the community. In contrast, *late multilingualism* refers to learning additional languages in adolescence or adulthood, often for educational, professional, or social reasons. In Ethiopia, children often grow up in multilingual environments, learning their family's native language or the language of their ethnic group as their first language. Amharic is commonly acquired as a second language since it serves as a lingua franca for communication among different linguistic groups. Typically, mother tongue-based multilingual education (MTB-MLE) programs promote early multilingualism by encouraging instruction in native languages during early schooling and additional regional languages are often learned in school or through social interaction later in life. English is frequently acquired as a foreign language during schooling or through informal learning opportunities. Thus, early multilingualism in Ethiopia results from early exposure to multiple languages, while late multilingualism develops through migration, urbanization, and educational opportunities.

Simultaneous multilingualism occurs when an individual acquires two or more languages at the same time, typically from birth, whereas *sequential multilingualism* occurs when languages are learned one after the other, at different stages in life. Sequential multilingualism in Ethiopia is common among individuals who migrate from rural to urban areas or from one region to another.

As mentioned above, a typical sequence involves learning the family's native language first, followed by Amharic as the federal working language, and then acquiring additional languages such as English for education or Arabic for religious purposes. However, simultaneous multilingualism is prevalent in regions where multiple languages are spoken at home or in the community, where children often hear a home language and a community language from birth and interactions with relatives and peers from different linguistic backgrounds contribute to simultaneous language acquisition. Both sequential and simultaneous multilingualism are shaped in Ethiopia by factors such as migration, urbanization, linguistic diversity, and educational practices. Children may acquire languages sequentially or simultaneously, depending on their family environment, community, and individual experiences.

Romaine (1995) distinguishes between *balanced and dominant multilingualism* based on proficiency and usage levels. *Balanced multilingualism*

refers to relatively equal proficiency and competence in two or more languages. A balanced multilingual can use all their languages fluently across various domains, such as social interactions, education, and work. *Dominant multilingualism* occurs when one language is more dominant in an individual's linguistic repertoire, either due to higher proficiency or more frequent use. The less dominant language may still be understood and spoken but is not used as extensively. Balanced multilingualism in Ethiopia is common in ethnically diverse regions like the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region (SNNPR), where people grow up speaking both their ethnic language and Amharic fluently. Individuals often use their ethnic language at home and in their community while using Amharic for broader communication. Yet, the dominant multilingualism is manifested in Amharic widely used as a lingua franca across different ethnic groups and regions. An Oromo, Tigray, or Somali speaker living in Addis Ababa may predominantly use Amharic in daily interactions, education, and work, while still using their native language at home. English may also become dominant in professional or educational settings, particularly among the elite.

Individual multilingualism involves the ability to acquire and use multiple languages with varying levels of proficiency and across different contexts. In Ethiopia, individual multilingualism is shaped by the country's linguistic diversity, social dynamics, and language policies. Early and simultaneous multilingualism are common due to Ethiopia's multicultural environment, while late and sequential multilingualism are influenced by migration, education, and social mobility. Balanced multilingualism is seen in regions with strong support for native and official languages, while dominant multilingualism reflects the social and political influence of Amharic and English.

In this study we use a combined perspective of multilingualism to permeate between the social aspects of multiple languages in a country, community, school and family as well as a individual aspect that concerns the perception and how this linguistic diversity is characterized by each individual in the agent groups that propel Ethiopia's multilingualism. In the following sections attention will be placed on the contextualization of the multiple languages and the multilingual speakers of Africa and concomitantly of Ethiopia. Ascribing to to a combined definition of multilingualism that is construed by the top-down dictates of a language policy of the nation which in turn are brought to fruition through the practices of the individuals who in turn are intermediary agencies either in the form of formal institutional (such as the education system) or in the form of informal contours (such as the homes, families and communities).

2.2 Language and multilingualism in Africa

Many African countries were shaped by colonial powers, which demarcated borders based on administrative convenience rather than existing social, ethnic, or linguistic boundaries (Taddia, 1990). This led to inconsistencies in the size of African countries, with some being extremely large and others relatively small. In comparison to European nations, a single African country can encompass an area equivalent to multiple European countries. Colonial boundary-making not only affected the size of African nations but also disrupted the social and cultural identity of many communities. Indigenous groups were forced to assimilate into new political entities, often resulting in the suppression or loss of their cultural and linguistic identities. This disruption contributed to the marginalization and extinction of many indigenous languages and continues to affect political stability and economic development in parts of Africa (Pawliková, 2018).

Africa is one of the most linguistically diverse continents. According to Pawliková (2018), Africa's linguistic landscape is among the most complex and varied in the world. One-third of the world's languages are spoken in Africa. UNESCO estimates that about 30% of the world's languages—over 2,000 languages—are spoken on the continent. Ethnologue (24th edition, February 22, 2021) confirms this, reporting that of the 7,139 languages spoken worldwide, 2,154 are spoken in Africa. This linguistic diversity has resulted in high levels of individual and societal multilingualism across the continent. Most Africans speak multiple languages, including indigenous languages and additional languages used for interethnic communication (Stavans & Jessner, 2022; Prah & Brock-Utne, 2009). Pawliková (2018) notes that Africa has the highest number of spoken languages in the world, with only a few exceptions. Countries such as Somalia (Somali), Swaziland (Seswati), Botswana (Setswana), Burundi (Kirundi), Lesotho (Sesotho), and Rwanda (Kinyarwanda) have a single predominant indigenous language as the mother tongue for most of the population.

According to Trudell et.al. (2015) Africa's rich linguistic diversity presents both challenges and opportunities for education and language policy. Multilingualism is a defining feature of African societies with a vast linguistic diversity that influences educational outcomes due to the need to teach in multiple languages. This teaching practice requires balancing the promotion of indigenous languages with the need for effective communication and governance, supported by language policies to preserve indigenous languages while fostering national unity and improving educational access. Trudell and colleagues emphasize that understanding the sociolinguistic dynamics of African multilingualism is essential for developing strategies that promote both linguistic and social cohesion ethnic groups and regions. Languages like Kiswahili (in Tanzania), Arabic, Somali, Berber, Amharic, Afan Oromo, Hausa, Bamanan/Manding, Fulani, and Yoruba are widely used as lingua francas for cross-ethnic and intra-country communication (Pawliková,

2018). Tanzania's use of Kiswahili is a notable example of how a common language can serve to unite a multilingual society.

2.3 Multilingualism in Ethiopia (a linguistically diverse federal state): regions and their languages

Ethiopia – a linguistically and ethnically diverse federal state - is home to a range of nations, nationalities and ethnicities, each with distinct cultures, customs, values, languages, and identities. The terms "nations" and "nationalities" are drawn from the Ethiopian constitution and refer to the different ethnic groups that have autonomous regional states. For consistency, the term "ethnic groups" will be used throughout this work. Studies on the number of ethnic groups and languages in Ethiopia are inconsistent. García and Menken (2010) report that Ethiopia is home to more than 75 ethnic groups speaking over 80 languages, while Milkessa (2011) estimates that over 85 languages are spoken. Additionally, some foreign languages are used for specific purposes, such as English in academia and Arabic for religious activities.

Despite the country's rich linguistic diversity, successive governments have consistently promoted Amharic at the expense of other languages. Historically, Amharic has been privileged as "yenegus kwankwa" (the language of the kings) (Getachew, 2019). While the current constitution allows the use of regional languages, Amharic remains dominant as both a first and second language (Cohen, 2006; Lanza & Woldemariam, 2014). The government's reluctance to embrace multilingualism reflects a historical continuity of linguistic centralization, where speakers of minority languages are not encouraged to maintain or develop their linguistic identities (Yonatan, 2022). The constitution permits the use of mother tongues at the regional level, but in practice, the regionally dominant language typically becomes the official working language and language of education. Amharic continues to serve as the federal language, while English functions as the language of foreign affairs. This reinforces the privileged status of Amharic, despite the constitutional recognition of over 85 languages.

Ethiopia's diverse regions have historically housed specific languages from the 86 languages spoken in the country. However, monolingualism was promoted during the establishment of modern Ethiopia. The unification of the Ethiopian nation brought challenges for many rulers, resulting in wars, conflicts, and ongoing protests. Ethnic groups such as the Oromo, Tigre, Sidama, Wolayta, Kambata, and Hadiya have resisted the loss of their autonomy and identity. The central government suppressed these movements, imposing Amharic language and culture while undermining ethnic languages and identities (Baxter et al., 1996; Walelign, 1969). Speaking Amharic fluently was regarded as a marker of civilization, while other languages like Afan Oromo, Tigrinya, and Somali were viewed as dialects of less developed groups (Alamirow, 2010). Consequently, Afan Oromo, spoken by about

40% of the population, was marginalized for over a century due to hostility from Amharic-speaking elites (Alamirow, 2010). This contributed to social unrest, discrimination, and conflicts (Milkessa, 2011).

The Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), which took power in 1991, attempted to address language inequality by introducing a new constitution recognizing ethnic groups' right to self-governance and linguistic diversity. The 1995 FDRE constitution established a federal system and granted equal recognition to all Ethiopian languages (Milkessa, 2011). Regional states were created based on the size of ethnic groups, with larger groups forming their own regions while smaller groups were combined into joint regions (Yonatan, 2022). Languages such as Afan Oromo, Somali, Tigrinya, Afar, and Harari were promoted as working languages alongside Amharic in academia, media, research, and regional governance (Ege et al., 2009; Turton, 2008; Yonatan, 2022). However, the implementation of linguistic equality remains uneven. Some large ethnic groups, such as the Sidama, Wolayta, Hadiya, and Kambata, have not received their own regional states, while smaller groups like the Harari have been granted regional status. Similarly, Afan Oromo, spoken by the largest ethnic group in the country, has not been recognized as a national working language (Bekale, 2012). The FDRE Population Census Commission (2008) reported that the Oromo make up 34.5% of the population, followed by Amhara speakers (26.9%), Somali (6.2%), Tigre (6.1%), and Sidama (4%). Nevertheless, the Harari, with a population of about 300,000, have a regional state, while larger groups remain without official recognition. Furthermore, ethnic groups like the Agaw, Kimant, and Oromo remain under the Amhara regional state. Figure 2 shows the regions of Ethiopia where the linguistic diversity is prominent.

Figure 2: https://www.reddit.com/r/Ethiopia/comments/17iu1ir/ethnic_map_of_Ethiopia/



The historical dominance of Amharic is rooted in Ethiopia's imperial constitution of 1955, which designated Amharic as the official language for administration, media, and education. Linguistic pluralism increased in the 1970s when publications appeared in Afan Oromo and other languages, but Amharic maintained its privileged status (Zahorik & Wondwosen, 2009). During the alphabetization campaign supported by UNESCO, several languages, including Hadiya, Kambata, Gurage, Gedeo, KefaMocha, Saho, Afar, Tigré, and Kunama, were included. However, Amharic remained the dominant language in official publications and government affairs. The EPRDF's introduction of regional states based on ethnic groups aimed to promote linguistic and cultural diversity. However, inequalities persist. For example, while Afan Oromo is the most widely spoken language, it remains excluded from national working language status. Similarly, some larger ethnic groups remain marginalized in political and linguistic representation (Yonatan, 2022). As Bekale (2012) notes, the implementation of linguistic and federal policies remains inconsistent. Although some progress has been made, Ethiopia's linguistic landscape continues to reflect historical patterns of inequality and centralization.

2.3.1 Societal Multilingualism

The linguistic inequalities in Ethiopia have fueled struggles, protests, and instability across the country. Initial protests, led by youth movements in the Oromia regional state, eventually attracted the region's elites and officials, leading to the election of new leadership in 2019. However, ongoing unrest continues to be influenced by issues related to language policy and recognition. Historically, marginalization deprived ethnic groups of the right to "own" their language and identity, forcing them to adopt dominant languages and identities (Milkessa, 2011). This led to

language death, endangerment, and linguistic discrimination. For instance, languages such as Ge'ez and Gafat are now extinct, along with other varieties including Argobba, Bayso, Burji, Ganza (Ganzo, Koma), RerBare (Berbere, Adona), Agaw (western variety), Weyto, Kwegu (Bacha, Menja), Ongota (Birale), Gatame, Ganjule, Qwarenya, Gomba, Kimantene (Qwara), Shabo, Omo-Murle, and Xamtan'a (Batibo, 2005).

Ge'ez, which has a rich historical legacy and its own writing system, was once used for religious and scholarly texts. However, political marginalization relegated it to use only in Orthodox churches and academic research. Similarly, more than 56 ethnic groups with distinct languages are grouped into a single region where Amharic functions as the working language, sidelining local languages. In Benishangul-Gumuz, Gambela, and the Southwest state, Amharic also serves as the regional working language (Milkessa, 2011). The Harari Regional State is the only region that officially recognizes two working languages—Afan Oromo and Harari (Yonatan, 2022). Table 2 illustrates the official working languages of different regions in Ethiopia.

Table 2: Ethiopia's regional states and their official working languages

State	State Working Language(s)	Number of Other Languages Spoken
Tigray	Tigrinya	2
Far	Afar	1
Amhara	Amharic	3
Oromia	Afan Oromo	2
Somali	Somali	2
Benishangul-Gumuz	Amharic	5
SNNP	Amharic	50
Gambela	Amharic	5
Harari	Harari and Afan Oromo	1
Sidama	Sidama	2
Southwest	Amharic	6
Tigray	Tigrinya	2
Far	Afar	1
Amhara	Amharic	3

Ethiopia's linguistic diversity is shaped by languages from three major language families—Afro-Asiatic, Nilo-Saharan, and Khoisan—amounting to over 85 native languages, each with multiple dialects. About 26 languages are used as languages of instruction in elementary schools, and six serve as working languages at the regional level. Nevertheless, over 70% of these languages remain confined to domestic and informal use due to the social and political dominance of Amharic. This preference for Amharic reflects ingrained political ideologies that have marginalized minority languages and discouraged formal multilingualism. The current constitution

promotes some degree of linguistic diversity, particularly through the education system. Students are expected to learn their mother tongue in the early grades (for at least 25 languages), study Amharic from grade five (if it is not their first language), and learn English from kindergarten as a foreign language (Ege et al., 2009). After grade 12, higher education is conducted in English. In regional administrations, Afan Oromo, Tigrinya, Somali, Afar, and Harari are used as working languages alongside Amharic. However, at the federal level, Amharic remains the only official language for governance and national communication.

Ethiopia's linguistic policies have historically favored Amharic. The imperial constitution of 1955 designated Amharic as the official language for administration, media, and education. While the 1970s saw increased linguistic pluralism with publications and broadcasts in Afan Oromo and other languages, Amharic retained its dominance (Záhořík & Teshome, 2009). The alphabetization campaign supported by UNESCO included several minority languages, yet Amharic remained the primary language of official documentation and governance.

The Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), which came to power in 1991, attempted to address linguistic inequality by introducing federalism and recognizing ethnic groups' right to self-governance. The 1995 FDRE constitution granted equal recognition to all Ethiopian languages and established a system of ethnic federalism. Larger ethnic groups were given their own regional states, while smaller groups were merged into multi-ethnic regions (Yonatan, 2022). However, the implementation of these changes has been inconsistent. For instance, Afan Oromo, despite being the most widely spoken language in Ethiopia, has not been recognized as a national working language (Bekale, 2012). Similarly, large ethnic groups like the Sidama, Wolayta, Hadiya, and Kambata have been denied their own regions, while smaller groups such as the Harari have been granted regional status. The FDRE Population Census Commission (2008) reported that the Oromo (34.5%), Amhara (26.9%), Somali (6.2%), Tigre (6.1%), and Sidama (4%) form the largest ethnic groups. However, political recognition does not align with these demographic realities.

Ethiopia exhibits characteristics of "territorial multilingualism" identified by Stavans and Hoffmann (2015) into five patterns of societal multilingualism: *Territorial Multilingualism Type A* – Multiple languages are spoken nationally, with individuals proficient in several languages. *Territorial Multilingualism Type B* – Multiple languages receive legal recognition and can be used for any purpose within the country. *Territorial Monolingualism* – One language is legally recognized for official use. *Predominantly Territorial Monolingualism with Urban Multilingualism* – One language holds official status, but communities use multiple languages in social and urban settings. *Diglossia* – Two language varieties coexist with distinct social functions. Ethiopia fits the fourth pattern - *Predominantly Territorial*

Monolingualism with Urban Multilingualism, where the government officially recognizes one language (Amharic), but individuals and communities practice multilingualism. While the state remains monolingual in governance, Ethiopian society is de facto multilingual. As Shohamy (2006) and Aronin (2019) observe, multilingualism extends beyond spoken communication to include literacy, grammatical proficiency, and communicative competence. The Ethiopian case illustrates a gap between official language policy and actual linguistic practice, where multilingualism thrives at the societal level despite the state's monolingual framework.

Ethiopia's multilingualism reflects a complex interplay of political, historical, and social factors. While the state has made strides toward recognizing linguistic diversity, political and structural challenges remain. The dominance of Amharic at the federal level, coupled with unequal recognition of ethnic languages, underscores the tension between de jure monolingualism and de facto multilingualism. Ethiopia's linguistic diversity persists in everyday life, highlighting the resilience of local languages despite historical and political pressures toward centralization.

2.3.2 National Language Policy and Planning

The term "language planning" was first introduced by Haugen in 1959. Since then, it has attracted significant attention from scholars across various disciplines. Most studies define language planning as a deliberate effort to influence the structure, function, or acquisition of a language or linguistic variations within a speech community (Anthony & Baldauf, 2008). Cooper (1989:8) defines it as "the process of creating a normative orthography, grammar, and vocabulary for writers and speakers in a non-homogeneous speech community." It involves the systematic development of new regional, national, or global languages, or the regulation and enhancement of existing ones. Makoni (2017) describes language planning as a formal, management-level governance process aimed at selecting and promoting specific languages for managerial purposes. Similarly, Fasold (1987:246) defines it as "language determination to refer to choices of languages to be used for specific purposes." It is essentially an organized attempt by individuals, organizations, or governments to influence language use or development. Language planning may be required for various reasons. Nahir (2003) identifies eleven motivations for language planning, including language purification, language revival, language reform, language standardization, language spread, lexical modernization, terminology unification, stylistic simplification, interlingual communication, language maintenance, and auxiliary-code standardization.

Fasold (1987) further distinguishes two approaches to language planning. The instrumental approach views language planning as a practical activity focused on linguistic utility, while the sociolinguistic approach addresses underlying social

problems connected to language. Language planning can be categorized into status planning, corpus planning, and acquisition planning. Status planning refers to the establishment and functional development of particular languages within a state. It is typically a state-level activity focused on determining the official and working languages of government, media, and education (Fishman, 2000). Corpus planning involves the internal development of a language, including vocabulary, grammar, and spelling reforms, or the adoption of new writing systems. It is usually carried out by linguists and language experts (Gibson, 2006). Ferguson (2008) identifies graphitization, standardization, and modernization as the three key forms of corpus planning. Acquisition planning refers to efforts by national, state, or local governments to influence language distribution and literacy through educational policies (Anthony & Baldauf, 2008). These types of planning are influenced by economic, political, demographic, psychological, and social factors (Fasold, 1987).

Although language planning and language policy are closely related, they are not identical (Shohamy, 2006). Language policy refers to official decisions and public practices related to language education and use. According to McGroarty (1997:1), "Language policy can be defined as the combination of official decisions and prevailing public practices related to language education and use." This definition highlights the role of both governmental and public participation in shaping language policy. Rubin and Fishman (1971) describe language policy as a "normative intervention" by decision-making bodies under the guidance of sociolinguistic experts. McCarty (2011:8) expands on this, describing language policy as "a complex sociocultural process involving human interaction, negotiation, and production mediated by relations of power." Kaplan and Baldauf (1997: xi) define language policy as "a body of ideas, laws, regulations, rules, and practices intended to achieve the planned language change in societies, groups, or systems."

In general, language policy provides the structural framework for language use within a country or region. It establishes the formal status and functional roles of different languages within a society, influencing the linguistic landscape of the country. Within the context of Ethiopia, with its rich linguistic diversity, a well-defined language policy and legal protection was necessary. Ethiopia, a landlocked country governed by a written constitution that was established during the transition from the Dergue regime to the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) in 1991, addresses language policy vaguely and lacks specific details. The constitution states that Ethiopian citizens have the right to use their mother tongue at school and in regional settings. Amharic serves as the working language at the federal level, and English is used for international communication (Samuel & Wolde, 2015). Yet, the language policy in Ethiopia has historically reflected the political structures of successive governments. Most regimes promoted a monolingual policy, using Amharic to reinforce political and social unity. Even

under the current system, language policy remains politically motivated and is imposed through a top-down approach (Smith, 2008; McNab, 1990; Daniel & Abebayehu, 2006; Alelign, 2013). One such example is the case of Oromia. In the Oromia Regional State, Afan Oromo is the official language for governance and education, alongside Amharic and English. The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) Constitution (1994:2), Article 5 states that: a) All Ethiopian languages shall enjoy equal state recognition; b) Amharic shall be the working language of the Federal Government; and c) Members of the Federation may determine their respective working languages by law.

Although Ethiopia was never colonized, English functions as a second official language due to its historical and political significance (Higgins, 2009). Ethiopia's first official language policy emerged in 1944 when Amharic was designated as the language of instruction in schools (Getachew & Derib, 2006). The 1955 constitution reinforced Amharic's status as the official language for governance, education, and legal affairs. Emperor Haile Selassie used Amharic to consolidate his political power by appointing Amharic speakers to key administrative positions (Smith, 2008; Getachew & Derib, 2006). Following Italy's expulsion from Ethiopia, English was introduced into the education system as a gesture of gratitude toward Britain. Curricula and teaching materials were imported from Britain, and British teachers were hired to teach English (Heugh et al., 2007; Kitila, 2012).

The introduction of a federal system in 1991 formally reversed Haile Selassie's monolingual policies. Ethnic-based national groups were granted the right to self-governance and the use of their local languages in education and administration (Ethiopian Government Programme cited in Getachew & Derib, 2006: 47). However, in practice, Amharic remained the dominant language in primary schools and government institutions due to the lack of trained teachers in local languages (Getachew & Derib, 2006; Yonatan, 2022). Language policy and planning in Ethiopia reflect the country's complex political and social history. Although Ethiopia's constitution formally recognizes linguistic diversity and equal status for all languages, Amharic remains dominant in governance and education. Successive governments have promoted monolingual policies to reinforce political unity, sidelining other languages. The federal system introduced in 1991 sought to reverse these inequalities by granting ethnic groups the right to self-governance and language use across federal and regional levels. However, the legacy of Amharic dominance persists, highlighting the ongoing tension between Ethiopia's political structure and its multilingual reality.

2.3.3 Language Education policy in Ethiopia

Ethiopia's language education policy also reflects the country's linguistic diversity and political history. The Transitional Government of Ethiopia (1994:23)

established the foundation for a multilingual education system. The policy states that:

"Primary education will be in the medium of the national language of the region. This will also be the medium of teacher training institutes for kindergarten and primary education. Amharic will be taught as a language of country-wide communication, and English will be the medium for secondary and higher education."

This policy allows regional languages to be used as the medium of instruction in primary schools, reinforcing the constitutional recognition of Ethiopia's linguistic diversity. Students are taught all subjects in their mother tongue at the primary level, except for language classes, where Amharic is introduced starting from grade five. English is taught as a subject from kindergarten to grade eight and becomes the medium of instruction in secondary and higher education.

Before 1991, Amharic was the sole language of instruction and literacy in primary education, reflecting the political dominance of the Amharic-speaking ruling class. The post-1991 shift to a more inclusive policy marks a significant change, recognizing the right of ethnic groups to use their languages in education. This approach aligns with Ethiopia's federal structure, which grants regional states the right to establish their working languages. However, in practice, the dominance of Amharic in federal institutions and the limited availability of educational resources in minority languages present ongoing challenges for fully implementing a multilingual education system.

Teacher training institutions (TTIs and TTCs) have played a key role in implementing the language education policy. Teacher training for kindergarten and primary education is conducted in regional languages, aligning with the language of instruction in primary schools. After the closure of TTIs, the minimum teacher qualification was raised to a TTC diploma, with opportunities for further education up to the PhD level. Despite these improvements, gaps remain in providing teacher training and learning materials in some regional languages, particularly in minority areas. Ethiopia's language education policy reflects an effort to balance national unity with linguistic diversity. While progress has been made in supporting regional languages in primary education, Amharic remains dominant at the national level, and English retains a privileged status in secondary and higher education (Keressa and Parapaties, 2024).

2.3.4 Family Language Policy in Ethiopia

To address the particularities of Family Language Policy (FLP) in Ethiopia, the issues are informed by theoretical framework of FLP. Family Language Policy

(FLP) refers to the explicit and implicit strategies that families use to manage language use within the household. It is influenced by sociocultural, political, and economic factors, playing a crucial role in the transmission and maintenance of languages across generations (King et.al., 2008). FLP is generally analyzed through three interrelated components: ideology, practices, and maintenance.

Language ideology in FLP refers to the beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions that parents and caregivers hold about languages and their value in society. Curdt-Christiansen (2016) emphasizes that language ideologies are shaped by broader societal discourses, such as government policies and globalization. Families may align with dominant ideologies (favoring majority languages) or resist them to preserve minority or heritage languages. Spolsky (2012) notes that parents often encourage the use of a dominant language if they believe it will provide economic and social advantages for their children. Conversely, Fishman (1991) highlights that some families prioritize the maintenance of heritage languages as a means of preserving cultural identity and family bonds. Others promote multilingualism, believing that proficiency in multiple languages enhances cognitive flexibility and global opportunities (De Houwer, 2007).

Language practices refer to how languages are used in daily family interactions. This includes explicit rules about language use and natural patterns of communication (Lanza, 2007). FLP practices can be categorized into three models: a) One-Parent-One-Language (OPOL): One parent consistently speaks one language, while the other parent speaks another (Barron-Hauwaert, 2004); b) Minority Language at Home (ML@H): The minority or heritage language is used exclusively at home, while the dominant language is learned in schools and society (Lanza & Wei, 2016); and c) Code-Switching and Translanguaging: Multilingual families mix languages fluidly depending on the context and speakers involved (García & Wei, 2014).

Language maintenance refers to efforts to preserve a language across generations despite the dominance of another language in society. Fishman (1991) notes that language maintenance requires intentional planning and reinforcement within the family. Curdt-Christiansen (2016) emphasizes the role of parental commitment, community support (through cultural events and religious institutions), and educational resources (such as bilingual schools and heritage language classes) in sustaining language maintenance. If families fail to pass on the heritage language, language shift can occur, leading to language loss (Fishman, 1991).

Ethiopia's FLP reflects the broader linguistic and political dynamics of the country. Successive governments have promoted Amharic as the dominant language, influencing the way families use and transmit languages within the household. The influence of national language policy on FLP in Ethiopia is evident in patterns of language use, intergenerational transmission, and the status of minority

languages. Historically, Ethiopian governments have pursued a centralized language policy that privileged Amharic over other languages. This has shaped FLP by encouraging the use of Amharic within families, even at the expense of indigenous and minority languages. The Transitional Government of Ethiopia (1994:23) introduced a language education policy that allowed primary education to be conducted in regional languages while maintaining Amharic as the federal working language and English as the medium of instruction in secondary and higher education. However, societal pressures and political structures have reinforced the dominance of Amharic, shaping family language practices and attitudes.

Parents in Ethiopia often encourage their children to speak Amharic due to its association with social mobility, economic opportunity, and political advantage. However, some ethnic groups, particularly in rural areas, continue to transmit their heritage languages at home despite the dominance of Amharic in public and institutional settings. This reflects a tension between official language policy and actual family language practices. In Oromia, for example, Afan Oromo is widely used in family settings and has been integrated into the education system. Under the federal system introduced in 1991, Oromia was granted the right to use Afan Oromo as the regional working language. This policy has strengthened the status of Afan Oromo within families, encouraging its transmission across generations. However, the dominance of Amharic at the federal level continues to create pressure for families to prioritize Amharic in certain social and economic contexts.

The evolution of FLP in Ethiopia reflects the broader political and historical trajectory of the country's national language policy. Thus for every historical period, there have been reactive adaptations by families as delineated here:

Emperor Menelik II's Era (Late 19th Century–1913): During Menelik's reign, the objective was to build a unified state under one language and one culture. Amharic was promoted as the sole national language through three powerful instruments: the military, the church, and local elites (Cohen, 2000). Families were pressured to adopt Amharic, particularly in urban and government-controlled areas. However, resistance from ethnic groups and logistical challenges in expanding Amharic education limited the full penetration of this policy in rural areas.

Imperial Government under Haile Selassie I (1930–1974): Haile Selassie's government reinforced the "one country–one people–one language" policy, intensifying efforts to spread Amharic through education and government administration (Getachew, 2019). Families were discouraged from speaking minority languages, and many children were forced to learn Amharic at the expense of their heritage

languages. Despite this, some rural communities maintained their indigenous languages at home, resisting linguistic assimilation.

Derg Regime (1974–1991): The Derg regime maintained Amharic as the official language but showed greater tolerance toward regional languages. Families were allowed to speak their heritage languages at home, but Amharic remained the dominant language in government and education. Official communication required Amharic, leading to the continued marginalization of minority languages in formal settings.

EPRDF Era (1991–Present): The Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) introduced a more liberal language policy that recognized the right of ethnic groups to use their languages in education and administration. Tamene (2021:609) notes that "compared to previous regimes' language policy, the language policy of Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) – the party in power since 1991 – can be said to be liberal." Families were given the right to teach and transmit their heritage languages without legal restriction. This policy strengthened the use of regional languages like Afan Oromo and Tigrinya in family settings. However, Amharic remains dominant in federal institutions and elite education, leading many families to prioritize Amharic for socioeconomic mobility.

Ethiopia's family language policy is shaped by historical patterns of political centralization and linguistic hierarchy. While families have been given greater freedom to use and transmit heritage languages under the current federal system, the dominance of Amharic remains influential. Family language practices reflect a strategic negotiation between preserving cultural identity and adapting to the social and economic advantages associated with Amharic and English. In Oromia and other linguistically diverse regions, family language policy demonstrates the resilience of indigenous languages despite broader political pressures toward linguistic assimilation.

2.4 Factors affecting multilingualism in parents, pupils, and teachers

Multilingualism can be influenced either positively or negatively by a range of interrelated factors. According to Tokuhama (2008), these include language use and purpose, language proficiency or ability, Can-Do capacities, language attitudes, emotional factors, and personality traits. These elements can support the development of multilingualism or contribute to its stagnation. In addition to these individual dimensions, motivations for language learning and use—whether

instrumental (externally driven by social or economic incentives) or integrative (internally driven by identity and affiliation)—also play a significant role. Learners may engage in multilingualism for different purposes, from practical communication to the expression of cultural identity. House (2002), drawing on Hüllen (1992), distinguishes between 'language for communication' and 'language for identification.' Multilingual individuals may select languages strategically—using their mother tongue to affirm cultural identity, and other languages instrumentally for broader communication (Todor & Dégi, 2016).

2.4.1 Language use with individuals and for different purposes

Many scholars believe that several factors influence language choice and language use. The three dominant factors are domain, interlocutors, and topic. The term "domain" refers to the idea that each language or dialect is associated with a specific role, setting, and/or group of people within society, including work, family, and religious contexts (Spolsky, 2012; Weinreich, 1953). Fishman (1972) argues that the concept of domain is useful for understanding how people use language both individually and in groups. In this regard, the language people use at home may vary from the one they use in public spheres. At the same time, the language that minority children use at home and with neighbors may differ from the language used in schools. These notions are evident in Fishman's (2000) theory of language domains, which suggests that speakers in ethnic minority groups frequently associate particular languages with particular domains.

The second dominant factor influencing language use and choice is interlocutors. Studies show that interlocutors also have a clear impact on language use. In this regard, Harris (2006) identified three patterns while examining the language use of ethnic minority groups in a London neighborhood: with parents, with siblings, and with grandparents. The language used with parents was a hybrid of majority and minority languages. The second pattern involved using the majority language, while the third involved using the minority language. However, Harris found that participants often used majority languages with grandparents and elder relatives to show respect and to make their parents proud, as the parents were successful in helping their children maintain their mother tongue.

The topic of discussion can also influence language choice and use (Ritchie and Bhatia, 2013). Fishman (2000:92) suggests that "Certain topics are somehow handled better in one language than in another in particular multilingual contexts." This implies that the language used to talk about love may differ from the one used to discuss sports, politics, business, or other subjects in a multilingual setting. This variation could be due to different reasons. Namei (2008:420) explains one reason: "The use of the ethnic minority language is due to the speakers' limited competence in the subject matters, or the lack of required vocabulary in the other language." In

addition to the three primary factors discussed above, age and gender differences (Harris, 2006; Wei, 1994) also influence language choice and use.

2.4.2 Language proficiency/ ability/ CAN-DO

Language assessment has long been a contested issue in the study of multilingualism, particularly in the context of language education. The debate extends beyond what and how to assess, encompassing the methodological approach to language—whether to focus on form or function (Spolsky, 1985, 2001). Moreover, questions arise about whether assessment should target skill, ability, or competence and whether a valid and reliable measure exists (Spolsky, 2001; Shohamy, 2001; Canale, 1983). It is also unclear whether there is a single approach for measuring different types of knowledge across various contexts, age groups, and stages of language development or learning (Kern, 2000; Echevarria et al., 2004). Inevitably, the context and purpose of assessment dictate the practices, ideologies, and methodologies employed, especially when measuring achievement, placement, and progress in diverse settings such as schools, businesses, and healthcare. Spolsky (2001) reflects on the history of testing and assessment, stating that:

In the 2000 years during which human abilities have been assessed formally, tests and examinations have grown more powerful. A century ago, critics launched a strong attack on examinations, citing their "inevitable uncertainty," but a growing testing industry and governmental cries for "accountability" have managed a stubborn defense. More recently, appreciation of the complexity of notions such as "language proficiency" and acceptance of the resulting impossibility of finding a single measure of those notions have led testing experts to a realization that assessing language knowledge is multipart and intricate—and more likely to be served by profiles than by simple scores. (p. 169)

An important question that arises is whether language proficiency can be measured or should be judged. While the answer may depend on how one defines proficiency and the aforementioned indicators, some aspects of language proficiency can be measured (e.g., grammatical structures, vocabulary size, morphological accuracy), whereas other aspects require subjective judgment (e.g., the quality of writing or appropriateness in conversation). Before considering whether something can be measured or judged, it is essential to define the object of testing—whether it is language proficiency or, more recently, language competence. Cloud et al. (2000) propose a more comprehensive form-function view of language proficiency, defining it as the capacity to use language correctly and appropriately in both written

and oral forms in a range of contexts. In contrast, Echevarria et al. (2004) take a more formalistic perspective:

Language proficiency is a measurement of how well an individual has mastered a language; proficiency is measured in terms of receptive and expressive language skills, syntax, vocabulary, semantics, and other areas that demonstrate language abilities. (p. 224)

Since the 1980s, the language testing community has recognized that tests must assess authentic language functions. However, these terms have yet to be satisfactorily defined or integrated into a widely accepted theoretical model. Proposed models have remained programmatic and heuristic rather than rigorous and testable. Canale (1983) was one of the first to propose a comprehensive conceptual framework encompassing three key aspects of language proficiency: linguistic, cognitive, and sociocultural. Language proficiency requires knowledge of linguistic components to achieve fluency, the ability to think critically and metacognitively, and the capacity to comprehend and apply cultural nuances, practices, and beliefs in a given context. Proficiency also involves competence in the four language domains—speaking, writing, listening, and reading - across various contexts, audiences, and purposes. These abilities can be evaluated in terms of levels (basic, conversant, and advanced) (Kern, 2000) or as developmental stages (pre-production, early production, speech emergence, intermediate fluency, and advanced fluency) (Echevarria et al., 2004).

The question of what it means to know a language is not new. It is related to, but distinct from, the question of what constitutes a language in linguistic theory. The discrete-item approach to language testing assumes that knowledge of a language's phonology, grammar, and lexicon is sufficient for test construction. Communicative testing, however, challenged this assumption by arguing that testing should reflect real-life situations where language is used. A functional approach to testing is likely to meet more assessment needs than a structural one. Such an approach begins with listing the types of functions a learner might reasonably be expected to perform and then designing specific tasks to represent those functions.

Attempting to fully describe an individual's language proficiency quickly reveals the complexity of the task. The challenge arises not only from the inherent complexity of language but also from the dynamic nature of language competence, which varies across contexts, situations, and interlocutors. Individuals often perform better in certain communicative contexts than in others. For example, some people are more comfortable with formal communication than with casual conversation, while others excel in social situations but struggle to present a structured argument. Performance also varies based on the interlocutor's reaction; discomfort with an

interlocutor's disapproval of one's accent or grammar may undermine fluency. The more varied the contexts in which a learner's language use is observed, the more accurately their proficiency can be assessed. Thus, reducing this complexity to a single score or a one-dimensional scale is misleading.

That said, the context and purpose of language assessment remain constrained by educational frameworks. In education, assessment is tied to teaching, curriculum, benchmarks, and achievement in a predetermined and teacher-centered manner. Educational systems often fail to accommodate communicative competence that may be formally flawed but functionally effective. Furthermore, test scores are frequently judged as "correct" or "incorrect" without accounting for the communicative context. Nonetheless, subjective self-evaluation has shown a proven correlation with formal test results. Ito et al. (2005) note that "self-assessment has been [most often] investigated... by means of correlating self-estimated ability data with more objective measures of the same abilities" (p. 3). Studies by Bachman and Palmer (1989), Blanche (1990), Blanche and Merino (1989), Finnie and Meng (2005), and LeBlanc and Painchaud (1985) found self-assessment scores to be highly reliable, with students' self-estimates being generally accurate. However, Brantmeier, Vanderplank, and Strube (2012) and Alderson (2005) found only moderate-strength correlations between self-assessment and test scores.

The rise of communicative functional perspectives has driven the development of tests that evaluate whether a language user "can do X" in a language. Initially designed for pathological purposes such as diagnosing aphasia, these tests were later adapted for language testing. Rather than targeting specific linguistic features (e.g., pronunciation, grammar, or vocabulary), they focus on communicative tasks, such as asking for directions, understanding instructions, or reading a newspaper. However, these tests were initially designed from a monolingual perspective that evaluates each language separately, even when the individual is multilingual.

In the context of the current study, the use of Can-Do statements as subjective self-assessment tools for multilingual pupils, parents, and teachers is adopted. Can-Do statements outline what language users can achieve at various proficiency stages across different skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing) and contexts (social, academic, professional). They provide a practical framework for communicating language ability and guiding instruction. For example, Can-Do statements have been developed by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), the Australian Curriculum, and the International English Language Testing System (IELTS). These statements offer detailed proficiency descriptions and support learner progress across different languages and contexts. In Ethiopia, where testing is predominantly formal, there is uncertainty about the validity of scores due to

variation across regions, school types (private or public), and local versus national measures. Therefore, assessing the influence of non-formal settings (e.g., parental input) and teacher quality may reveal different insights into a learner's language repertoire, competence, and ability.

2.4.3 Language attitude and Their Role in Language Learning and Multilingualism

Language learners' attitudes towards a language and its speakers significantly influence the language learning process and outcomes. Research shows that attitudes and motivation are deeply intertwined (Csizér, 2007; Dörnyei, 2009). Positive attitudes towards the language and its speakers can enhance motivation, leading to better learning experiences and higher achievement. Krashen (1982) argues that positive attitudes foster language learning, particularly when combined with a low-anxiety environment and a positive affective filter. This creates favorable conditions for successful language acquisition. Moreover, understanding educators' attitudes is essential to comprehending classroom decision-making, as teachers play a crucial role in fostering students' positive attitudes towards language learning and promoting multilingualism (Haukås, 2016).

Attitudes toward the target language reflect psychological orientations, including opinions, perceptions, and feelings about the language itself, its speakers, and its cultural value (Huang, 2021). Baker (2011) notes that learners develop distinct attitudes towards various aspects of the target language, including its social and cultural significance. Theoretical models of motivation conceptualize it as encompassing cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects (Ushioda & Dörnyei, 2017). McEown et.al., (2014) define motivation in terms of why people engage in learning, how long they sustain the activity, and the level of effort they invest. Dörnyei's (2009) motivational 'self-system' suggests that motivation arises from a learner's desire to align their 'self-concept' with their 'ideal L2 self.' Gardner's (1985, 2010) 'socio-educational' model emphasizes intergroup relations and learners' ethnic identity, highlighting the role of integrative motivation (the willingness to adopt attributes of another cultural community) and instrumental motivation (the desire to learn a language for practical purposes). Gardner et.al., (1997) demonstrate that motivation predicts L2 proficiency, with integrative attitudes and perceptions of the learning environment playing secondary roles.

Positive attitudes toward language learning can be influenced by cultural appreciation, perceived usefulness of the language, and personal interest in linguistic diversity. Fishman (1966) highlights the link between language attitudes, cultural identity, and language maintenance, noting that ethnolinguistic vitality contributes to sustaining minority languages. Individuals often associate their language(s) with cultural heritage and identity, fostering language maintenance and the preservation

of cultural identity in multilingual communities. Spolsky (2004) argues that societal attitudes shape language use and the status of different languages, with languages deemed prestigious or economically valuable viewed more favorably. Societies that promote linguistic diversity and legitimize minority languages alongside dominant languages foster positive attitudes toward multilingualism (Dörnyei, 2009; Crawford, 2000). Hornberger's (2008) research in language policy and planning also addresses how attitudes toward languages affect language use patterns, language shift, and language revitalization efforts.

In multilingual societies, attitudes towards different languages affect language use, language shift, and the success of language revitalization programs. Negative attitudes toward minority languages can contribute to language endangerment and decline, while positive attitudes toward bilingualism and multilingualism promote language learning and maintenance (Todor & Degi, 2016). Baker and Wright (2017) advocate for inclusive language policies that value linguistic diversity and promote positive attitudes toward multilingualism. Translanguaging, as explored by Garcia and Wei (2014), reflects the recognition of linguistic diversity within a single linguistic repertoire, supporting more flexible and inclusive language practices. Furthermore, technology and globalization have reshaped language attitudes, with increased cultural exchanges, media consumption, and travel creating new opportunities for communication and fostering positive attitudes toward languages and their users (Kramsch, 2009).

Gardner (2010) emphasizes that learners' perception of their educational context and experiences correlates with motivation and integrativeness. Masgoret and Gardner (2003) highlight the importance of perceived parental encouragement and motivation in influencing L2 proficiency. The relationship between motivation and language achievement is complex in multilingual contexts, varying with age, language status, and sociolinguistic context (Huang, 2021). Studies show that younger learners tend to have more favorable attitudes and higher motivation toward language learning than older learners (Lasagabaster & Huguet, 2007).

In summary, attitudes toward languages are closely linked to language learning success and the development of multilingualism. Positive attitudes toward linguistic diversity, cultural appreciation, and the perceived value of language learning can foster thriving multilingual communities and contribute to a more inclusive and interconnected global society. Encouraging positive attitudes toward all languages, particularly minority and heritage languages, is essential for sustaining linguistic diversity and promoting successful language acquisition.

2.4.4 Personality and multilingualism

Multilingualism and multiculturalism have gained increasing attention in psychological and sociolinguistic research due to their potential influence on

personality development and social adaptation. The concept that speaking multiple languages and navigating multiple cultural contexts can shape cognitive, emotional, and social traits has been explored through various theoretical frameworks and empirical studies. Several key studies by Dewaele and collaborators provide a comprehensive examination of how multilingualism and multiculturalism interact with personality traits, particularly through the lens of the Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (MPQ), which measures five core personality dimensions: Cultural Empathy, Openmindedness, Social Initiative, Emotional Stability, and Flexibility (Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2000). This review synthesizes findings from multiple studies, highlighting the patterns, inconsistencies, and broader implications of the research.

Personality dimensions are often understood through the "Big Five" model, which identifies five core traits: Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, and Openness to Experience (Pervin & Cervone, 2010). Pervin and Cervone (2010) define personality traits as patterns of behavior, emotion, and thought that are relatively stable over time. The Big Five model captures general personality traits, while the MPQ was specifically developed to assess traits linked to functioning in culturally diverse contexts (Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2000). The MPQ's five dimensions are: a) Cultural Empathy (i.e., the ability to understand and relate to people from different cultural backgrounds); b) Openmindedness (i.e., a willingness to accept new ideas and perspectives); c) Social Initiative (i.e., an active approach to social situations and interactions); d) Emotional Stability (i.e., the ability to maintain emotional balance and control under stress); and f) Flexibility (i.e., the ability to adjust to new situations and learn from experience). Studies exploring the relationship between personality and multilingualism suggest that they mutually influence each other, though the direction of causality remains contested (Dewaele & Li Wei, 2013; Dewaele & Botes, 2020). Multilingualism may foster the development of multicultural personality traits, while certain personality profiles may also make individuals more predisposed to becoming multilingual.

Dewaele and Van Oudenhoven (2009) investigated how multilingualism and multiculturalism affect personality profiles, particularly among Third Culture Kids (TCKs)—children raised in a culture different from their parents' native culture. Their study involved 79 teenagers in London, half of whom were born abroad, and used the MPQ to measure personality traits. TCKs scored higher on Openmindedness and Cultural Empathy than their monolingual and monocultural peers, indicating that exposure to multiple languages and cultures enhances acceptance of diversity and understanding of others' perspectives. However, TCKs scored lower on Emotional Stability, suggesting that the stress and emotional challenges associated with frequent cultural transitions might undermine

psychological resilience. Language dominance had a significant effect on personality traits: participants dominant in more than one language scored higher on Openmindedness and Cultural Empathy but lower on Emotional Stability. The number of languages known correlated positively with Openmindedness and Cultural Empathy, reinforcing the idea that multilingualism strengthens cross-cultural adaptability while presenting emotional challenges.

In a later study, Dewaele and Botes (2020) conducted a large-scale, quantitative investigation into the relationship between multilingualism and personality traits among 651 multilingual participants from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. This study expanded the scope beyond TCKs to examine whether multilingualism more generally influences personality development. A statistically significant but weak positive correlation was found between the number of languages spoken and three personality traits: Flexibility, Social Initiative, and Openmindedness. No significant correlation was found with Cultural Empathy and Emotional Stability. Participants who reported higher proficiency and regular use of multiple languages demonstrated higher levels of Flexibility and Openmindedness. The findings suggest that multilingualism promotes social adaptability and cognitive openness but does not necessarily enhance emotional stability. The relatively weak correlations point to the complexity of the relationship between language use and personality traits, suggesting that other sociocultural and psychological factors may moderate these effects.

Shibata and Upton (2023) conducted a replication of Dewaele and Botes (2020) using a sample of 401 participants from Japan, the US, and China. The study aimed to test the robustness and generalizability of the original findings using a Bayesian approach and by including monolingual participants - a key limitation of the original study. A very weak correlation was found between the number of languages spoken and Flexibility. However, no significant correlation was found with the other four MPQ dimensions (Cultural Empathy, Social Initiative, Openmindedness, and Emotional Stability). The replication study revealed inconsistencies with the original findings, particularly regarding Openmindedness and Social Initiative. The discrepancies between the original and replicated findings suggest that the relationship between multilingualism and personality traits may be more context-dependent than initially believed. Cultural and environmental factors, as well as methodological differences, may account for the variability in results. Moreover, these findings also suggest a bi-directional relationship between personality and multilingualism as shown in additional studies. For instance, Dewaele (2009) argues that personality traits such as extraversion, neuroticism, openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness significantly influence how individuals approach language learning, navigate linguistic diversity, and manage language-related anxieties. Jessner (2008) discusses how cognitive and

affective aspects of multilingualism, including language learning strategies and language use, are influenced by personality traits and diverse cultural settings. MacIntyre (1995, 1996) and Dörnyei (2014) examine the complex interplay between motivation, personality, and social context in second language acquisition and multilingualism, emphasizing the importance of individual differences in predicting language learning success. In conclusion, these inconsistencies have been explained by Deweale (2019) who emphasizes that the relationship between personality and multilingualism is bidirectional and multifaceted: personality traits shape language behaviors, but language experiences and cultural interactions also shape personality traits over time. The cognitive and emotional challenges of multilingualism may thus enhance or hinder psychological resilience depending on individual personality profiles and social contexts.

No previous studies have been done on personality and multilingualism in Ethiopia. However, a study conducted on immigrant participants outside of Ethiopia by Dewaele and Stavans (2014) explored the personality profiles of multilingual individuals using the MPQ (Van der Zee et al., 2013) five key traits - Cultural Empathy, Openmindedness, Social Initiative, Emotional Stability, and Flexibility - in relation to language use, learning, and instruction among multilingual individuals. The findings confirmed that multilingual individuals showed higher levels of Openmindedness and Cultural Empathy, consistent with broader patterns in multilingual research. However, individual differences in Emotional Stability and Flexibility were moderated by the sociocultural context and language acquisition trajectory.

To conclude, research on the relationship between multilingualism and personality traits underscores the dynamic and bidirectional nature of this interaction. Multilingualism appears to enhance cognitive and social traits, particularly Openmindedness and Flexibility, but emotional challenges related to language learning and cultural adaptation can offset these benefits. The relatively weak correlations between multilingualism and personality traits highlight the complexity of this relationship. Understanding how multilingualism shapes and is shaped by personality traits remains a complex but promising avenue for future research. Encouraging positive language learning experiences and providing social support for multilingual individuals may help to maximize the psychological benefits of multilingualism while mitigating its emotional costs.

2.5. Triangulating agencies: parents, pupils, and teachers as “propelling forces” towards multilingualism

2.5.1 Agency in multilingualism

Agency in the context of multilingualism refers to the capacity of individuals to make intentional and strategic choices about their language use, learning, and social interactions within multilingual environments. It highlights the idea that multilingual speakers are not passive recipients of linguistic input but actively engage with and shape their linguistic environments according to their personal goals, social contexts, and the broader power structures that influence language use. In multilingual settings, individuals exercise agency when they choose which language to use in different contexts, such as at home, in school, or in the workplace. These choices are rarely neutral; they are shaped by social norms, power dynamics, and identity negotiations. For instance, a multilingual speaker may choose to use a minority language with family members to maintain cultural ties while switching to the dominant societal language in professional settings to align with institutional expectations and peer norms. The act of choosing which language to use in a particular context reflects an individual's strategic negotiation of their social positioning and identity.

Agency in multilingualism is also evident in the ways individuals learn and maintain languages. Multilingual speakers demonstrate agency when they actively seek to learn a new language, sustain their heritage language, or abandon a language altogether based on perceived utility, social pressure, or emotional attachment. This suggests that language acquisition and maintenance are not simply cognitive processes but socially situated acts influenced by personal motivation and social constraints. For example, a second-generation immigrant may deliberately maintain their heritage language as a means of preserving cultural identity, even when dominant social norms and educational policies encourage assimilation into the majority language. Conversely, another individual might distance themselves from their heritage language to avoid discrimination or to fit more easily into the dominant cultural group. These decisions reflect the complex interplay between individual agency and social structures.

The exercise of agency in multilingualism also extends to identity formation and negotiation. Language is a central marker of identity, and multilingual speakers often use their linguistic resources to construct and project particular social identities. For example, code-switching between languages may serve as a way for individuals to align themselves with or distance themselves from particular social groups, express solidarity, or assert social power. A speaker may deliberately use their minority language in a majority-language setting as an act of resistance or cultural affirmation, challenging dominant linguistic hierarchies. Alternatively, they might switch to the majority language to gain access to social or economic opportunities, reflecting the strategic and context-dependent nature of agency in multilingual interactions.

However, agency in multilingualism is always shaped and constrained by broader social, political, and institutional structures. While individuals may have the capacity to make choices about their language use, these choices are not made in a vacuum. Language policies in schools, workplaces, and public institutions, as well as societal attitudes toward different languages and accents, influence the extent to which agency can be exercised freely. A multilingual student, for example, might wish to use their heritage language in the classroom, but educational policies that prioritize monolingual instruction in the dominant language may limit their ability to do so. In such cases, agency becomes a site of struggle, where individuals must navigate and sometimes resist institutional pressures in order to maintain linguistic diversity and personal identity.

Theoretical perspectives on agency in multilingualism emphasize the complex relationship between individual action and social structure. From a social constructivist perspective, agency is seen as socially situated, meaning that individuals' capacity to make language-related choices is influenced by social norms, cultural expectations, and power dynamics (Lantolf & Pavlenko, 2001). The ecological perspective views agency as emerging from the dynamic interaction between individuals and their sociolinguistic environments, suggesting that agency is not an inherent trait but a relational and context-dependent process (van Lier, 2008, 2010). Poststructuralist approaches, such as those developed by Norton (2000), emphasize the link between agency, identity, and power, arguing that language choices are not merely pragmatic but reflect deeper social and political positioning within hierarchical structures. For instance, a speaker's decision to maintain their heritage language or adopt the dominant language may reflect not only personal identity but also an effort to claim or resist social power.

In summary, agency in multilingualism involves the strategic and context-dependent capacity of individuals to make choices about their language use, learning, and identity negotiation within complex social environments. While individuals exercise agency in choosing which languages to use, when, and with whom, these choices are always shaped by broader social, political, and institutional forces. Multilingual speakers, therefore, engage in an ongoing process of negotiation and adaptation, where agency serves as a means of both self-expression and social positioning.

2.5.2 The triangle of students, parents and teachers as agents of multilingualism

Students, parents, and teachers all act as *agents of multilingualism* by making intentional choices and engaging in practices that shape language use, learning, and transmission within educational and social settings. Their agency reflects not only personal motivation and identity but also the influence of broader social, cultural,

and institutional structures. Agency in multilingualism is therefore exercised through decision-making, negotiation, and adaptation in response to the opportunities and constraints present in multilingual environments.

Students demonstrate agency in multilingualism through their decisions about language use, learning, and identity negotiation (Chik and Breidbach, 2021). They are not passive recipients of linguistic input but actively shape their own linguistic repertoire and social positioning. For example, students may choose to speak their heritage language at home while using the dominant language at school, reflecting strategic adaptation to different social norms. Code-switching, translanguaging, and mixing languages are common strategies that students use to navigate multilingual spaces, assert their identity, and manage social relationships. Students also exercise agency when they decide how much effort to invest in learning additional languages. A student who perceives that knowing a certain language will offer social or economic benefits may actively seek out opportunities to practice and improve their skills. Conversely, a student who experiences discrimination or social exclusion because of their accent or linguistic background may choose to distance themselves from their heritage language as a protective strategy. Moreover, students' agency is evident in how they engage with language learning in the classroom—whether they challenge or conform to the linguistic norms promoted by teachers and institutions. For example, a bilingual student might choose to use their home language when collaborating with peers to deepen understanding, even if classroom policies emphasize monolingual instruction. Alternatively, students may resist dominant language norms by forming social networks where minority languages are valued and maintained, thereby reinforcing multilingual identities.

Parents play a central role in fostering or limiting multilingualism through their language choices, parenting strategies, and educational decisions (DeHouwer and Bornstein, 2024). As primary socializers, parents shape the linguistic environment at home and influence the languages their children acquire and maintain. Parental agency is reflected in decisions about which language(s) to speak at home, whether to enroll children in bilingual or heritage language programs, and how to respond to societal pressures for language assimilation. Some parents may consciously promote multilingualism by ensuring that their children are exposed to multiple languages through books, media, and conversations. Others may prioritize the dominant societal language to enhance their children's social integration and future career opportunities. For example, immigrant parents may choose to speak the dominant language at home to help their children succeed academically, even if this comes at the expense of heritage language maintenance. Parents' agency is also evident in how they advocate for multilingual education. They may engage with schools and policy-makers to push for the inclusion of heritage languages in the curriculum or seek out after-school language programs. In some cases, parents resist

assimilationist pressures by forming community networks where heritage languages and cultures are preserved and valued, creating spaces for intergenerational transmission of linguistic knowledge. Parental agency is shaped by complex social and political factors, such as language policies, societal attitudes toward minority languages, and access to educational resources. For instance, parents in marginalized communities may face structural barriers to promoting multilingualism, such as the lack of bilingual education programs or discriminatory language policies in schools.

Teachers exercise agency in multilingualism through their pedagogical choices, attitudes toward linguistic diversity, and classroom management strategies (Ganuza and Hedman, 2023). They have the power to either encourage or discourage multilingual practices, depending on how they frame language use and diversity within the classroom. Teachers who view multilingualism as a resource are more likely to create inclusive learning environments where students feel comfortable using their full linguistic repertoire. For example, a teacher who encourages translanguaging—allowing students to use multiple languages to express themselves and process information—validates students' linguistic identities and promotes deeper learning. Conversely, a teacher who insists on strict monolingual instruction may inadvertently suppress students' agency and linguistic creativity. Teachers also influence multilingualism through the materials they select and the instructional strategies they employ. A teacher who incorporates texts and media in multiple languages or creates opportunities for peer interaction in different languages promotes an environment where multilingualism is valued and reinforced. Moreover, teachers can act as agents of multilingualism by advocating for changes in language policy and curriculum design. A teacher who challenges the dominance of a single language in the classroom and pushes for more inclusive language policies exercises agency not only on behalf of their students but also within the broader educational system. However, teachers' agency is also shaped by institutional and policy constraints. National language policies, standardized testing requirements, and educational norms may limit teachers' ability to promote multilingualism. For example, a teacher who values multilingualism may still be required to teach in the dominant language and assess students according to monolingual standards, thereby limiting their capacity to fully support linguistic diversity.

The interplay of agency among students, parents, and teachers does not operate in isolation; it reflects a dynamic and interconnected process where individual choices and actions influence and are influenced by each other. A multilingual student's ability to maintain their heritage language may depend on the support and encouragement they receive from parents and teachers. Similarly, a teacher's ability to promote multilingualism may be strengthened or undermined by parental involvement and institutional language policies. For example, a student who

feels supported in using their home language by both their parents and teachers is more likely to retain and develop multilingual competence. Conversely, if parents discourage heritage language use to promote assimilation, and teachers enforce monolingual instruction, the student's agency in maintaining multilingualism may be diminished. This dynamic interplay highlights the complex, context-dependent nature of agency in multilingualism. Students, parents, and teachers navigate competing social pressures, institutional norms, and personal motivations as they make decisions about language use and learning. Their agency reflects not only individual action but also the broader social and political structures that shape opportunities for multilingual expression and development.

2.6. Summary of the Literature Review and the Conceptual Model of the Study

The literature reviewed in this chapter has illuminated the multifaceted and evolving nature of multilingualism as both an individual and societal phenomenon. Definitions of multilingualism have shifted from early structuralist models emphasizing native-like proficiency to more dynamic, inclusive, and context-sensitive perspectives that recognize multilingual competence as socially embedded, cognitively integrated, and emotionally mediated. These conceptual shifts have underscored the importance of examining multilingualism not as a static trait but as a lived and strategic practice influenced by personal, institutional, and policy-level factors.

The Ethiopian context exemplifies these complexities. Multilingualism in Ethiopia is situated within a historically contested and politically charged language policy landscape, marked by tensions between centralization and decentralization, and between additive and subtractive language practices. The recognition of regional languages and the implementation of mother tongue-based education signal progressive shifts, yet challenges remain in achieving equity, especially for minority language speakers. Within this context, the roles of students, parents, and teachers become crucial—not only as users of multiple languages but as agents who actively negotiate, reproduce, and reshape multilingual practices within their respective domains.

The literature further identified a range of sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic factors that shape multilingual development and expression. These include domains and interlocutors of language use, self-assessed proficiency, instrumental and integrative motivations, language attitudes, and personality traits such as cultural empathy, open-mindedness, and social initiative. Together, these dimensions form a composite view of what it means to be multilingual in everyday life and in institutional settings.

The conceptual model guiding this study is therefore grounded in a combined framework that integrates three levels of multilingual experience. First, the *Policy-Level Multilingualism*, reflected in national and regional language policies that shape language use in education and governance. Second, the *Institutional and Community-Level Practices*, such as language use in schools, families, and peer networks. Last, the *Individual-Level Perceptions and Traits*, including attitudes, proficiency, emotions, and multilingual personality characteristics. This multilevel framework informs the study's research questions by foregrounding the agency of students, parents, and teachers as mediators of language policy and practice. It also guides the methodological approach, which examines these agents' multilingual profiles through their reported practices, beliefs, and dispositions. In doing so, the study aims to provide a nuanced account of how multilingualism is not only enacted but also experienced and sustained in a linguistically complex context such as Oromia, Ethiopia.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the methodology adopted to study the multilingual perceptions and practices of agents (students, their parents, and teachers) in Oromia, Ethiopia. The study aims to explore how these agents perceive and engage with multilingualism, considering their unique roles within the thereforeciety, the educational system and as individuals. The chapter begins by discussing the overarching research approach— quantitative methods—and justifying its selection. The research design, which serves as the blueprint for conducting the study, is then presented, outlining specific strategies (yin, 2018). Furthermore, the chapter details the data collection method employed, that is., different forms of questionnaires, ensuring that the chosen techniques align with the study's objectives (bryman, 2021). The sampling techniques and participant selection are additionally elaborated upon, as these influence the generalizability and credibility of the findings (etikan et al., 2016). The data analysis section explains how the collected information is processed, interpreted, and validated, incorporating statistical tests for quantitative research (braun & clarke, 2006). Finally, this chapter discusses ethical considerations, including informed consent, confidentiality, and researcher reflexivity, as ethical adherence strengthens the credibility and integrity of the study (resnik, 2020). By systematically outlining these methodological aspects, this chapter establishes a robust foundation for understanding the study's research process and its contribution to knowledge.

3.1 The research approach

This study adopts a quantitative research approach as its primary methodological framework. As creswell and creswell (2018) stated, quantitative research is instrumental in conducting a systematic examination of relationships among variables, enabling researchers to draw conclusions that may be generalized to a larger population. This capacity for generalization is particularly critical in thereforeciolinguistic contexts, such as this study's focus. Quantitative research is especially suitable for exploring language-related phenomena because it allows for the extraction of measurable data from instruments such as questionnaires. As bryman (2021) explains, these tools provide a structured means to gather responses that may later be subjected to rigorous statistical analysis. In this study, structured questionnaires were developed to ensure uniformity in data collection across a wide range of participants. The standardized nature of these instruments enhances both the objectivity and the reliability of the findings, as noted by muijs (2010).

To implement this approach, the survey method was selected due to its efficiency in gathering large volumes of data from geographically dispersed and

demographically diverse individuals. As Fowler (2013) emphasizes, surveys are particularly advantageous when the research objective requires the collection of data within a relatively short time frame and through remote means. This method proved effective not only in reaching a wide range of participants but additionally in capturing various dimensions of language use, attitudes, and perceptions across different formal and institutional contexts. The quantitative design further allows for the application of statistical techniques such as correlation analysis, analysis of variance (ANOVA), and t-tests, which are instrumental in identifying and confirming patterns and relationships within the data (Field, 2018). These tests help to uncover how different variables—such as age, education level, geographic location, and language background—influence multilingual behavior and perceptions. Ultimately, the utilization of a quantitative research approach strengthens the validity and robustness of the study's conclusions, providing a therefore solid empirical foundation for understanding the dynamics of active multilingualism among the various linguistic agents in Oromia.

3.2 Research design

This study follows a descriptive cross-sectional design, which enables the examination of multilingual perceptions and practices at a single point in time (Saunders et al., 2019). This design is advantageous as it provides a snapshot of the attitudes and behaviors of students, parents, and teachers toward multilingualism without requiring longitudinal data collection (Cohen et al., 2018) which often has a high rate of dropouts. Whereas cross-sectional research is a type of research that generates a snapshot of a phenomenon at a provided time allowing for comparable insights into people's thoughts, feelings, emotions, attitudes, cognitive and therefore personal traits (Dornyei, 2009, 2014; Wei & Moyer, 2008).

The current study merited a cross-sectional design because one of the agent groups – the students – were 12th graders on the brink of graduation from the mandatory educational framework and before engaging either in higher education or employment. As one of the major objectives of this study was to profile how multilingualism was in synch with the national and regional language policy, the 12th graders provided a therefore pivot of those who have gone through the basic educational provisions that are provided to all the citizens. As the language policy of the country and individual regions demands that elementary school be taught in the students' mother tongue; Amharic is taught as the national official language used at federal institutions and organization; and English is taught as the for international cases. These translate into the language educational program which is trilingual at its base and upon completion of the language education at school, the formal teaching and learning of languages stops and therefore the type of multilingualism is

assumed. From a practical point of view, this design was the most sustainable one as these school graduates leave school and move to other places either for further education or jobs and consequently, they would not be reachable. In addition, the setting of the study is in Ethiopia, and the researcher lives in Hungary which involved an attainable logistic for data collection remotely (Wei and Moyer, 2008).

This design additionally facilitated the comparison between agents that are associated with the different school types - the public and the private schools. By purposively selecting high-achieving students and incorporating a randomized selection of teachers, the study ensures a balanced representation of perspectives. Comparative research design is useful for identifying variations in language perceptions and usage across different educational settings (Yin, 2018). The structured nature of the survey enhances reliability, as all participants respond to the same set of standardized questions, reducing potential biases (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2009). The combination of descriptive and inferential statistical methods further strengthens the robustness of the research findings.

3.3 Sampling techniques and population

The population was sampled randomly. The study population consists of 12th grade students ($n=80$), their parents ($n=80$), and their teachers ($n=80$), with an equal number from both public and private schools: 40 students and parents, and 20 teachers from each school. The focus on 12th grade students who were therefore on the brink of moving into society either directly to the workforce or to a professional/vocational capacity building training period. The focus on the teachers, both language teachers as well as other subject matter teachers, was to map out the multilingual perceptions and practices of these educational agents who had a pivotal role in motivating and enabling the best outcome of a multilingual individual that would be productive and constructive within the nation and outwards. Focusing on the parents whose children attended either private or public school provided the completion of all the active agents in the process of fostering, enabling and encouraging multilingual practices grounded in ideologies, emotions, aspirations and needs for the family, the community and the individual. To ensure a representative sample, all participants were sampled from public and private schools who consented to take part in the study. The sampling techniques employed for student recruitment was to select high-achieving students based on their academic performance (Cohen et al., 2018) to ascertain that the sample consists of the maximal achievement by graduating students. The parents were additionally sampled from the same schools and conformed with their association to their child's school type. Concomitantly, the teachers were randomly sampled from within the

participating schools and consisted of teachers from various subjects, providing a diverse representation of perspectives on multilingualism (saunders et al., 2019).

3.4 Methods of data collection

3.4.1 Material

The study employed a multiple sections questionnaire. This includes: (i) demographic information; ii) general subjective proficiency assessment and the CAN-DO questionnaire on language-specific abilities such as speaking, understanding, reading and writing (Clark 1981); (iii) a questionnaire on language use with different interlocutors and a questionnaire on language use for different purposes (Stavans et al., 2009); (iv) a questionnaire on the attitude toward each language (Stavans et al., 2009); and (v) a questionnaire of multilingual personality traits (MPQ) (Oudenhoven & der Zee, 2000).

The researchers used these questionnaires in the study to comprehensively assess various aspects of language ability, use, attitudes, and personality traits related to multilingualism. General language skills and CAN-DO questionnaire were employed to gauge participants' self-perceived proficiency in different languages. This may help identify how individuals evaluate their language abilities, which may be related to language use, personality or attitudes towards multilingualism. A questionnaire of language use with different interlocutors and a questionnaire of language use for different purposes were employed to analyze patterns of language choice depending on the special context and to examine how participants use different languages in various functional domains. Multilinguals often switch languages based on their relationship with interlocutors. This questionnaire facilitates explore the sociolinguistic dynamics and code-switching behaviors in real-life interactions. Understanding the functional allocation of languages facilitates clarify the roles each language plays in a multilingual's life, providing a detailed picture of language dominance and use. A questionnaire of the attitude toward each language were employed to measure participants' emotional, cultural, or practical attitudes toward the languages they use. Attitudes toward a language may influence motivation to learn or use a specific language. Positive or negative associations may impact language maintenance, shift, or attrition. MPQ (Multilingual Personality Questionnaire) was employed to explore personality traits that may be influenced by or influence multilingualism. Language and personality are closely linked, and multilingual individuals may exhibit unique traits due to their experiences with multiple languages and cultures. The MPQ may help investigate how personality interacts with language use and acquisition.

3.4.2 Procedure

The data collection process for this study was conducted in a structured and ethically compliant manner to ensure the reliability and integrity of the information gathered. It commenced with the researcher formally submitting a permission letter, issued by their affiliated university, to the administrations of the selected schools in Oromia, Ethiopia. This letter outlined the objectives and scope of the research, as well as assurances regarding adherence to the ethical codes of research, confidentiality, and the voluntary nature of participation.

Upon approval from the respective school directors, the research process was set into motion. To facilitate coordination at the school level, the directors designated a teacher-coordinator to serve as the liaison between the researcher and the school community. This assigned teacher played a pivotal role in streamlining the logistics of data collection. Using existing school records, the teacher helped identify high-achieving students based on academic performance indicators. These students were considered ideal participants due to their presumed cognitive maturity and likely awareness of language use in academic and social contexts. The teacher then assisted in scheduling appointments for the researcher to meet with these students during times that would not disrupt their academic commitments.

During the initial meetings, the researcher introduced the purpose of the study, providing a clear explanation of its objectives, relevance, and the importance of honest participation. The students were also given the opportunity to ask questions and express concerns. Preliminary demographic information and insights into their daily language use, preferences, and experiences with multilingualism were collected during these sessions. Follow-up appointments were subsequently arranged, during which the students completed the detailed questionnaires designed to capture quantitative data on their multilingual practices, attitudes, and language competencies.

A parallel procedure was implemented to incorporate the perspectives of the students' parents, acknowledging the critical role of family in shaping multilingualism as a window to the world and a productive life. The assigned teacher instructed the selected students to return on a scheduled date accompanied by either their mother or father. These parent-student sessions provided an opportunity to gather firsthand parental insights regarding home language practices, intergenerational language transmission, and attitudes toward multilingualism in education and community life. As with the students, the researcher introduced the study to the parents and ensured that their participation was both informed and voluntary. Questionnaires tailored for parents were then administered, allowing for the systematic data collection reflecting household linguistic dynamics.

For the teacher participants, the process was followed a similar well-organized procedure. The school assigned teacher-coordinator identified volunteer teachers from a variety of disciplines, ensuring a balanced representation across subject areas and grade levels. These teachers were invited to participate in a scheduled data collection session, during which they were briefed about the study's objectives and had the opportunity to ask for clarifications. Following this introduction, they completed the questionnaire in a single sitting. This session was designed to minimize disruption to teaching schedules while ensuring that teachers had adequate time to provide thoughtful and comprehensive responses. Overall, the data collection phase was carefully designed and executed to ensure inclusivity, consistency, and respect for participants' time and contributions.

3.4.3 Data coding and analysis

Following the completion of the data collection phase, the next step involved organizing, processing, and analyzing the data in a systematic and methodologically thereforeund manner. To facilitate efficient handling and minimize the risk of manual errors, all collected responses from the questionnaires were digitized using google forms. This platform allowed for immediate entry of data during administration and provided a centralized, easily accessible digital repository of responses. The utilization of google forms additionally streamlined the process of categorizing participant data by group—students, parents, and teachers—and ensured uniform formatting, which is crucial for subsequent analysis.

Once all the responses were compiled and reviewed for completeness and accuracy, the data were exported into microthereforeft excel. Excel served as an intermediary tool for preliminary data cleaning, such as filtering out incomplete responses, standardizing coding for categorical variables, and checking for inconsistencies. This preparatory stage was essential in ensuring that the dataset was accurate, reliable, and ready for rigorous statistical analysis. The cleaned and organized dataset was then imported into the statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS), a widely recognized software for quantitative data analysis. SPSS was chosen for its robustness, versatility, and user-friendly interface, making it well-suited for handling large datasets and performing a range of statistical procedures.

The analysis began with the computation of descriptive statistics—frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations—which provided a general overview of the data and allowed for the identification of central tendencies and distribution patterns among the responses. These descriptive statistics offered foundational insights into multilingual practices, language attitudes, and usage patterns across the different respondent groups.

To explore more nuanced relationships within the data, inferential statistical techniques were employed. Correlation analyses were conducted to examine the strength and direction of relationships between key variables, such as the frequency of language use at home and attitudes toward multilingual education. These correlations helped identify whether certain behaviors or beliefs tended to co-occur. In addition, independent samples t-tests were employed to compare the mean scores of different demographic groups to determine whether statistically significant differences existed in their responses. Where appropriate, additional tests such as one-way anova were deployed to assess differences across the three participant groups. Figure 3 below presents a visual layout of the organization of the RQs and how these address the three tiered issues described.

Figure 3: The plan of analysis and research questions

	Student	Parent	Teacher	RQ1: Agent Profile	Descriptive Stats
ALL	←————→			RQ2: agent all comparison	Anova + Bonferroni
Private	←————→			RQ3: only private school agent comparison	Anova + Bonferroni
Public	←————→			RQ4: only public school agent comparison	Anova + Bonferroni
	A	B	C	RQ5: comparison between private-public within each agent	T-test + Bonferroni
Indicators	W-in Student ALL	W-in Parent ALL	W-in Teacher ALL	RQ6: within agent ALL indicator correlations	Spearman

Throughout the analytical process, the quantitative findings were carefully interpreted and contextualized with reference to relevant scholarly literature. This step was crucial in ensuring that the results were not viewed in isolation but rather understood within the broader theoretical and empirical body of multilingualism studies. The interpretation phase involved comparing the study’s outcomes with existing research, identifying points of convergence or divergence, and assessing the implications for language policy and educational practice in the region. Finally, the key findings from the analysis were synthesized to draw meaningful conclusions about the nature and impact of the national multilingual policy onto the multilingual practices of the different societal agents in Oromia.

3.5 Ethical considerations

Ethical approval was obtained before data collection, ensuring adherence to research ethics guidelines (resnik, 2020).securing ethical clearance was not only a procedural requirement but additionally a foundational component of responsible research

practice, demonstrating the researcher's commitment to safeguarding the rights, dignity, and well-being of all participants involved in the study. Following ethical approval, the researcher took deliberate steps to implement these ethical principles during all phases of data collection. A central element of this process was obtaining informed consent from all participants. Participants were provided with a clear and comprehensive explanation of the study's purpose, objectives, procedures, and potential risks and benefits. This information was conveyed in a language that was accessible and appropriate to the participants' educational and linguistic backgrounds. The informed consent process additionally emphasized the voluntary nature of participation. Participants were assured that their involvement in the study was entirely optional and that they could choose to decline participation or withdraw at any stage of the research without facing any negative consequences. This assurance was crucial in fostering a sense of trust and openness, encouraging honest and thoughtful responses during data collection.

Anonymity and confidentiality were rigorously maintained throughout the research process. Participants' identities were protected by assigning unique codes to their responses, thereby ensuring that no perthereforenally identifiable information was linked to the data. Any names or other potentially revealing information were anonymized in all records and reports. The researcher ensured that all digital data were stored securely on password-protected devices and cloud platforms with restricted access, further safeguarding the privacy of participants. Additionally, participants were informed of how the data would be used, including the scope of its application in academic analysis and reporting. They were reassured that their responses would be used thereforelely for research purposes and would not be shared with unauthorized parties. These measures ensured that the study adhered not only to institutional ethical guidelines but additionally to the broader ethical standards of research. In summary, the research was conducted with a high level of ethical integrity, guided by principles of respect, transparency, and responsibility. By obtaining prior ethical approval, securing informed consent, and upholding participant anonymity and data confidentiality, the study maintained full compliance with ethical research practices, thereby reinforcing the credibility and legitimacy of its findings.

3.6 Limitations of the methodology

While this study employs a rigorous methodological approach, thereforeme limitations exist. The purposive sampling of students may introduce selection bias, potentially limiting the generalizability of findings (etikan et al., 2016). Additionally, self-reported measures may be subject to thereforecial desirability

bias, affecting the accuracy of responses. Despite these limitations, the study provides valuable insights into multilingual perceptions and practices.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

This chapter presents the findings of the study and is structured around the research questions. The goal is to trace the multilingual profiles of three agent groups - students, parents, and teachers - across both private and public educational settings in Oromia, Ethiopia. The agents, as defined in this study, are the students who are in their last stretch of education and soon to move into the workforce and civil life, their parents who have accompanied and built the conditions for these students to embark on an independent life, and the teachers who hold the role of capacitating and equipping the students. The school contexts that have been the “incubators” of their multilingualism have been of two types – private schools and public schools which are subject to the same language policy and language education policy. The triangulation of the profiles of the students, parents and teachers from private and public schools contexts in Oromia will contribute to a yet under researched aspect of accountability of the multilingualism reality in the region.

The goal in this study is three tiered. First, we wish to profile each agent group as a whole in terms of their demographic background, their patterns of language use in different interlocutor contexts and for different purposes, their subjective holistic and specific evaluation of their language abilities and skills in each language, their attitude towards monolingualism and multilingualism, and their personality traits that may be related to their multilingualism. The second goal is to explore whether these profiles are the same or different among agents in the public schools and those in the private schools. Third, we wish to explore which of the features of the profile relate to each other to draw on the factors that predict a possible successful multilingual practice and maintenance in the people of Oromia.

In what follows, the results presented are organized as follows: First, we provide a descriptive statistical profile of each agent group as a whole (irrespective of school type), focusing on features that characterize their multilingualism: demographic background, language use, proficiency, attitudes, and personality traits (RQ1). Then, we compare these multilingual features across the agent groups to assess inter-group differences (RQ2). Third, we disaggregate the multilingual profiles by school type examining the multilingual features within each agent group by school type (addressing RQ3 for Private schools and RQ4 for Public schools). Fourth, we compare within each agent group the differences between the multilingual characterizing features of private and public school affiliates (RQ5), for instance, comparing the feature of language use with interlocutors of students in private versus public schools. Finally, we examine correlations between multilingualism features within each agent group (RQ6) to identify patterns of association that reveal the internal coherence and structure of multilingualism

characterizing features in each agent group (irrespective of school type). This tiered approach allows us to build from general profiling to specific comparisons and relational insights, shedding light on how multilingualism is experienced and manifested differently among key educational agents in Oromia.

4.1 Participant profiles

In this section we address the descriptive information profiling the agent group as a whole and also the agent group in relation to the school type. In so doing, this section aims at addressing *RQ1: Which features characterize the profile of the agent groups in terms of demographic (age, languages, education), linguistic repertoire, proficiency in the language/s (CAN-DO and general), language/s use with interlocutors (intimate and formal) for different purposes (entertainment, sustainability and business), attitude towards mono/multilingualism and personality traits?*

4.1.1 Demographic information

The participants of this study included 80 students who were completing or just completed 12th grade in the private or public school system in Oromia, 40 in-service teachers of different subject matter working in either a private or a public school, and 80 parents of pupils schooled in the same schools in Oromia. Table 3 summarizes the participants' information in the study.

Table 3: Participants groups by age, school type and gender

Group	School Type	Males (N)	Females (N)	Age (years)				Years of Education		
				Average	SD	min	max	Average	min	max
Student N=80	Private N=41	8	33	19.12	0.98	17	21	12	12	15
	Public N=39	9	30	19.23	0.90	18	21	12	12	14
Teacher N=40	Private N=20	18	2	38.20	4.12	32	45	15	15	18
	Public N=20	16	4	38.85	5.60	28	51	15	15	21
Parent N=75	Private N=40	28	12	49.13	6.62	36	61	10	8	17
	Public N=35	35	0	46.63	4.36	38	55	10	7	15

Table 3 shows the general demographic information of the targeted agents group in general and also in relation to school type with which they are associated. school type. The distribution of female and male participant was uneven as in the student agent group females were more engaging than males while in the teacher and parent agent groups male participants predominated. unlike the expected age of graduation

(typically around 18-19) the participants in this group consisted of students who were at the time of study collection starting 12th grade and those who just graduated or graduated a year before. The range of age in this group was conceptually motivated so as to have a broad perspective of the effect of schooling during and after completion of studies and on the brink of entering the workforce of the region. In the present generation, the number of females has surpassed the number of males across all regions, and that is why the number of female students is greater than the males. However, when it comes to parents and teachers, due to societal traditions, males continue to receive more opportunities than females to engage in social matters. In all the years of education of teachers not only complete 12 years of schooling but also go to university to get an undergraduate degree and then continue to acquire a teaching diploma/certificate. The variation in parents educational background is rather broad as some parents are highly educated (17 years of education) while others are basically educated with 10 years of schooling.

The student groups' average age was approximately 19 years; the average age of the teachers was about 38 years old, and the parents' agents were the oldest with an average age of between 46 to 49 years of age the teachers in both school types have high school education and post-secondary education. Parents however have middle to high-school education mostly with some parents acquiring post-secondary education especially parents who send their children to private schools. The fact that most parents have a middle to high school education, with some pursuing post-secondary education, especially among those who send their children to private schools, suggests a relation between educational attainment and the value placed on education. Additionally, higher educational attainment often relates with better financial stability, enabling these parents to afford private school tuition. This trend reflects how education and socioeconomic factors can influence parental decisions about their children's schooling.

4.1.2 Linguistic Repertoire

A linguistic repertoire refers to the full range of linguistic resources available to an individual or a community, encompassing all the languages, dialects, registers, and styles that a person can draw upon in different social contexts. It reflects the complex and dynamic nature of language use, where individuals switch between different modes of speech depending on the situation, audience, and purpose. The concept of a linguistic repertoire is central to understanding multilingualism and language practices, as it emphasizes the fluidity and adaptability of language in everyday communication. It also highlights the ways in which social, cultural, and educational factors influence language choice and proficiency, revealing the intricate interplay between language and identity. Understanding linguistic repertoires is crucial for educators, policymakers, and linguists in promoting effective communication and

supporting linguistic diversity in increasingly multilingual societies. Accordingly, a detailed breakdowns of the language repertoires of the agent groups (students, teachers, and parents) based on the number of languages they speak and the roles of those languages (L1, L2, L3, etc.) in their lives, illustrated in Table 4a whereas Table 4b breaks down these repertoires further by school type (Private and Public).

Table 4a: Language repertoire by agent participant groups' Bilingualism, Trilingualism and the role of languages

Agent		Student N=80	Teacher N=40	Parent N=75
Reported number of languages	1-2 %	1.25%	27.50%	25.00%
	3+ %	98.75%	72.50%	71.25%
	No answer %	0.00%	0.00%	3.75%
Afan Oromo	L1	82.28%	63.16%	78.75%
	L2	17.24%	6.25%	13.16%
	L3	0.00%	0.00%	1.25%
Amharic	L1	11.39%	23.68%	10.00%
	L2	82.76%	93.75%	85.53%
	L3	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Tigrinia	L1	3.80%	10.53%	3.75%
	L2	0.00%	0.00%	1.32%
	L3	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Guaragigna	L1	2.53%	2.63%	7.50%
	L2	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
	L3	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
English	L1	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
	L2	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
	L3	100.00%	100.00%	76.25%

Table 4a illustrates each agent group by whether they speak 1-2 languages (mono/bilinguals) or 3+ languages (Trilinguals). Furthermore, the report of each agent group regarding the role (L1, L2 or L3) of most frequently reported language (Afan Oromo, Amharic, Tigrigna, Guragigna and English languages). Most (98.75%) of the student agent group are multilingual speaking three or more languages, and most of them (82.28%) report Afan Oromo as their L1 while Amharic language is the L2 for 82.76% of them. Among the teacher agent group, 72.5% report they have three or more languages, where Afan Oromo is the L1 for 63.16% of them and Amharic is their L2 93.75%. The parents agency group report vastly (71.25%) to speak at least three languages, with Afan Oromo as the L1 for 78.75% of them while Amharic is a close companion in their linguistic toolkit as L2 (85.53%). A significant proportion of participants across all groups are multilingual, particularly trilingual. Afan Oromo predominantly is reported to be the L1 across all groups, with Amharic being the predominantly common L2.

Table 4b: Language repertoire of agent groups' by school type

Agent School Type		Student (N=80)		Teacher (N=40)		Parent (N=75)	
		Private	Public	Private	Public	Private	Public
Measure	Reported number of languages						
	1-2 %	0.00	2.56	25.00	30.00	25.00	25.00
	3+ %	100.00	97.44	75.00	70.00	72.50	70.00
	No answer %	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.50	5.00
Afan Oromo	% L1	78.05	86.84	63.16	63.16	82.05	79.49
	% L2	24.32	16.67	0.00	15.3	12.12	20.69
	% L3	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3.33	0.00
Amharic	% L1	12.20	10.53	21.05	26.32	7.69	12.82
	% L2	97.30	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
	% L3	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Tigrinia	% L1	4.88	2.63	15.79	5.26	5.13	2.56
	% L2	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3.03	0.00
	% L3	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3.33	0.00
Guaragigna	% L1	4.88	0.00	0.00	5.26	5.13	10.26
	% L2	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	% L3	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
English	% L1	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	% L2	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	% L3	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Table 4b expands further the profiling of the linguistic repertoire of the agent groups presented in Table 4a above considering the school type with which the participant is associated, indicating how the school environment might enhance their linguistic repertoire. of the linguistic repertoire of the student agent group is quite different in the context of school type. The student agents in both public and private schools are predominantly multilingual (97.44% and 100% respectively). The teachers agent group in both private and public schools report they are multilingual to a similar extent (75% and 70% respectively) and the same in their Afan Oromo as L1 (63.16% reported in both groups) and Amharic as their L2 (100% reported by both groups). The parents agent group whose children attend private and public schools report they are multilingual in a similar manner (72.5% and 70% respectively) with Afan Oromo as their L1 in 82.15% in the private school and 79.49% in the public school. In summary, whether in private or public schools, multilingualism is the norm across all groups. Afan Oromo is predominantly the L1 and Amharic the L2.

4.1.3 Language Proficiency

Language proficiency refers to an individual's ability to use a language effectively and fluently in various contexts. It encompasses a range of skills, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing, and is often assessed to determine how well someone can communicate in a language other than their native tongue. Proficiency levels can

vary from basic understanding to advanced mastery, and achieving a high level of proficiency is crucial for personal, academic, and professional success in today's globalized world. Whether learning a new language or improving existing skills, language proficiency opens doors to diverse opportunities and fosters deeper cultural connections.

Table 5a: The average GENERAL proficiency assessment (spoken and written skills) in each language by agent as a whole group and by agents in school type

Proficiency: General		Afan Oromo		Amharic		Tigrinia		Guaraginia		English	
		\bar{x}	SD	\bar{x}	SD	\bar{x}	SD	\bar{x}	SD	\bar{x}	SD
Agent											
Student	Private	98.17	11.71	96.34	13.18	7.93	26.48	4.27	13.58	98.17	11.71
	Public	97.44	16.01	96.79	16.40	5.13	22.35	0.00	0.00	97.44	16.01
	Both	97.81	13.89	96.84	14.64	6.65	24.58	1.58	8.34	97.78	13.98
Teacher	Private	60.00	50.26	100.00	0.00	15.00	36.63	0.00	0.00	100.00	0.00
	Public	70.00	47.02	100.00	0.00	5.00	22.36	5.00	22.36	100.00	0.00
	Both	65.00	48.30	100.00	0.00	10.00	30.38	2.50	15.81	100.00	0.00
Parent	Private	78.13	32.12	78.75	33.76	10.00	30.38	5.00	18.95	61.25	47.69
	Public	81.88	32.02	83.75	32.79	2.50	15.81	6.25	20.22	73.75	43.47
	Both	80.00	31.92	81.25	33.16	6.25	24.36	5.63	19.48	67.50	45.77

Table 5a presents the average score of the participants' holistic assessment of language ability across both agent groups and within each group by the school type for each language. The students agent group show very high and consistent proficiency in Afan Oromo (97.81% in both types of schools, 98.17% in private and 97.44% in public schools), where Amharic and English exhibit similar scores.; this is not the case for Tigrigna (6.65% in both types of schools, 7.93% in private and 5.13% in public schools) and Guragigna (1.58% in both types of schools, 4.27% in private and 0.0% in public schools). Similarly, the teachers agent group report perfect proficiency in Amharic and English languages with both scoring 100, but their proficiency in Afan Oromo is noticeably lower (65.00% in both types of schools, 60.0% in private and 70.0% in public schools) . Moreover, the teachers agent group like the students indicate a low proficiency in both Tigrigna and Guragigna languages particularly for Guragigna language (2.50). The parents agent group's scores are moderate across most languages with Afan Oromo and Amharic language scoring around 80% and 81%, respectively indicating diverse proficiency levels irrespective of school type and similar scores in private school of around 78% in both languages and in public schools around 81% in Afan Oromo and 83% in Amharic. Their scores for Tigrigna and Guragigna languages are similar to those of students and teachers with Tigrigna language scoring 6.25 and Guragigna language at 5.63.

Table 5b: : Average language-related subjective proficiency assessment (CAN-DO in speaking, understanding, reading and writing) in each language as reported by agent participants as a whole and by school-type

Proficiency: Can-Do		Afan Oromo		Amharic		Tigrinia		Guaragina		English	
		\bar{x}	SD	\bar{x}	SD	\bar{x}	SD	\bar{x}	SD	\bar{x}	SD
Student	Private	98.17	11.71	96.34	13.18	7.93	26.48	4.27	13.58	98.17	11.71
	Public	97.44	16.01	96.79	16.40	5.13	22.35	0.00	0.00	97.44	16.01
	Both	97.91	11.15	98.10	7.43	8.86	28.42	4.66	0.89	95.31	11.31
Teacher	Private	60.00	50.26	100.00	0.00	15.00	36.63	0.00	0.00	100.00	0.00
	Public	70.00	47.02	100.00	0.00	5.00	22.36	5.00	22.36	100.00	0.00
	Both	70.89	42.50	100.00	0.00	10.00	30.38	5.00	0.00	100.00	0.00
Parent	Private	78.13	32.12	78.75	33.76	10.00	30.38	5.00	18.95	61.25	47.69
	Public	81.88	32.02	83.75	32.79	2.50	15.81	6.25	20.22	73.75	43.47
	Both	88.85	23.23	85.90	29.44	7.06	25.00	3.29	2.08	67.38	41.46

Table 5b provides the language related ability in specific activities (Can-Do) across groups agents, languages and school type in terms of averages and standard deviations. The findings that emerge regarding the student agents irrespective of school type is that Afan Oromo and English are reported to have the highest performance rating; whereas Tigrinya and Guragina have significantly lower performance. As for the teachers agent profile, a perfect performance rating (100%) is reported in Amharic across either or both school types; likewise in English. This was not the case for the official regional language of Afan Oromo where teachers exhibit moderate performance with slight variation across all school types; and to a more extreme case, the performance rating on both Tigrinya and Guragina was very low. The parents agent groups of children attending the different school type indicated that Afan Oromo and Amharic are predominantly used. Moreover, Tigrinya and Guragina have very low scores overall, consistent with findings for other groups.

To further understand the subjective assessment based on specific language – related statements for each language by each agent group and by school type, we explored the average group score for each of the major CAN-DO categories (speaking, understanding oral language, and reading and writing). Table 5c displays the average score on a scale from 1-5 (1=low, 5- high) each group by school rated for each of their languages.

Table 5c: Agent group average score (scale 1-5) to assess their performance by skill in the Can-Do subjective proficiency assessment in each language and by school type

Agent Group	School type		Afan Oromo			Amharic			Tigrignia			English		
			SPK	UND	R&W	SPK	UND	R&W	SPK	UND	R&W	SPK	UND	R&W
Student	Private	\bar{x}	5.00	4.99	4.98	4.98	4.88	4.85	0.61	0.61	0.61	4.95	4.53	4.49
		SD	0.00	0.06	0.16	0.09	0.43	0.48	1.66	1.66	1.66	0.12	0.84	0.86
	Public	\bar{x}	4.82	4.75	4.75	4.93	4.91	4.91	0.30	0.26	0.26	4.95	4.90	4.90
		SD	0.83	0.91	0.91	0.33	0.44	0.41	1.14	1.12	1.12	0.29	0.50	0.50
Teacher	Private	\bar{x}	3.05	3.00	3.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	0.75	0.75	0.75	5.00	5.00	5.00
		SD	2.46	2.51	2.51	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.83	1.83	1.83	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Public	\bar{x}	3.75	3.75	3.75	5.00	5.00	5.00	0.25	0.25	0.25	5.00	5.00	5.00
		SD	2.22	2.22	2.22	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.12	1.12	1.12	0.00	0.00	0.00
Parent	Private	\bar{x}	4.69	4.66	4.24	4.45	4.36	4.16	0.60	0.57	0.57	3.48	3.16	3.18
		SD	1.06	1.16	1.47	1.40	1.47	1.58	1.60	1.54	1.54	2.04	2.09	2.12
	Public	\bar{x}	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
		SD	1.33	1.36	1.89	1.51	1.52	1.71	0.79	0.79	0.79	2.16	2.10	2.10
ALL agent group (N=200)	\bar{x}	4.50	4.47	4.23	4.77	4.71	4.60	0.43	0.42	0.41	4.41	4.20	4.20	
	SD	1.45	1.49	1.65	0.96	1.02	1.15	1.38	1.37	1.37	1.49	1.58	1.59	

Note: SPK=speaking; UND = understanding oral language; R&W = reading and writing

Table 5c provides a summary of language-related performance across various groups (students, teachers, and parents) associated with private and public schools. It includes self-reported abilities in speaking (SPK), understanding (UND), and reading and writing (R&W) in four languages: Afan Oromo, Amharic, Tigrignia, and English. The findings indicate that among the student agent group, private school student: a) perform slightly better in Afan Oromo and Amharic across all skills (SPK, UND, R&W) compared to their public school counterparts; b) have weaker performance in English (e.g., R&W: 4.49 vs. 4.90) and very low proficiency in Tigrignia (0.61 across all skills); c) since variability (SD) in performance is lower compared to public schools, private schools may be using more consistent teaching practices but have a narrower linguistic exposure. The public school students: a) report on excellent English ability across all skills; b) report lower scores in Afan Oromo but not that different than their cohorts in the private schools; c) similar to their cohorts in the private school they also report on low performance on Tigrignia. The teachers in private schools: a) consistently achieve perfect scores in Amharic and English but demonstrate weaker Afan Oromo skills (e.g., SPK: 3.05 vs. 3.75 for public teachers); b) exhibit higher variability (SD: 2.51 in Afan Oromo) in the group, suggesting disparate linguistic backgrounds among teachers; c) report on proficiency in Tigrignia remains low but slightly higher than students' scores. The teachers in public schools: a) report perfect performance in Amharic and English, similar to their private school counterparts; b) show higher performance in Afan Oromo compared to private school teachers, suggesting more emphasis on regional languages in public schools; c) have less variability in performance across all

languages, suggesting a more standardized teacher training process. As for the parents whose children attend private schools they report on: a) moderate to high performance in Afan Oromo (e.g., SPK: 4.69) and Amharic (e.g., SPK: 4.45); b) have significantly lower English proficiency (e.g., SPK: 3.48, R&W: 3.18) compared to public school parents; c) exhibit relatively high variability, particularly in Tigrigna and English, indicating diverse linguistic exposure. The parents of children attending public school show uniformly perfect performance across all languages and skills, which may reflect an idealized or exaggerated self-assessment and a lower variability which suggests a more homogeneous linguistic environment or standardized reporting practices.

In conclusion, the subjective assessment of proficiency and performance in all languages (dominant such as Afan Oromo, Amharic and English and marginalized such as Tigrigna, Guragigna) by the different agent groups provides the following language ability profiles: for students, Afan Oromo, Amharic, and English are the most used languages, with high and consistent mean performance scores across private, public, and combined school type whereas Tigrinya and Guragigna show minimal usage but significant variability. This suggests that the student agents align with institutional priorities in dominant languages, with variability in marginalized languages reflecting linguistic diversity across communities. For teachers, Amharic and English dominate with a reported perfect scoring and no variability, underscoring their essential role in education. By contrast, Afan Oromo shows moderate usage, most likely reflecting the regional language policies which also may impact the absence and inconsistent usage of Tigrinya and Guragigna. Lastly the profile of parents whose children attend the different school types reported that Afan Oromo and Amharic are prominent, but with slightly lower performance scores and higher variability compared to students and teachers; English performance is moderate and Tigrinya and Guragigna have minimal but inconsistent use.

Some comparative insights are suggested by these findings in terms of dominant languages, marginalized languages and variability patterns. In terms of Dominant Languages, teachers consistently prioritize Amharic and English, while students and parents show more balanced use of Afan Oromo, Amharic, and English. By contrast, marginalized Languages such as Tigrinya and Guragigna have minimal representation in all agents but exhibit variability, especially among students and parents.

4.1.4 Language use

Language usage refers to the ways in which language is employed in various contexts to convey meaning, communicate ideas, and interact socially. It encompasses the choice of words, grammar, tone, and style that individuals use depending on the audience, purpose, and setting. Language usage is not only a

reflection of personal preference but also influenced by cultural norms, societal expectations, language policy of the country and region and educational background. Understanding language usage involves examining how different forms of communication are appropriate for different situations such as formal versus informal interlocutor settings and for different daily communication purposes such as entertainment, sustainability, and business interactions. It is a key concept in linguistics, as it provides insights into how language functions in everyday life, how it changes across different social groups, and how it can be used to express identity and power dynamics. Exploring patterns of language use within various social contexts reveals critical insights into how individuals and groups navigate communication, for language functions not just as a tool for conveying information but as a powerful marker of identity, social status, and cultural affiliation. Understanding the patterns of language use in different environments, such as within the home, in educational settings, and across professional domains, provides a deeper understanding of the sociolinguistic dynamics bearing broader implications for cultural integration, social mobility, and educational policy.

4.1.4.1 Use of languages within interlocutor settings

Exploring the choices of languages to interact with different – albeit intimate and formal – interlocutors sets up an integral part of the language constellations of individual multilinguals (Aronin, 2019). To inquire into the language use with intimate (family, neighbors and friends) and informal (work, institutions, businesses) interlocutors, participants ranked each language as mostly, equally or partially used in the different contexts of communication with interlocutors (Table 6a).

Table 6a – in appendices

Table 6a the average percent and standard deviation of participants in each agent group (Students, Teachers, and Parents) who reported using one of the languages (Afan Oromo, Amharic, Tigrinya, Guragigna, and English) as dominant for communicating with different (intimate and formal) interlocutors in different school types (Private, Public, and Both). Three aspects are reflected by these findings: the interlocutor context, the agent group and the school type impact. The intimate interlocutor context overall determines the use of Afan Oromo and Amharic as dominant across all roles, with a higher reported use among agents of private schools; whereas English is reported to be used less frequently with the intimate interlocutors and varies highly among the groups. Surprisingly, Tigrinya and Guragigna have minimal usage. In the formal context, Amharic predominates across all agent groups, particularly among teachers and parents; English is relatively more

dominant in formal contexts compared to intimate ones, especially among private school students and parents. Unsurprisingly, Tigrinya and Guragigna remain marginally used, reflecting limited need in either context.

The particularities of language use in interlocutor context by the different agent group shows some interesting insights. Students agents, when communicating with an interlocutor of the intimate context, predominantly use Afan Oromo, especially in the private compared to the public schools, and to a more moderate extent in these contexts they report using English and to a negligible extent the marginalized languages (Tigrinya, Guragigna). The trend of the use of the language by the student agents with formal interlocutors is quite similar to that of the intimate with a slightly greater use of English by all groups; yet Amharic usage increases significantly in private and combined school types. The teachers agents use to a moderate extent Afan Oromo and Amharic in the intimate context especially in the private schools whereas English is rarely used and the marginalized languages have a minimal presence. Within the formal interlocutor context, Afan Oromo and Amharic remain dominant, English usage is reported by slightly more teachers in the private school suggesting it has a role either in the instructional or professional development interactions. As for the parents agent group, in the intimate context, Afan Oromo and Amharic dominate and though English is used less frequently its use varies greatly among the parents compared to the students and teachers. Here too the marginalized languages remain absent. Within the formal context, parent agents the use of Amharic increases substantially while Afan Oromo remains the same as with the intimate context and English is used moderately but there is greater variation among the parents agents reflecting diversity in proficiency, need and exposure to the language in English.

The third aspect that relates to the use of languages in different interlocutors contexts is influenced by the school type affiliation of the agent group. In the private schools Amharic and English are reported frequently to be used in both formal and intimate contexts suggesting an inclination to gravitate towards a more global and official languages whereas Afan Oromo is present but most dominantly in the intimate context. In the public schools Afan Oromo is consistently reported as used by all agent group reflecting its important local presence, however, English is used less frequently compared to the private schools with a high variability of usage by the agent groups especially in the intimate context.

To summarize the use of languages by the agents groups from different school types in intimate and formal interlocutor contexts has shown that language dominance befalls on both Afan Oromo and Amharic across agent groups, interlocutor contexts, and school types, but Amharic has a stronger presence in formal contexts particularly among teachers and parents. The marginalized languages (Tigrinya and Guragigna) have limited communicative roles, with small

and inconsistent (high variability) usage across all agent groups, suggesting these may be limited to localized or community-specific use. The presence of English is increased (though with great variability) especially in formal contexts, in private schools and among teachers and parents suggesting that English is used for professional and globalized purposes especially among the educated adults with different degrees of proficiency in or access to such interactions.

4.1.4.2 Language use for purpose

In addition to the interlocutor context, it is important to look at the purpose of the communication as an indicator to language choice by the different agent groups in the different languages and school type. Participant in the agents group had to report on the language and the extent to which it is used to conduct different lifestyle activities such as consuming entertainment, conducting business or carrying on with daily needs for sustainability. Table 6b presents the average percentage of participants in each agent group, language and school type.

Table 6b – in appendices

Table 6b the average and SD of participant score in the use of five languages (Afan Oromo, Amharic, Tigrigna, Guragigna, and English) for three purposes (entertainment, sustainability and business) by each agent groups (Students, Teachers, and Parents), distinguishing between private, public, and both school types. The findings show that the languages used for entertainment purpose, Afan Oromo dominates among private school students and parents with high averages (85.85% and 93.00%, respectively) whereas public school participants show slightly lower values. Amharic is consistently used by more than 40% of the cases across all agent groups and school types, and English is more significant in the private school participants (students 38.05%, parents 33.00%) but low in public schools cohorts. For sustainability purposes, the findings indicate that Afan Oromo remains prominent, especially among private school students (82.44%) and parents (84.00%); and Amharic shows a steady presence, particularly in private school settings but English usage declines significantly in public schools, especially among teachers and students (below 5%). Lastly, for business purposes the patterns are similar to entertainment, with Afan Oromo and Amharic consistently leading across all groups, moreover, English is moderately used among private school agent groups but scarcely used in public school contexts. If we profile the language use purpose by agent group, the findings show that among the student agents in the private school framework Afan Oromo and Amharic more extensively used for all purposes compared to the public school students. The teacher agent groups showed a more balanced use of language for the different purposes but the languages were less

diverse with lower percentages for Tigrigna and Guragigna. The parents agent group in the private school exhibit the highest usage percentages for most languages, indicating more diverse communication habits. In all measures, the high SD values, especially in languages like Amharic and Tigrigna, reveal diverse usage patterns, likely due to regional or cultural differences.

To conclude the patterns of language use for different purposes, Afan Oromo and Amharic are the most utilized languages across all contexts. Afan Oromo stands out in the private school agents, while Amharic's presence is stable across all agents groups irrespective of school context. English is significant in the agents of the private schools but scarce in the public school cohorts, especially for sustainability purposes. The marginalized languages (Tigrigna and Guragigna) have limited use, reflecting possible regional constraints. Such regional constraints as well as groups' demographics are also reflected in the high variability (SD) for Amharic.

4.1.5 Attitude towards mono/multilingualism

Studying the attitudes of school agents toward mono- and multilingualism is essential because their beliefs and perceptions significantly influence educational practices and outcomes. Schools are increasingly diverse linguistic environments, and how these agents view and approach language use affects curriculum development, student engagement, and inclusivity. A positive attitude toward multilingualism can foster an environment that values linguistic diversity, enhancing learning experiences for students from various backgrounds. In contrast, a preference for monolingualism might limit opportunities for linguistic minorities and hinder their academic and social integration. Understanding these attitudes helps policymakers and educators design interventions that promote equitable and effective language policies in schools, contributing to a more inclusive and globally aware educational system.

Accordingly, the analysis of the current study about attitudes toward monolingualism and multilingualism among students, teachers, and parents reveals a clear preference for multilingualism across all groups. By examining these attitudes both generally and within the contexts of private and public schools, the study highlights a strong consensus against monolingualism and a widespread endorsement of multilingualism. The findings suggest that in today's diverse and interconnected world, the value of multilingual skills is widely recognized, with public school environments showing particularly strong support for embracing multiple languages. This collective inclination underscores the importance of multilingualism in education and society. The results presented in Table 7 offer insights into the attitudes of different agent groups (students, teachers, and parents) toward monolingualism and multilingualism. These attitudes are broken down both in general terms and by the type of schooling (private vs. public).

Table 7: Average percent of participants with a favorable (Pro) and unfavorable (Con) attitude towards monolingualism and multilingualism by agent group and school type

Group	School Type	Monolingualism				Multilingualism			
		Positive attitude		Negative attitude		Positive attitude		Negative attitude	
		Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)
Student	Private (N=41)	7.32	92.68	92.68	7.32	90.24	9.76	7.32	92.68
	Public (N=39)	12.82	87.18	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	12.82	87.18
	Both (N=80)	10.00	90.00	96.25	3.75	95.00	5.00	10.00	90.00
Teacher	Private (N=20)	20.00	80.00	85.00	15.00	85.00	15.00	15.00	85.00
	Public (N=20)	15.00	85.00	85.00	15.00	85.00	15.00	10.00	90.00
	Both (N=40)	17.50	82.50	85.00	15.00	85.00	15.00	12.50	87.50
Parent	Private (N=39)	10.26	92.31	89.74	12.82	97.44	5.13	7.69	94.87
	Public (N=40)	20.00	80.00	95.00	5.00	90.00	10.00	10.00	90.00
	Both (N=79)	15.00	85.00	91.25	8.75	92.50	7.50	8.75	91.25

Table 7 shows the language attitude profiles (favorable and unfavorable) toward monolingualism and multilingualism by agents (students, teachers, parents) and school types (public and private). The findings show insights in two intertwined axes: attitude (positive and negative) towards -lingualism (mono – and multi-) and attitude by agent group. In term of attitude towards monolingualism, there is a low percent of participants with a positive (pro) attitude to monolingualism across all groups, for example, private school students agent report only 7.32% agreeing with monolingualism, while their public school cohorts reach 12.82%. Teachers agents are more likely to hold a positive attitude toward monolingualism compared to students or parents, especially the private school teachers at 20%. Parents agents in public schools are the most favorable towards monolingualism with 20% agreeing like the teachers in the private school and unlike all other agents. Unlike a low positive attitude towards monolingualism, the negative attitude is overwhelming as the rejection of monolingualism is nearly universal, especially among students (e.g., 92.68% in private schools). Teachers and parents also exhibit high disagreement, though slightly less emphatically. By contrast, multilingualism is overwhelmingly favored, especially among students (in private schools 90.24% and 100% in public schools), among teachers agents there is a consistent 85% favoring multilingualism across all school types. Parents agent generally show strong support for

multilingualism, especially private school parents (97.44%). The mirror image that transpires shows a very low negative attitude towards multilingualism, typically below 10% and even reaching no disagreement with multilingualism as in the case of public school students report (0%).

In terms of the attitude towards mono-multi-lingualism as profiling the agent groups, we observe that the student agent group strongly reject monolingualism and overwhelmingly support multilingualism, particularly in the public schools where disagreement with multilingualism is absent altogether. By contrast, the teachers agent group displays slightly higher acceptance of monolingualism than other groups but still strongly favors multilingualism. The parents agent group shows a balanced view, with the public school parents embracing slightly more favorably monolingualism compared to the private school parents.

4.1.6 Multilingual and multicultural personality

It is believed that studying the multilingual and multicultural personality traits of school agents is crucial because these traits directly impact their ability to navigate and contribute to diverse educational settings. Multilingual and multicultural traits enable school agents to foster inclusive environments that respect and celebrate differences. These traits also influence their teaching practices, classroom management, and relationships with students and families, shaping the overall school climate. By understanding and developing these traits, educators can better prepare to meet the challenges of diversity, ensuring equitable opportunities for all learners and promoting social cohesion in the school community. The analysis of multicultural personality questionnaire (MPQ) scores across various groups—students, teachers, and parents—reveals intriguing insights into how different demographics and educational environments shape multicultural personality traits. By examining five key dimensions—cultural empathy which measures the ability to empathize with people from different cultures, open-mindedness which reflects the openness to new experiences and ideas, social initiative which indicates the propensity to take the lead in social situations, emotional stability which refers to how well one can remain calm and balanced in stressful situations, and flexibility which captures the adaptability in changing situations—the current study highlights significant differences in how these traits are expressed within and between groups. Furthermore, the influence of schooling type (public versus private) emerges as a critical factor, with public school environments generally fostering stronger multicultural competencies. These results provide a nuanced understanding of the diverse ways in which individuals adapt to and thrive in multicultural settings, offering valuable perspectives for educational strategies and community engagement.

Table 8: Average agent group score of multilingual and multicultural personality characteristics (MPQ) by school type

Agent Group	School Type	Cultural Empathy		Open-mindedness		Social Initiative		Emotional Stability		Flexibility	
		\bar{x}	SD	\bar{x}	SD	\bar{x}	SD	\bar{x}	SD	\bar{x}	SD
Student	Private	89.70	9.62	89.27	10.48	89.33	10.53	89.21	10.64	89.09	10.66
	Public	91.60	9.27	91.54	9.33	91.60	9.35	91.54	9.36	91.15	9.54
	Both	90.63	9.44	90.38	9.94	90.44	9.97	90.34	10.05	90.09	10.12
Teacher	Private	81.38	11.11	83.25	14.89	72.13	7.45	62.75	11.55	79.75	14.53
	Public	82.00	13.07	87.00	14.90	71.25	15.01	56.88	24.61	87.00	14.90
	Both	81.69	11.97	85.13	14.83	71.69	11.70	59.81	19.21	83.38	14.98
Parent	Private	81.75	14.26	81.19	15.37	80.06	13.73	76.81	16.57	81.69	14.25
	Public	88.63	11.59	88.13	12.18	88.13	12.22	87.69	12.30	87.88	11.88
	Both	85.19	13.36	84.66	14.21	84.09	13.54	82.25	15.50	84.78	13.40

The findings shown in table 8 deploy the profile of each agent group in terms of the 5 multilingual and multicultural personality indicators. The student agent group in the public schools score highest across all dimensions with cultural empathy (91.60%) and open-mindedness (91.54) leading, whereas the private school students score slightly lower (roughly 89%), but their scores also vary greatly (SD ~10). The teachers agent group exhibit significant differences compared to students with cultural empathy (81.69%) and open-mindedness (85.13%) are their strongest traits; but emotional stability is particularly low - especially in the public schools teachers (56.88%), and flexibility in the private compared to the public school teachers is lower (79.75% and 87.00% respectively). Teachers in the public schools show a lower emotional stability which may indicate stress or challenges in managing emotional demands yet they display a high open-mindedness that might be linked to their professional roles. In the public school parents agent group scores are consistently higher across all dimensions, with cultural empathy (88.63%) and open-mindedness (88.13%) being most prominent suggesting that these may be an outcome of their children’s enhanced traits that result from their engagement with diverse communities. However, the private school parents agent group exhibit moderate scores (around 81%) for most traits, and there is greater variability as compared to their cohorts in the public schools. In all, the results show that the public school agent groups generally score higher across all indicators, suggesting richer exposure to multicultural settings or community involvement.

4.2 Comparison of the Multilingual Characteristics across the Three Agent Groups

To examine the differences between the agent groups we aim at establishing the multilingual characteristics that may stand out when comparing it to the other agent group. In so doing we used a One-Way ANOVA to compare means across the three

groups of each of the characterizing variables. Moreover, to avoid “false positive results” of statistical significance, we performed a Bonferroni correction post-hoc test. In this section we wish to address RQ2: Are there differences across the whole-agent groups’ (irrespective of school) multilingual characteristics? If so, which group is different and in what way?

Table 9 – in appendices

Table 9 summarizes the results of a one-way between-subjects analysis of variance (ANOVA) that compared the effects of participant group (students, parents, teachers) on language use, language proficiency, attitudes toward monolingualism and multilingualism, and multicultural personality traits. Bonferroni post hoc tests were used to identify specific group differences while controlling for Type I error in multiple comparisons. For Language Use with interlocutor circles, there were statistically significant differences in intimate language use across groups for Afan Oromo, $F(2, 197) = 5.12, p = .007, \eta^2 = .049$, and Amharic, $F(2, 197) = 5.20, p = .006, \eta^2 = .050$. Bonferroni post hoc tests indicated that teachers used Afan Oromo significantly more than students ($p = .005$), and parents used Amharic more frequently in intimate contexts compared to students ($p = .005$). Similarly, formal language use varied significantly for Afan Oromo, $F(2, 197) = 6.47, p = .002, \eta^2 = .062$, and English, $F(2, 197) = 3.92, p = .021, \eta^2 = .038$, with teachers reporting greater use than students ($p = .002, p = .036$, respectively). For Language Use for specific communicative purposes, language use for entertainment showed significant variation across all three languages: Afan Oromo, $F(2, 197) = 8.03, p < .001, \eta^2 = .075$; Amharic, $F(2, 197) = 7.96, p < .001, \eta^2 = .075$; and English, $F(2, 197) = 4.55, p = .012, \eta^2 = .044$. Bonferroni-corrected comparisons indicated that teachers used Afan Oromo significantly more than both students ($p = .011$) and parents ($p < .001$), whereas parents used Amharic more than students ($p = .002$). In contrast, students reported slightly higher engagement with English for entertainment compared to teachers ($p = .017$).

In terms of language Proficiency, significant differences were found in general proficiency in Afan Oromo, $F(2, 197) = 13.52, p < .001, \eta^2 = .121$; Amharic, $F(2, 197) = 15.68, p < .001, \eta^2 = .137$; and English, $F(2, 197) = 25.32, p < .001, \eta^2 = .204$. Teachers reported the highest proficiency across all three languages, significantly surpassing both students and parents ($p < .001$). Similarly, functional (Can-Do) proficiency was significantly higher for teachers across Afan Oromo, $F(2, 197) = 13.71, p < .001, \eta^2 = .122$, Amharic, $F(2, 197) = 13.26, p < .001, \eta^2 = .119$, and English, $F(2, 197) = 28.25, p < .001, \eta^2 = .223$. The largest proficiency gap was observed in English, where students reported the lowest Can-Do scores compared to teachers ($p < .001$).

As for attitudes toward -isms, there were no significant differences in attitudes toward monolingualism ($p > .05$) or multilingualism ($p > .05$), indicating that students, parents, and teachers share similar perspectives on language ideology. However, in regard to multilingual and multicultural personality traits (MPQ), there were significant differences in cultural empathy, $F(2, 197) = 8.91, p < .001, \eta^2 = .083$, open-mindedness, $F(2, 197) = 4.54, p = .012, \eta^2 = .044$, social initiative, $F(2, 197) = 33.36, p < .001, \eta^2 = .253$, emotional stability, $F(2, 197) = 59.71, p < .001, \eta^2 = .377$, and flexibility, $F(2, 197) = 5.26, p = .006, \eta^2 = .051$. Teachers showed a significantly higher score than both students and parents across all these traits ($p < .001$), suggesting that their professional experience contributes to greater adaptability and social initiative.

Overall, the findings indicate that teachers consistently demonstrate higher language proficiency, greater functional use of Afan Oromo and English, and stronger multicultural personality traits compared to students and parents. Students, on the other hand, exhibit greater reliance on English for entertainment purposes but report the lowest language proficiency across all contexts. There were no significant differences in language attitudes, suggesting a shared perspective on multilingualism across groups.

The comparison thus far looked at each agent groups as a unit irrespective of the school type with which its members are associated. In what follows, we wish to compare each agent group that is associated with the same school type. Hence, we will first address the agent subgroup that is associated with private schools and address RQ3: Are the agent groups associated with Private schools characterized by the different multilingual features?

Table 10 – in appendices

Table 10 presents the comparison between students, parents, and teachers in private schools regarding their language use, proficiency, attitudes toward monolingualism and multilingualism, and multicultural personality traits. In the language use with different interlocutor circles significant differences emerged in the use of Afan Oromo, Amharic, and English for intimate interactions. Students reported significantly higher use of Afan Oromo in intimate settings compared to teachers, $F(2, 100) = 3.661, p = .029$, and were also significantly more likely to use Amharic ($F(2, 100) = 14.096, p < .001$) and English ($F(2, 100) = 7.181, p = .001$) than parents. However, no significant differences were found between groups for formal settings in Amharic ($p = .410$) and English ($p = .657$), suggesting a more uniform use of these languages in formal interactions. For the language use for different daily purposes, students reported significantly higher use of Afan Oromo for entertainment purposes compared to teachers ($F(2, 100) = 6.520, p = .002$), whereas

differences in Amharic and English use were not statistically significant across groups ($p > .05$). Similarly, for sustainability purposes, students reported greater use of Afan Oromo than teachers ($F(2, 100) = 3.470, p = .035$), while their use of Amharic was comparable to parents ($p = .663$). In business communication, students exhibited significantly greater use of Afan Oromo than teachers ($F(2, 100) = 5.492, p = .005$) and reported more frequent use of English than parents ($F(2, 100) = 3.371, p = .038$). No significant differences were observed for Amharic use in business settings. For the subjective self-assessment of proficiency, students reported significantly higher general proficiency in Afan Oromo ($F(2, 100) = 11.672, p < .001$), Amharic ($F(2, 100) = 11.374, p < .001$), and English ($F(2, 100) = 17.961, p < .001$) compared to teachers and parents. Likewise, in the Can-Do proficiency measure, students exhibited significantly greater self-reported proficiency in Afan Oromo than teachers ($F(2, 100) = 13.083, p < .001$) and reported higher proficiency in Amharic ($F(2, 100) = 6.032, p = .003$) and English ($F(2, 100) = 13.673, p < .001$) than parents. As for attitudes toward monolingualism and multilingualism, teachers demonstrated a more favorable attitude toward monolingualism ($F(2, 100) = 1.133, p = .326$) compared to students, although this difference was not statistically significant. Parents showed a more favorable attitude toward multilingualism than students ($F(2, 100) = .841, p = .435$), but again, the difference was not significant. By contrast, in multilingual and multicultural personality traits (MPQ), significant differences were found across the three groups of the private school. Students exhibited significantly higher levels of cultural empathy ($F(2, 100) = 5.569, p = .005$), open-mindedness ($F(2, 100) = 3.817, p = .025$), social initiative ($F(2, 100) = 16.387, p < .001$), emotional stability ($F(2, 100) = 26.855, p < .001$), and flexibility ($F(2, 100) = 4.836, p = .010$) than parents. These findings indicate that students in private schools tend to exhibit stronger multicultural adaptability and social engagement traits compared to their parents.

In all, the results highlight significant differences in language use, proficiency, and multicultural personality traits among students, parents, and teachers in private schools. Students consistently demonstrated greater language proficiency and multicultural personality traits, while teachers showed a stronger inclination toward monolingual attitudes. These findings suggest that students in private schools engage more frequently in multilingual interactions and possess more adaptable multicultural skills than their parents and teachers.

Along similar lines, we wished to explore the differences between the agents associated with the public school system. To that end we address RQ4: Are the agent groups associated with public schools characterized by the different multilingual features?

Table 11 – in appendices

Table 11 presents the significant differences in language use, proficiency, attitudes, and multicultural personality traits among three groups—students, parents, and teachers in public schools, shedding light on their linguistic and attitudinal distinctions. Regarding language use with interlocutors in the intimate circles, students exhibited significantly lower scores than parents when using English ($F = 4.087, p = .020$), while there were no significant differences in the use of Afan Oromo ($F = 1.676, p = .193$) or Amharic ($F = 0.033, p = .967$). This suggests that students may be less inclined to use English in close interpersonal communication compared to parents. In formal circles, students demonstrated significantly lower use of Amharic ($F = 4.679, p = .012$) and English ($F = 12.419, p < .001$) than parents, but no significant difference was observed in Afan Oromo use ($F = 1.700, p = .188$). These findings indicate that parents may favor Amharic and English more than students in formal settings, potentially reflecting a generational shift in linguistic preferences. Moreover, the language use for purposes of entertainment, students reported significantly lower use of Amharic ($F = 12.708, p < .001$) and English ($F = 16.660, p < .001$) compared to parents, with no significant differences found in Afan Oromo ($F = 2.279, p = .108$). Similarly, in sustainability-related language use, students showed significantly lower usage of Amharic ($F = 5.274, p = .007$) and English ($F = 24.956, p < .001$) compared to parents, but no significant difference in Afan Oromo ($F = 0.897, p = .411$). A similar trend emerged in business-related language use, where students demonstrated significantly lower scores than parents in Amharic ($F = 12.618, p < .001$) and English ($F = 13.024, p < .001$), though no significant difference was found in Afan Oromo ($F = 1.987, p = .143$). These results suggest that parents utilize Amharic and English more frequently than students across multiple domains, including entertainment, sustainability, and business.

In the subjective self-assessment of general language proficiency, students outperformed parents in Afan Oromo ($F = 5.760, p = .004$), Amharic ($F = 4.898, p = .009$), and English ($F = 8.197, p < .001$). Similarly, in Can-Do language proficiency, students scored significantly higher than parents in Afan Oromo ($F = 3.784, p = .026$), Amharic ($F = 7.056, p = .001$), and English ($F = 14.863, p < .001$), with a particularly strong advantage in English over teachers as well. These findings suggest that students have stronger self-perceived proficiency compared to both parents and teachers, particularly in English. Regarding attitudes towards monolingualism and multilingualism, students were significantly more against monolingualism ($F = 3.209, p = .045$), as reflected in their stronger disagreement with monolingual-oriented statements compared to parents. However, no significant differences were observed in positive attitudes toward monolingualism ($F = 0.379, p = .685$) or multilingualism ($F = 2.771, p = .068$), suggesting that while students oppose monolingualism more than parents, they do not necessarily exhibit stronger support for multilingualism. In contrast, the analysis of multilingual and

multicultural personality traits revealed significant differences across the three groups. Students exhibited significantly higher levels of cultural empathy than parents ($F = 4.987, p = .009$), indicating a greater ability to understand and relate to individuals from different cultural backgrounds. Additionally, students demonstrated higher levels of social initiative ($F = 20.583, p < .001$) and emotional stability ($F = 40.190, p < .001$) than teachers, suggesting that they may be more proactive in social situations and possess greater emotional resilience compared to educators. No significant differences were found in open-mindedness ($F = 1.284, p = .282$) or flexibility ($F = 1.134, p = .326$), indicating that these traits are relatively stable across students, parents, and teachers.

In sum, the results of this study indicate that parents exhibit greater usage of Amharic and English across different settings, while students report higher proficiency levels in all three languages. Additionally, students display stronger rejection of monolingualism compared to parents and exhibit superior multicultural personality traits, particularly in social initiative and emotional stability, relative to teachers. These findings underscore the evolving linguistic landscape within public schools and highlight key differences in language use, proficiency, and intercultural adaptability across generations and social roles.

Having profiled the multilingual characteristics indicators of each agent group (RQ1) above and conducting comparisons between the entire agent group (RQ2) with each other (irrespective of school type association) and finally conducting the same comparison across the agent groups associated only with private schools (RQ3) and public school (RQ4), we now wish to compare within agent group whether the school type with which they are associated is different in its multilingual characterization.

4.3 Intra-agent Group Comparison of the Multilingual Characteristics indicators by School Association

This section's objective is to determine whether there is an impact of the school type on the multilingualism agents, we performed an independent samples t-test for each agent group separately. For each of the two groups (private and public) within each the agent group (students, parents and teachers) a series of independent samples t-tests were conducted to compare language use, proficiency, attitudes, and multicultural personality traits between the two groups. A Bonferroni correction was applied to adjust for multiple comparisons. In what follows as summary of the difference between the agents that are associated with the different school types will be described in Tables 12a for student agency; 12b for parent agency and 12c for teacher agency as means to answer to the overarching RQ5: Is there a difference in the multilingual characterizing indicators within each agent group separately when comparing its members associated with Private versus Public schools?

4.3.1 Students

Table 12a – in appendices

Table 12a shows that regarding language use in intimate circles, no significant difference was found for Afan Oromo, $t(78) = -0.418$, $p = .677$. However, significant differences were observed for Amharic, $t(78) = -5.048$, $p < .001$, and English, $t(78) = -5.644$, $p < .001$, with Students in private school showing higher mean scores than Public. For language use in formal contexts, no significant difference was found for Afan Oromo, $t(78) = -0.299$, $p = .766$. In contrast, significant differences emerged for Amharic, $t(78) = -4.033$, $p < .001$, and English, $t(78) = -4.688$, $p < .001$, with Students in private school again exhibiting higher mean values. In language use for specific purposes, for entertainment, Afan Oromo showed no significant difference, $t(78) = -0.819$, $p = .415$, but significant effects were observed for Amharic, $t(78) = -4.394$, $p < .001$, and English, $t(78) = -6.192$, $p < .001$, favoring Students in private school. Similarly, for sustainability, Afan Oromo showed no significant difference, $t(78) = -0.692$, $p = .491$, whereas Amharic, $t(78) = -4.252$, $p < .001$, and English, $t(78) = -3.976$, $p < .001$, were significantly higher in Students in private school. And for business-related language use, Afan Oromo did not differ significantly between the groups, $t(78) = -0.980$, $p = .330$. However, Amharic, $t(78) = -4.617$, $p < .001$, was significantly higher in Students in private school, while English, $t(78) = -3.058$, $p = .003$, did not remain significant after Bonferroni correction.

The results for the language proficiency, no significant differences were observed in the general proficiency assessment across Afan Oromo, Amharic, or English proficiency ($p > .05$). Similarly, Can-Do proficiency measures did not show significant differences except for English, $t(78) = 2.563$, $p = .012$, which did not meet the Bonferroni-adjusted threshold. Regarding attitudes towards monolingualism and multilingualism, neither unfavorable attitude towards monolingualism, $t(78) = 1.733$, $p = .087$, nor favorable attitude towards multilingualism, $t(78) = 2.028$, $p = .046$, reached significance after Bonferroni adjustment. In the same way, multilingual and multicultural personality traits (MPQ) — including Open Mindedness, $t(78) = 1.022$, $p = .309$, Social Initiative, $t(78) = 1.019$, $p = .310$, Cultural Empathy, $t(78) = 0.902$, $p = .370$, Emotional Stability, $t(78) = 1.038$, $p = .301$, and Flexibility, $t(78) = 0.913$, $p = .363$ —did not show statistically significant differences between the groups.

In summary, after applying the Bonferroni correction, the strongest differences were observed in language use, particularly for Amharic and English across different domains, where Students in private school exhibited significantly

higher engagement compared to students in the public school. No significant differences were found in language proficiency, attitudes, or multicultural personality traits.

4.3.2 Parents

Table 12b – in appendices

From Table 12b we learn that in language use with interlocutors, no significant differences were found in intimate circles for Afan Oromo, $t(78) = -0.284$, $p = .389$, Amharic, $t(78) = 0.065$, $p = .474$, or English, $t(78) = -0.780$, $p = .219$. Similarly, no significant differences emerged for use of languages in formal circles of Afan Oromo, $t(78) = -1.017$, $p = .156$, Amharic, $t(78) = 0.068$, $p = .473$, or English, $t(78) = 0.437$, $p = .332$. These results suggest that parental language use in intimate and formal circles does not differ significantly between public and private school contexts. In as far as the language use for specific purposes is concerned, for entertainment, no significant differences were observed in Afan Oromo, $t(78) = -0.967$, $p = .168$, Amharic, $t(78) = 0.453$, $p = .326$, or English, $t(78) = -0.183$, $p = .428$. Similarly, for sustainability-related language use, Afan Oromo, $t(78) = -0.766$, $p = .223$, Amharic, $t(78) = 0.770$, $p = .222$, and English, $t(78) = -0.787$, $p = .217$, did not show significant differences. And for business-related language use, Afan Oromo, $t(78) = -0.705$, $p = .242$, Amharic, $t(78) = -0.970$, $p = .168$, and English, $t(78) = -1.032$, $p = .153$, also did not differ significantly between groups. In terms of subjective self-assessment of general language proficiency, Afan Oromo proficiency showed a marginal difference, $t(78) = -2.032$, $p = .023$, though this did not meet the Bonferroni-adjusted threshold. Amharic proficiency, $t(78) = 0.995$, $p = .161$, and English proficiency, $t(78) = 1.207$, $p = .116$, did not exhibit significant differences either. Can-Do proficiency measures were also not significantly different for Afan Oromo, $t(78) = -1.022$, $p = .155$, Amharic, $t(78) = -0.193$, $p = .424$, or English, $t(78) = 0.478$, $p = .317$. With regard to attitudes, neither monolingualism (con), $t(78) = 1.183$, $p = .120$, nor multilingualism (pro), $t(78) = -0.842$, $p = .201$, showed significant differences. Yet, for multilingual and multicultural personality traits, significant differences were found in Social Initiative, $t(78) = 2.774$, $p = .003$, and Emotional Stability, $t(78) = 3.332$, $p = .001$, with parents in private schools scoring higher in both measures. Cultural Empathy, $t(78) = 2.367$, $p = .010$, Open-Mindedness, $t(78) = 2.238$, $p = .014$, and Flexibility, $t(78) = 2.109$, $p = .019$, were not significant after Bonferroni correction.

In summary, language use, attitudes, and proficiency did not show significant differences between parents in public and private schools. However, differences in multilingual and multicultural personality traits were observed, particularly in Social

Initiative and Emotional Stability, where private school parents scored significantly higher.

4.3.3 Teachers

Table 12c – in appendices

The findings in table 12c indicate that in language use with interlocutors, no significant differences were found in intimate circles for Afan Oromo, $t(38) = 0.241$, $p = .406$, Amharic, $t(38) = -0.470$, $p = .321$, or English, $t(38) = -1.751$, $p = .048$. Likewise, no significant differences emerged for formal language use in Afan Oromo, $t(38) = 0.587$, $p = .280$, Amharic, $t(38) = -1.575$, $p = .062$, or English, $t(38) = -1.294$, $p = .102$. These results indicate that teacher language use in intimate and formal settings does not significantly differ between public and private schools. For language use for purposes of entertainment, Afan Oromo, $t(38) = 0.319$, $p = .376$, and Amharic, $t(38) = -1.244$, $p = .111$, did not show significant differences. While English, $t(38) = -1.881$, $p = .036$, showed a lower mean in private schools, this difference did not meet the Bonferroni-adjusted threshold. Regarding sustainability-related language use, Afan Oromo, $t(38) = 0.319$, $p = .376$, and Amharic, $t(38) = -1.038$, $p = .153$, showed no significant differences. Although English, $t(38) = -2.122$, $p = .022$, had a lower mean in private schools, this result was not significant after adjustment for multiple comparisons. And for business-related language use, no significant differences were found for Afan Oromo, $t(38) = 0.319$, $p = .376$, Amharic, $t(38) = -1.285$, $p = .103$, or English, $t(38) = -1.431$, $p = .082$. In terms of self-assessment of general language proficiency, no significant differences were observed for Afan Oromo, $t(38) = 0.650$, $p = .260$. Amharic and English proficiency values were almost identical in both groups and reached the maximal score. Similarly, Can-Do proficiency measures did not exhibit significant differences for Afan Oromo, $t(38) = 1.000$, $p = .162$, with missing values for Amharic and English because of similarity between the groups and a maximal score. With regard to attitudes, neither monolingualism (con), $t(38) = 0.000$, $p = .500$, nor multilingualism (pro), $t(38) = 0.000$, $p = .500$, showed significant differences. As was the case for multilingual and multicultural personality traits, where no significant differences were found for Open-Mindedness, $t(38) = 0.163$, $p = .436$, Social Initiative, $t(38) = 0.796$, $p = .215$, Cultural Empathy, $t(38) = -0.234$, $p = .409$, or Emotional Stability, $t(38) = -0.966$, $p = .171$. Flexibility, $t(38) = 1.558$, $p = .064$, also did not meet the Bonferroni threshold for significance.

In summary, language use, attitudes, proficiency, and multicultural personality traits did not show statistically significant differences between teachers in public and private schools. While some results suggested potential differences in

English language use and multicultural traits, these findings did not remain significant after controlling for multiple comparisons.

4.4 Intra-Agent Group’s Related Indicators of their Multilingual Profiles

Thus far we compared the agent groups (student, parent and teacher) with each other as a whole group or as a sub-group by private or public school association (section 3.2) using a one way Anova with a Bonferroni correction; then, we compared the whether within each agent-group separately (section 3.3) there was a difference between those associate with private or public school (i.e., whether students in private schools were different to their counterparts in public schools) using an independent t-test and a Bonferroni correction. This section is meant to explore which of the multilingual characterizing indicators in each agent group (irrespective of school type association) is related to another of the indicators. This analysis provides a n even more in depth characterization not only between agency group or between educational context driven by the school type, but rather by the multilingual features that have been assessed so far as part of what constitutes a multilingual individual. In what follows, a Spearman correlation of the multilingual indicators was performed for each agent group (irrespective of school association) to extract the “fabric” of what makes a specific agent of multilingualism in Oromia.

4.4.1 Student-agency

Table 13a: Spearman Correlation Summary of the variables within the entire student agent group

Category	Correlation Coefficient (r)	Significance (p-value)
Intimate & Formal English	0.602	<.001
Intimate & Entertainment English	0.719	<.001
Formal Amharic & Entertainment Amharic	0.845	<.001
Formal Amharic & Business Amharic	0.829	<.001
Business Afan Oromo & Entertainment Afan Oromo	0.976	<.001
Business Afan Oromo & Sustainability Afan Oromo	0.817	<.001
General English Proficiency & Can-do English Proficiency	0.616	<.001
Can-do Amharic & Can-do Afan Oromo	0.514	<.001
Can-do English & Intimate Amharic	-0.247	.026
Can-do English & Formal Amharic	-0.427	<.001
MPQ Cultural Empathy & Attitude mono (con)	-0.294	.008
MPQ Open-mindedness & Formal Amharic	-0.243	.029
MPQ Open-mindedness & Entertainment Amharic	-0.24	.031
Sustainability Afan Oromo & Business Afan Oromo	0.817	<.001
Sustainability English & Entertainment English	0.818	<.001
Sustainability English & Formal English	0.832	<.001

The results, as presented in Table 13a, reveal several statistically significant associations ($p < .05$), with correlation coefficients ranging from moderate to very strong. A particularly strong positive correlation was found between Business Afan Oromo and Entertainment Afan Oromo ($r = .976, p < .001$), suggesting a high degree of overlap in proficiency or usage of Afan Oromo for these purposes by the student agents. Similarly, Formal Amharic and Entertainment Amharic ($r = .845, p < .001$) and Formal Amharic and Business Amharic ($r = .829, p < .001$) also showed strong positive correlations. The significant associations among these language categories indicate that the use in one context may strongly correspond with use of that language in another context. Sustainability English was positively correlated with both Entertainment English ($r = .818, p < .001$) and Formal English ($r = .832, p < .001$), while Sustainability Afan Oromo and Business Afan Oromo were also significantly correlated ($r = .817, p < .001$). These findings imply that sustainability discourse may be closely related to both formal and entertainment registers within a given language. Additionally, General English Proficiency and Can-do English Proficiency were positively correlated ($r = .616, p < .001$), reflecting a moderate relationship between subjective self-reported assessments of language proficiency. Likewise, Can-do Amharic and Can-do Afan Oromo were positively correlated ($r = .514, p < .001$), suggesting a link between self-perceived proficiency across these two languages.

In contrast, negative correlations were observed in some cases, particularly between Can-do English and Formal Amharic ($r = -0.427, p < .001$) and Can-do English and Intimate Amharic ($r = -0.247, p = .026$). These findings suggest that higher proficiency assessment of what one Can-Do with these languages as subjectively self-assessed for English may be associated with lower perceived proficiency in abilities in the use as opposed as subjective perceived ability in Amharic.

Moreover, the measures of the MPQ (Multicultural and multilingual Personality traits Questionnaire), also demonstrated significant relationships with attitude towards mono/multilingualism, language use. For example, Cultural Empathy was negatively correlated with unfavorable attitude towards monolingualism (Con) ($r = -0.294, p = .008$), indicating that more cultural empathy is associated with more favorable attitudes toward monolingualism (Pro). Additionally, Open-mindedness was negatively correlated with both Formal Amharic ($r = -0.243, p = .029$) and Entertainment Amharic ($r = -0.240, p = .031$), suggesting that higher openness may be linked to lower formal and entertainment Amharic usage. Overall, these results highlight the intricate relationships between language use, self-reported proficiency, attitudes, and multilingual and multicultural personality traits.

4.4.2 Parent- agency

Table 13b: Spearman Correlation Summary of the variables within the entire parent agent group

Categories	Correlation Coefficient (r)	Significance (p-value)
Intimate & Formal English	0.602	<.001
Intimate & Entertainment English	0.719	<.001
Formal Amharic & Entertainment Amharic	0.845	<.001
Formal Amharic & Business Amharic	0.829	<.001
Business Afan Oromo & Entertainment Afan Oromo	0.976	<.001
Business Afan Oromo & Sustainability Afan Oromo	0.817	<.001
General English Proficiency & CAN-DO English	0.616	<.001
CAN-DO Amharic & CAN-DO Afan Oromo	0.514	<.001
CAN-DO English & Intimate Amharic	-0.247	0.026
CAN-DO English & Formal Amharic	-0.427	<.001
MPQ Cultural Empathy & Attitude mono (con)	-0.294	0.008
MPQ Open-mindedness & Formal Amharic	-0.243	0.029
MPQ Open-mindedness & Entertainment Amharic	-0.24	0.031
Sustainability Afan Oromo & Business Afan Oromo	0.817	<.001
Sustainability English & Entertainment English	0.818	<.001
Sustainability English & Formal English	0.832	<.001

The results of the Spearman correlation analyses reveal several significant relationships among language use, proficiency, attitude towards mono/multilingualism and personality traits , as summarized in Table 13b. Significant positive correlations were observed between the different language uses as for example Intimate English usage was strongly correlated with both Formal English ($r = .602, p < .001$) and Entertainment English ($r = .719, p < .001$), suggesting that individuals who frequently use English in with intimate interlocutors are also more likely to use it with formal interlocutor circles and for entertainment purposes. Similarly, strong correlations were found between Formal Amharic and its use for Entertainment ($r = .845, p < .001$) and Business ($r = .829, p < .001$) purposes, indicating a broad functional role of Amharic across formal and professional settings. Additionally, language use in Afan Oromo exhibited robust associations across various domains. Business Afan Oromo showed a very strong correlation with its use for Entertainment ($r = .976, p < .001$) and Sustainability ($r = .817, p < .001$) purposes, suggesting that the language plays a key role in both professional and daily routine communication. Afan Oromo for Sustainability was significantly correlated with Afan Oromo for Business ($r = .817, p < .001$), highlighting the interconnectedness between language use for daily sustainability and business in Afan Oromo. Similarly, Sustainability English was highly correlated with both Entertainment English ($r = .818, p < .001$) and Formal English ($r = .832,$

$p < .001$), suggesting that the use of English for sustainability purposes spans across both professional and recreational needs.

As for proficiency self-assessment, General English proficiency demonstrated a significant positive relationship with Can-do English self-assessment ($r = .616$, $p < .001$), implying that individuals who perceive themselves as proficient in English also report higher confidence in their ability to use English functionally. Likewise, a significant positive correlation was observed between Can-do Amharic and Can-do Afan Oromo ($r = .514$, $p < .001$), suggesting that individuals with higher self-reported functional ability in one of the national languages tend to report similar abilities in another. However, some notable negative correlations were found. Can-do English proficiency was negatively correlated with Intimate Amharic use ($r = -0.247$, $p = .026$) and Formal Amharic use ($r = -0.427$, $p < .001$), indicating that individuals with higher self-reported English proficiency may rely less on Amharic in both personal and formal interlocutors.

The Multilingual and Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (MPQ) measures revealed significant relationships with language attitudes. Cultural Empathy was negatively correlated with a negative attitude toward monolingualism (con) ($r = -0.294$, $p = .008$), suggesting that individuals with higher cultural empathy are less likely to hold negative attitudes toward multilingualism. Similarly, Open-Mindedness was negatively correlated with Formal Amharic use ($r = -0.243$, $p = .029$) and Amharic use for Entertainment purposes ($r = -0.240$, $p = .031$), indicating that individuals who are more open to cultural diversity may use Amharic less frequently in these domains.

Overall, the results highlight the significant positive correlations between language use across different domains suggesting that individuals who use a language in one context are likely to use it in others. Additionally, proficiency levels influence self-perceived functional abilities, with English proficiency negatively associated with Amharic use.

4.4.3 Teacher-agency

Table 13c – in appendices

A Spearman correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationships among the different multilingual characterizing indicators within the teacher agent group. The results indicate several significant correlations across the indicators as presented in table 13c above. A significantly strong positive correlation was found between Formal Afan Oromo and Intimate Afan Oromo ($r=.974, p=.001$ $r = .974$, $p = .001$), suggesting a predominant use of Afan Oromo with different interlocutors. Similarly, Afan Oromo for Entertainment purposes and Intimate Afan Oromo showed a nearly

perfect positive correlation ($r=.981, p=.001$), as it did with Formal Afan Oromo ($r=.993, p=.001$), indicating a strong association between the extensive use not only with interlocutors but also for entertainment purposes. Conversely, Formal Amharic and Formal Afan Oromo demonstrated a significant negative correlation ($r=-.456, p=.003$), suggesting that higher usage of one formal language might correspond with lower usage of the other. In a similar manner, Formal Amharic and Formal English were negatively correlated ($r=-.421, p=.007$), implying potential linguistic preferences or trade-offs in formal language usage.

The use of different language for Entertainment purposes showed meaningful relationships. For example, Amharic for Entertainment purposes and Formal Amharic were significantly correlated ($r=.737, p=.001$), as were Amharic for Entertainment purposes and Formal English ($r=.410, p=.009$), suggesting that entertainment-based language use in Amharic is linked to formal proficiency in both Amharic and English. Similarly, the use of English for Entertainment purposes was positively associated with Formal English ($r=.615, p=.001$) and with Amharic for Entertainment purposes ($r=.577, p=.001$). Moreover, strong positive correlations were observed between Business Amharic with Formal Amharic ($r=.807, p=.001$) and Business English with Formal English ($r=.840, p=.001$). These findings indicate that language usage for business purposes is closely tied to formal proficiency in the same language.

Regarding multilingual and multicultural personality traits, a strong correlation was observed between Open-Mindedness and Flexibility ($r=.820, p=.001$), suggesting that individuals who exhibit higher levels of open-mindedness also tend to demonstrate greater flexibility especially in what concerns language diversity. Similarly, Emotional Stability was positively correlated with Flexibility ($r=.580, p=.001$), indicating that individuals with a high emotional stability may also be more adaptable. Further, Social Initiative was positively correlated with both Open-Mindedness ($r=.449, p=.004$) and Flexibility ($r=.339, p=.032$), implying that those who are more socially proactive also tend to be more open-minded and flexible in multicultural settings.

To sum, the results indicate strong associations within different language uses with interlocutors and for different purposes (formal, intimate, entertainment, business) within the same language. Negative correlations between certain formal language use suggest potential shifts in language preference among bilingual or multilingual individuals. Additionally, the findings reinforce the idea that key multicultural personality traits, such as open-mindedness and flexibility, are closely linked.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

This chapter presents an in-depth analysis of how school agents—students, parents, and teachers—perceive and practice multilingualism, with attention to distinctions between public and private schools. The findings are situated within the context of existing research to identify points of convergence, divergence, and potential explanations. The chapter also discusses theoretical implications, practical applications, and areas for future inquiry. It is organized into three main components: a comprehensive profiling of the different multilingual agent groups, a comparison of these groups, and an exploration of the multifaceted network of multilingualism-related indicators characterizing each group.

The chapter opens with a brief summary of the key findings (see Appendix A, B, c), which are then expanded upon in each section. Section 5.1 addresses the general profile of the agent groups, both as a collective and in relation to school type. Section 5.2 examines differences across agent groups, first treating them as a unified whole (5.2.1), and then analyzing variations by school type (5.2.2). Finally, Section 5.3 explores specific multilingualism indicators, focusing on correlations within each agent group considered independently.

5.1 Profiles agency indicators of the entire agent group and of the school-related sub-grouping

This study explored the profiles of multilingual agencies in educational contexts in Oromia, Ethiopia. It has three main objectives. The first objective aims to analyze each agent group comprehensively, examining their demographic characteristics, language usage patterns across various interlocutor contexts and purposes, self-assessed language abilities and skills, attitudes toward monolingualism and multilingualism, and personality traits associated with multilingualism. Secondly, it seeks to determine whether these profiles differ between agents in public and private schools. Lastly, the study aims to identify relationships among profile features to uncover factors that may contribute to the successful practice and maintenance of multilingualism among the people of Oromia.

To begin with the comprehensive profiling of multilingual agents exhibit the following entire points: i) There is significant multilingualism across different participant groups (students, teachers, and parents) of the school environments in which many languages (i.e. Afan Oromo, Amharic, English, Tigrigna and Guragigna) played great role; ii. The profiles of the participants highlight that they are proficient (multilingual proficiency) in more than two languages where Afan Oromo and Amharic dominate; iii) It is also found that the profile of the multilingual participants could be characterized by various approaches of language choice and

use; iv) Participants hold positive attitudes towards multilingualism and negative attitudes towards monolingualism; v) There is also marginalization of minority languages; and vi) Participants' group based variation in MPQ was also portrayed throughout the study. To begin with the first, the high prevalence of multilingualism among participants, particularly students and teachers, emphasizes key aspects of modern linguistic studies and educational practices. One notable aspect is the emergence of multilingualism as a standard. The findings reveal that most participants, especially within the student and teacher groups, speak three or more languages, which provides numerous cognitive and social advantages. Bialystok (2011) suggests that multilingual individuals often demonstrate enhanced cognitive flexibility, improved executive functioning, and heightened cultural awareness, all of which are beneficial in both educational and social settings.

The second objective concerns the multilingual proficiency in which the Can-Do results shed light on participants' self-perceived ability to perform specific language-related tasks. High Can-Do scores for Afan Oromo and Amharic among students, teachers, and parents indicate that these languages are not only well understood but also actively used in various practical and social contexts. Vygotsky (1978) emphasizes the importance of social interaction and practical application in language development. In contrast, lower Can-Do scores for other languages suggest that these languages are less frequently used in everyday activities, which may contribute to reduced proficiency. This limited functional use highlights a gap between language knowledge and practical application—a distinction that Cummins (2000) identifies as crucial for understanding bilingual proficiency. Cummins explains that cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) tends to be more developed in dominant languages due to their use in formal education, while basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS) vary depending on the role a language plays within community and family settings.

The third objective refers to the language choice and use which depicted valuable insights into how language choices are influenced by the context of communication, ranging from intimate to formal settings. The findings reveal a consistent pattern where Afan Oromo dominates across all groups—students, teachers, and parents—in both personal and formal interactions. This prevalence suggests that Afan Oromo functions as a primary language within these communities, supporting communication in diverse contexts. The increased use of Amharic in formal settings, particularly among parents and teachers, reflects a sociolinguistic trend where a more standardized or socially prestigious language is preferred in professional and formal scenarios. Previously, Amharic was used to be considered as kings' language throughout different ruling systems of the country. Additionally, the findings highlight significant variations in language use based on purpose. Afan Oromo remains the dominant language across all contexts, especially

in entertainment and business, underscoring its versatility as a widely accepted medium for both leisure and professional interactions. However, the notable use of Amharic in formal business contexts emphasizes its role as a complementary language, serving specialized or formal purposes alongside Afan Oromo, because it has been the language that priority was given in the past as a city and business language.

The fourth objective of the study focuses on attitudes and it reveals a strong and consistent preference for multilingualism across all groups. Bialystok (2011) has shown that multilingual individuals often demonstrate enhanced executive function, greater cognitive flexibility, and superior problem-solving abilities compared to monolinguals. The widespread support for multilingualism among students, teachers, and parents reflects an awareness of these benefits, which are especially relevant in an increasingly globalized world where effective cross-cultural communication and collaboration are essential. It also shows that the community well understood the nature of the country that being multilingual helps them more to understand and live peacefully and collectively. Conversely, the study also highlights a notable rejection of monolingualism, with the majority of participants expressing unfavorable attitudes toward it. This sentiment underscores a growing recognition of the limitations of monolingualism, particularly in diverse and interconnected societies. Monolingualism is often associated with reduced access to broader cultural experiences and limited cognitive adaptability (Adesope et al., 2010). The strong opposition to monolingualism across all groups suggests a societal shift in values, where reliance on a single language is increasingly viewed as a disadvantage rather than the norm.

The fifth objective pertains to proficiency showing the notably lower proficiency in Tigrigna and Guragigna underscores the challenges minority languages face in maintaining their relevance within educational contexts. Minority languages are often marginalized in educational policies, leading to their gradual decline as more dominant languages take precedence (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000). The low scores in these languages, particularly among students, point to limited opportunities for exposure and usage in both formal and informal settings. This trend is particularly concerning as it mirrors the global phenomenon of language shift, where younger generations increasingly abandon their heritage languages in favor of those perceived as offering greater social and economic advantages (Romaine, 2006). The significant variability in proficiency levels, as evidenced by large standard deviations, suggests that even within communities where these languages are spoken, fluency is unevenly distributed. This inconsistency is likely driven by disparities in exposure, support, and opportunities for consistent language use.

Finally, the MPQ results reveal significant differences between public and private school participants, shedding light on the impact of social interaction and

cultural context on cognitive and emotional development. Public school students scored higher in cultural empathy and open-mindedness, reflecting the influence of diverse environments that promote interaction with peers from varied cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Vygotsky (1978) stated that social interaction is central to cognitive development. Exposure to diversity fosters inclusivity and prepares students for a globalized world (Banks, 2013). In contrast, the variability in private school scores suggests that private schools often prioritize academic excellence over cultural pluralism, potentially limiting students' engagement with diverse perspectives. Among public school teachers, the observed low emotional stability shows the influence of systemic factors such as institutional support and classroom demands (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Challenges like larger class sizes, resource limitations, and diverse student needs often contribute to stress and reduced emotional stability in public school settings (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). However, the high open-mindedness among public school teachers suggests that multicultural teaching environments encourage cultural responsiveness (Gay, 2010). Ladson-Billings (1995) further supports this by emphasizing that educators in diverse contexts develop culturally relevant pedagogues, cultivating openness as a professional trait. Public school parents also scored highly in cultural empathy and open-mindedness, reflecting the intergenerational transmission of multicultural values (Grusec & Goodnow, 1994). Engaging with diverse school communities likely encourages parents to adopt and reinforce these values, creating a positive feedback loop. On the other hand, the moderate scores and variability among private school parents depicts that private schools often draw from more homogeneous cultural and socioeconomic groups, which may limit exposure to diversity (Coleman and Hoffer, 1987). The variability within this group could be attributed to differing levels of engagement with multicultural initiatives or community interactions. Overall, the higher scores observed across all public school agent groups posits that exposure to diverse cultural contexts fosters a progression from ethno-centric to ethno-relative perspectives (Bennett, 1993). Public schools, with their inclusive policies and culturally diverse populations, provide ideal conditions for cultivating such traits. Environments with greater cultural variability naturally encourage open-mindedness and empathy as individuals navigate and adapt to differences (Hofstede, 2001).

5.2 The Comparison of the Multilingual agent groups

5.2.1 Comparisons across entire agent groups

The findings of the study among students, parents, and teachers from both private and public schools reveal significant patterns in intra-language correlations, cross-language dynamics, multicultural competencies, and cultural implications. The

strong intra-language correlations, particularly in Afan Oromo, indicate that proficiency in one communicative domain (e.g., intimate, formal, or business) predicts similar proficiency in another. Linguistic skills are not isolated but develop cohesively across different functional contexts (Canale & Swain, 1980). According to Bachman and Palmer (1996), communicative competence consists of grammatical, sociolinguistic, and strategic competencies that work together across settings. The strong correlations within Afan Oromo suggest that speakers transfer and apply linguistic skills seamlessly between different domains, reinforcing the cohesion of language use in diverse social, educational, and professional settings. The evidence of interdependence between languages shows the cognitive and functional benefits of bilingualism and multilingualism. Proficiency in one language can transfer to another, particularly when the languages share conceptual or contextual frameworks (Cummins, 1979). The students, parents, and teachers demonstrated shared themes across languages, indicating a dynamic interplay of linguistic skills. Multilingual speakers often develop metalinguistic awareness, allowing them to navigate different linguistic systems effectively (Bialystok, 2001). Additionally, the observed cross-language relationships suggest that exposure to multiple languages enhances cognitive flexibility and problem-solving skills (Bialystok et.al., 2012). Multilingual individuals develop domain-specific competencies that enhance their ability to adapt across linguistic and cultural boundaries (Grosjean, 2010).

The strong correlation between linguistic proficiency and language attitudes emphasizes the role of affective factors in language learning and use. Gardner (1985) suggests that motivation and attitudes toward a language significantly impact proficiency. The study's findings indicate that individuals with positive attitudes toward multilingualism and cross-cultural communication are more proficient across languages, demonstrating the interplay between language attitudes and proficiency in diverse linguistic environments (Dewaele, 2017). The study also highlights the role of empathy in diverse communication settings, underscoring adaptability in handling complex global themes. The concept of cultural empathy, a core dimension of the Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (MPQ), has been found to facilitate effective communication and deeper cross-cultural understanding (Van der Zee et.al., 2013). The positive correlations observed between linguistic proficiency and multicultural personality traits suggest that multilingual individuals possess higher levels of cultural empathy, which enhances their ability to navigate intercultural interactions. Individuals with greater cultural empathy exhibit better language learning outcomes and cross-cultural adaptability (MacIntyre & Dewaele, 2014). Furthermore, the study underlines the importance of contextual usage-such as business or sustainability contexts- in shaping language proficiency and intercultural understanding. Language proficiency is not only shaped by formal instruction but

also by exposure to real-world communicative contexts (Byram, 1997), and knowledge acquisition is deeply influenced by social and environmental contexts (Lave & Wenger, 1991). The strong correlation between language proficiency and business-related themes suggests that economic engagement fosters language acquisition. Individuals engaged in professional multilingual environments develop higher levels of pragmatic competence and cross-linguistic skills (Taguchi, 2015). Similarly, the significance of sustainability themes in shaping language proficiency underscores the role of thematic exposure in language learning in which immersion in domain-specific content enhances linguistic and cognitive abilities (Marsh, 2002).

5.2.2 Comparison of agent group associated with private or public schools

It was also apparent that the comparative correlation analysis between students, parents, and teachers from public and private schools depicts significant variations in language use, proficiency, attitudes, and multicultural personality traits. The observed variations in language use between public and private school students could be associated with language exposure and proficiency (Bialystok, 2017). The stronger correlations for “Formal Afan Oromo” in private schools indicate a structured language learning approach that emphasizes formal settings, whereas the relatively lower correlation in public schools suggests a more varied linguistic experience, potentially due to limited instructional reinforcement (Baker & Wright, 2021). For Amharic and English, the lower correlations in formal contexts for public school students could be linked to reduced exposure to these languages in structured settings compared to their private school counterparts (Dearden, 2014). The weak or non-significant correlation for “Intimate English” in public schools but its presence in private schools indicates that English is more integrated into informal settings among private school students, likely due to curriculum emphasis and extracurricular exposure (Crystal, 2012).

Moreover, language attitudes influence acquisition, motivation, and use (Gardner, 1985). The study found that significant differences in language attitudes were more pronounced in private school students, particularly regarding multilingualism. Students from private schools, which often have stronger multilingual programs, demonstrate a more positive outlook toward multilingualism (Lasagabaster, 2017). Meanwhile, the weaker attitudes toward monolingualism in public schools strengthen that monolingual ideologies are often reinforced in environments with limited multilingual exposure (MacIntyre & Dewaele, 2014). Besides, the strong correlation of Afan Oromo in entertainment and business contexts across both school types suggests its cultural and economic significance. The greater variability in Amharic and English use for these purposes could be attributed to different levels of language prestige and necessity in formal economic settings (Ferguson, 2006). While local languages maintain high cultural value,

languages like Amharic and English gain prominence in commercial and globalized environments, which may explain their higher usage in private school settings (Phillipson, 2009). Likewise, the study's findings on the Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (MPQ) highlight the impact of educational environments on personality traits linked to cross-cultural adaptation. Public school students demonstrated stronger correlations for Cultural Empathy and Open-Mindedness, which suggests that exposure to a diverse linguistic and cultural background fosters adaptability (Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2013). The stronger significance levels for MPQ Social Initiative and Emotional Stability in public schools reflect the need for students in these environments to develop resilience and social adaptability, as opposed to private school students who have more structured and homogeneous academic experiences (Dewaele & Li, 2012). The greater variability in MPQ Flexibility across groups further underscores the influence of institutional settings on personality development. The significant difference in MPQ Social Initiative, where public school students showed a negative correlation and private school students displayed a positive and significant correlation emphasize the role of structured environments in fostering leadership and proactive social engagement (Bücker et al., 2016).

5.3 The Multifaceted Network of Multilingual Characterizing indicators of Each Agent Group

The study also aimed at exploring the relationships among various features of multilingualism agents within the Oromia agency context. Specifically, it sought to determine whether certain linguistic and attitudinal traits among pupils, parents, and teachers could predict similar traits in another group. The findings of the study indicate statistically significant differences among students, parents, and teachers in their general language proficiency across Afan Oromo, Amharic, and English. The pronounced variations, especially in English suggest a differential exposure and functional use of these languages among the groups (Ellis, 2008). The Can-Do measures further corroborate these findings, with English proficiency again showing the most substantial variation. The significance of these results underscores the uneven linguistic competence levels among different agents, likely attributable to educational backgrounds, occupational demands, and exposure to multilingual environments (Grosjean, 2010). Besides, attitudinal variations were analyzed to assess differences in perceptions of monolingualism and multilingualism. Although the findings indicate minor differences in attitudes, these differences were not statistically significant. Positive attitudes toward monolingualism were generally low while negative attitudes toward monolingualism were slightly more pronounced but still non-significant. In contrast, positive attitudes toward multilingualism were high across all groups suggesting a strong cultural inclination toward linguistic

diversity (Baker, 2011). The non-significance of these differences imply that multilingualism is widely accepted across the Oromia agency, reducing potential attitudinal divergences. Likewise, the findings revealed significant group differences across multiple dimensions of the Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (MPQ). Cultural empathy and open-mindedness were highest among students, indicating a stronger adaptability to multicultural settings (Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2000). Social initiative and emotional stability demonstrated the largest differences, with students exhibiting the highest levels and teachers the lowest. This pattern suggests that younger individuals, especially students, are more receptive to cultural diversity and social engagement, while teachers exhibit comparatively lower levels of social initiative and emotional resilience (Hofstede, 2001). Flexibility also showed significant differences reinforcing the idea that adaptability varies significantly among these groups.

Additionally, significant differences in language use across various interlocutors and contexts were observed. The analysis of language use in intimate and formal settings depicted distinct patterns among agent groups. Statistically significant differences were found in intimate Afan Oromo, intimate Amharic, and intimate English. Similarly, formal contexts of Afan Oromo and English showed notable differences, with students using Afan Oromo more in intimate settings, while parents led in formal Amharic use. The non-significance in formal Amharic suggests a consistent linguistic norm across groups (Fishman, 1991). Furthermore, language use for different purposes revealed significant differences in specific contexts such as Entertainment Afan Oromo and Business English. The higher engagement with Afan Oromo in entertainment shows its dominant cultural presence, while English's use in business suggests its perceived economic and professional utility (Crystal, 2003). The lack of significant differences in Sustainability Amharic indicates a relatively balanced linguistic function in this domain.

Moreover, the study revealed significant insights into language proficiency, use, attitudes and MPQ among different agent groups in public and private schools. The statistical results provide a detailed understanding of the variations across students, parents, and teachers in their respective school settings. The results indicate that general proficiency levels in Afan Oromo, Amharic, and English were relatively high across all groups. This depicts the role of exposure and contextual immersion in language proficiency (Cummins, 2000). The strong proficiency in English, particularly among teachers, is reflective of global trends where English serves as the dominant language in education and professional communication (Crystal, 2003). In the Can-Do proficiency self-assessments, English exhibited the highest variability, with a moderate-to-large effect size. The higher variability in self-assessed English proficiency suggests that different groups have distinct levels of engagement with the language, potentially influenced by their educational

background and daily usage (Bachman & Palmer, 1996). The stronger self-assessed proficiency among teachers compared to students and parents suggests greater formal instruction and pedagogical exposure (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Besides, the predominance of Afan Oromo in intimate and formal settings underscores the significance of first languages in personal and professional interactions (Fishman, 1991). The findings also show the sociolinguistic functions of Amharic and English, with Amharic demonstrating high variability in intimate settings and English being more prominent in formal domains. The significant differences in Amharic and English usage depicts that language choice is heavily influenced by sociocultural and institutional factors (García & Lin, 2017). The role of English as a secondary language in formal contexts resonates with studies on linguistic capital (Bourdieu, 1991), where English functions as a gatekeeping mechanism in education and employment. The limited use of English in intimate settings further reinforces its status as a formal or academic language rather than a primary medium for familial or social interactions. For language use by purpose, Afan Oromo was dominant across entertainment, sustainability, and business, demonstrating its strong community and cultural significance. Amharic was more variable, with significant differences noted across all purposes. English, though secondary in most domains, showed significant group differences emphasizing its functional role in economic and global contexts (Phillipson, 1992).

The attitude towards multilingualism analysis revealed strong rejection of monolingualism and high support for multilingualism advocating for multilingual education (Grosjean, 2010; Cenoz & Gorter, 2015). The lack of significant group differences in language attitudes suggests a general consensus across public and private schools regarding the benefits of multilingualism (Bialystok, 2017). The minimal negative attitudes toward multilingualism further validate the widespread acceptance of multilingualism in educational and social contexts. The small effect sizes indicate that factors such as school type and role (student, parent, teacher) do not significantly influence attitudes, which shows that multilingualism is perceived as an essential skill in contemporary society (Hornberger, 2002). Overall, the findings emphasize the complex interplay between language proficiency, use, attitudes and multilingual personality traits. The significant differences in proficiency across groups indicate variations in exposure, formal instruction, and practical application. The distinct language preferences across contexts suggest that sociocultural and institutional factors shape language use. Finally, the overwhelmingly positive attitudes toward multilingualism reinforce its perceived value in education and society.

In all, the findings indicate that there are notable differences in multilingual characteristics and multicultural personality traits among the agent groups (students, teachers, and parents) and that school type (public versus private) plays a meaningful

role in these differences. Students in public schools demonstrate higher overall multilingual and multicultural personality scores, particularly in cultural empathy and open-mindedness, suggesting that public school environments may provide richer sociocultural exposure. Teachers, despite exhibiting higher language proficiency across all three languages (Afan Oromo, Amharic, and English), show lower emotional stability, particularly in public schools, pointing to the potential need for targeted emotional support and professional development. Differences are also evident in language use patterns: private school students are more engaged in English and Amharic for business and entertainment purposes, whereas public school students report stronger Afan Oromo use in daily interactions. Parents in public schools tend to have higher cultural empathy and open-mindedness scores than their private school counterparts, which may reflect their children's engagement with more diverse communities. Overall, the results suggest that school type influences not only language use and proficiency but also broader multicultural adaptability and personality traits, highlighting the complex interaction between educational context and multilingual competence.

Moreover, the findings reflect that the population of Oromia exhibits a deeply rooted multilingual reality, characterized by a dynamic interplay between dominant and marginalized languages, social stratification, and educational influences. The high rates of multilingualism reported across students, teachers, and parents suggest that multilingualism is not only a functional necessity in Oromia but also a social and cultural norm. Afan Oromo and Amharic emerge as the dominant languages, with English gaining importance in educational and professional contexts, particularly in private schools. The widespread use of multiple languages across different social and educational contexts indicates that the people of Oromia have adapted to and integrated multilingual practices into their everyday lives.

However, the findings also highlight structural differences tied to school type, which reflect broader socioeconomic and educational disparities. Public school participants demonstrate stronger multilingual and multicultural adaptability, suggesting that public schools in Oromia may foster more diverse linguistic and cultural interactions, possibly due to their greater accessibility and exposure to a wider range of social and linguistic backgrounds. Private school participants, on the other hand, show higher engagement with English and Amharic, which reflects a more elite, urban, and globally oriented linguistic environment. This division reflects broader patterns of social stratification, where economic and educational privilege align with language use and proficiency in certain high-status languages like English.

The limited and inconsistent use of marginalized languages like Tigrinya and Guragigna suggests that while multilingualism is widespread, the linguistic landscape is stratified. Afan Oromo and Amharic dominate communication and

proficiency, while other regional languages are less central to daily life, pointing to possible language shift and uneven language maintenance. The positive attitudes toward multilingualism across all agent groups, regardless of school type, reflect a strong societal acceptance of linguistic diversity, which contrasts with the low support for monolingualism. This suggests that the people of Oromia recognize the social and economic benefits of multilingualism and value its role in social mobility and cultural identity.

Overall, the findings depict Oromia as a complex multilingual society where dominant languages reflect both historical and political influences, and where the educational system serves as a key site for shaping language use, proficiency, and attitudes. The differences between public and private school participants highlight how access to different educational and social opportunities shapes the multilingual profiles of individuals, reinforcing the role of schooling and socioeconomic background in sustaining or transforming linguistic diversity.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

This section presents the conclusion of the study. The study aimed to examine the multilingualism and multiculturalism profile among 12th grade students, their parents, and teachers in both public and private schools in Ambo town, Oromia, Ethiopia. The study was guided by five basic research questions, and the data were collected by different forms of questionnaires. Accordingly, the findings of the study provides a comprehensive profiling of multilingualism agents in educational contexts in Oromia, Ethiopia, depicting the significant multilingual abilities, language use patterns, attitudes, and personality traits of students, teachers, and parents.

The findings underscore the widespread prevalence of multilingualism, with most participants proficient in multiple languages, particularly Afan Oromo and Amharic. These languages serve as dominant linguistic mediums in both formal and informal settings, reflecting their sociocultural and economic significance. The study reveals the complex dynamics of language choice, where Afan Oromo is widely used across various contexts, while Amharic plays a complementary role, particularly in formal and business interactions. English, on the other hand, maintains prominence in professional domain. Despite the strong presence of these languages, the marginalization of minority languages such as Tigrigna and Guragigna raises concerns about linguistic inclusivity, echoing broader global discussions on language shift and maintenance. These findings emphasize the necessity of educational policies that foster the preservation and equitable treatment of all languages.

Attitude towards multilingualism analysis suggests a strong consensus in favor of multilingualism, with participants overwhelmingly rejecting monolingualism. The study portrays the cognitive, social, and cultural benefits of being multilingual, reinforcing its perceived value in both educational and social contexts. Additionally, language attitudes are shown to significantly influence language acquisition, with positive perceptions of multilingualism correlating with higher proficiency levels.

The study also identifies a strong link between language proficiency and multicultural personality traits, particularly cultural empathy and open-mindedness. This connection is further reflected in variations in the Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (MPQ) scores, demonstrating how educational environments shape cultural adaptability. Public school students exhibit higher cultural empathy and open-mindedness due to their diverse social interactions, whereas private school students show variability influenced by structured language instruction and institutional settings. Comparative analysis of students, parents, and teachers in

public and private schools further illustrates distinct patterns in language use and attitudes, reinforcing the role of exposure, educational background, and occupational demands in shaping linguistic experiences. Moreover, the study spotlight the sociocultural and economic importance of Afan Oromo, Amharic, and English in business and entertainment contexts. The observed sociolinguistic hierarchy--where Afan Oromo dominates intimate and cultural domains, Amharic exhibits variability in social interactions, and English remains central to formal and economic settings--aligns with broader linguistic capital theories, suggesting that language choice is shaped by sociocultural and institutional factors.

Overall, this study underscores the complex interplay between language proficiency, sociocultural exposure, and personality development in multilingual settings. The findings advocate for educational policies that promote multilingual competence, cultural empathy, and adaptive communication skills, ensuring that learners are well-equipped to navigate diverse linguistic and cultural landscapes i.e. enhancing teacher training in multilingual pedagogy, developing curricula that reflect linguistic diversity, improving instructional material including technological resources, encouraging community involvement in language planning decisions and (re)articulating a multilingual language policy.

Addressing disparities in language use, attitudes, and personality traits requires targeted interventions, particularly in teacher training and language policy, to ensure that all languages and cultural identities are valued within Ethiopia's multilingual landscape. Future research could explore longitudinal trends in multilingualism, the evolving role of global languages in different educational and social contexts, and the impact of digital globalization on language use patterns. By fostering inclusive linguistic policies and culturally responsive teaching, stakeholders can contribute to a more equitable and sustainable multilingual environment.

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APPENDICES

Tables

Table 1: The Evolution of Multilingualism Definitions

Period	Scholar(s)	Definition/Contribution	Perspective
1950s	Weinreich (1953)	"The practice of alternately using two or more languages."	Structuralist, Functionalist
	Haugen (1956)	"The ability to understand and speak two languages perfectly."	Structuralist, Functionalist
1960s	Macnamara (1967)	Introduced the idea that even minimal competence in another language qualifies as multilingualism.	Psycholinguistic
1980s	Grosjean (1982)	"Multilinguals are not the sum of two or more monolinguals but possess a unique linguistic configuration."	Psycholinguistic
1990s	Cook (1992)	Introduced <i>multicompetence</i> : "The knowledge of more than one language creates a unique cognitive system."	Cognitive
	Edwards (1994)	Defined multilingualism as the coexistence of multiple languages within a society.	Sociolinguistic
2000s	De Bot (2004)	Multilingualism is a dynamic cognitive process influenced by neurological and social factors.	Cognitive, Dynamic
	Jessner (2006)	Developed the <i>Dynamic Model of Multilingualism</i> (DMM), emphasizing the interactive and adaptive nature of multilingual competence.	Dynamic, Cognitive
	Lanza (2007)	Focused on how multilingualism operates in family and social settings.	Sociolinguistic
2010s	García (2009)	Developed the concept of <i>translanguaging</i> : "Multilingualism is not the sum of two or more languages but the integration of diverse language practices."	Translanguaging, Sociocultural
	Dewaele (2010)	Defined multilingualism as an emotional and social resource.	Emotional, Psychological
	Cenoz & Gorter (2011)	Emphasized context-based competence: "Proficiency varies depending on communicative needs and settings."	Contextual, Communicative
	Canagarajah (2013)	Developed <i>translingual practice</i> : The ability to creatively navigate linguistic resources across contexts.	Translanguaging, Sociocultural
	Li Wei (2018)	Expanded the concept of translanguaging as a flexible and strategic communication practice.	Translanguaging, Sociocultural
	De Houwer (1995)	Defined multilingualism as the use of more than one language in everyday life, especially in family and societal contexts.	Family, Social
2015+	Stavans & Hoffmann (2015)	Defined multilingualism as the strategic and purposeful use of multiple languages to achieve communicative, social, and cognitive goals.	Strategic, Cognitive, Sociocultural

Table 6a: Average percent of agent participants who use each language for communication purposes with (intimate and formal) interlocutors by each school and by both combined

Agent	School Type	Afan Oromo		Amharic		Tigrigna		Guragigna		English	
		\bar{x}	SD	\bar{x}	SD	\bar{x}	SD	\bar{x}	SD	\bar{x}	SD
Intimate											
Student	Private	87.80	31.68	87.20	31.19	4.27	16.68	6.71	24.38	35.37	39.12
	Public	84.62	36.55	41.67	48.10	5.13	22.35	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Both	86.25	33.96	65.00	46.15	4.69	19.53	3.44	17.67	18.13	33.04
Teacher	Private	60.00	50.26	52.50	49.93	10.00	30.78	5.00	22.36	12.50	31.93
	Public	63.75	48.31	45.00	51.04	5.00	22.36	5.00	22.36	0.00	0.00
	Both	61.88	48.70	48.75	49.98	7.50	26.67	5.00	22.07	6.25	23.17
Parent	Private	80.00	36.34	41.88	41.37	5.63	22.28	4.38	19.52	9.79	23.33
	Public	77.50	42.29	42.50	44.29	2.50	15.81	8.75	27.47	6.25	16.75
	Both	78.75	39.20	42.19	42.58	4.06	19.26	6.56	23.78	8.02	20.26
Formal											
Student	Private	88.78	30.35	89.27	30.03	2.44	11.13	1.95	8.72	28.78	20.52
	Public	86.67	32.87	52.31	49.97	3.08	14.17	0.51	3.20	9.23	16.45
	Both	87.75	31.42	71.25	44.76	2.75	12.63	1.25	6.63	19.25	20.97
Teacher	Private	60.00	50.26	80.00	36.71	4.00	12.31	1.00	4.47	23.00	19.76
	Public	69.00	46.56	59.00	47.01	4.00	17.89	5.00	22.36	15.00	19.33
	Both	64.50	48.04	69.50	42.96	4.00	15.16	3.00	16.04	19.00	19.72
Parent	Private	87.50	27.43	80.50	33.74	5.00	22.07	1.50	7.00	26.75	26.74
	Public	81.00	29.68	81.00	32.01	1.50	9.49	5.50	18.11	29.00	18.65
	Both	84.25	28.59	80.75	32.68	3.25	16.97	3.50	13.79	27.88	22.93

Table 6b: Average percent of participants who use each language for communication purposes in different contexts (in the Entertainment, Sustainability, and Business contexts) by groups

Groups	School type	Afan Oromo		Amharic		Tigrigna		Guragigna		English	
				\bar{x}	SD	\bar{x}	SD	\bar{x}	SD	\bar{x}	SD
Entertainment Purposes											
Student	Private	85.85	33.24	80.49	36.74	16.10	21.55	25.37	23.25	38.05	33.41
	Public	79.49	36.27	40.00	45.42	7.18	22.71	5.13	13.55	3.72	9.30
	Both	82.75	34.68	60.75	45.72	11.75	22.43	15.50	21.58	21.31	30.08
Teacher	Private	60.00	50.26	68.00	46.07	21.00	35.23	18.00	28.21	22.00	30.37
	Public	65.00	48.94	49.00	50.46	10.00	22.94	10.00	18.92	8.00	13.61
	Both	62.50	49.03	58.50	48.65	15.50	29.87	14.00	24.05	15.00	24.28
Parent	Private	93.00	22.44	82.50	35.72	7.00	23.77	3.50	16.88	33.00	40.40
	Public	87.00	32.20	86.00	33.34	7.50	17.36	11.00	18.09	31.50	32.62
	Both	90.00	27.74	84.25	34.38	7.25	20.68	7.25	17.79	32.25	36.49
Sustainability Purposes											
Student	Private	82.44	33.23	70.24	33.80	4.39	19.75	1.95	7.49	17.07	18.74
	Public	76.92	37.99	34.87	40.45	4.62	20.24	1.03	4.47	4.10	8.18
	Both	79.75	35.51	53.00	41.01	4.50	19.87	1.50	6.18	10.75	15.89
Teacher	Private	60.00	50.26	62.00	42.50	14.00	34.40	0.00	0.00	11.00	15.18
	Public	65.00	48.94	47.00	48.68	5.00	22.36	5.00	22.36	3.00	7.33
	Both	62.50	49.03	54.50	45.74	9.50	29.00	2.50	15.81	7.00	12.44
Parent	Private	84.00	27.99	70.00	34.19	5.50	22.18	3.00	14.00	24.50	30.88
	Public	79.00	35.07	63.00	30.23	2.00	12.65	5.50	17.53	19.00	13.55
	Both	81.50	31.63	66.50	32.26	3.75	18.03	4.25	15.81	21.75	23.85
Business Purposes											
Student	Private	84.88	33.99	82.93	35.65	4.39	18.17	3.41	14.07	18.54	19.18
	Public	76.92	38.54	41.03	45.18	4.62	20.24	3.08	13.41	7.18	13.37
	Both	81.00	36.27	62.50	45.49	4.50	19.09	3.25	13.67	13.00	17.46
Teacher	Private	60.00	50.26	70.00	47.02	15.00	36.63	0.00	0.00	11.00	16.51
	Public	65.00	48.94	50.00	51.30	5.00	22.36	5.00	22.36	5.00	8.89
	Both	62.50	49.03	60.00	49.61	10.00	30.38	2.50	15.81	8.00	13.44
Parent	Private	91.00	24.79	81.00	36.22	5.00	22.07	3.00	14.00	28.50	34.16
	Public	86.00	33.03	87.00	33.45	2.00	12.65	3.50	13.50	23.50	21.19
	Both	88.50	29.13	84.00	34.77	3.50	17.94	3.25	13.67	26.00	28.36

Table 9: Comparison between whole agent group of multilingual characterizing features

Variable		Language	F	p	Mean Difference	SD	Sig.	Bonferroni Comparison by Agent Group [#]
Language Use with interlocutor	Intimate	Afan Oromo	5.123	.007	.24375	.0762	*	1 vs. 3 (p = .005)
		Amharic	5.195	.006	.22813	.0720	*	1 vs. 2 (p = .005)
		English	3.933	.021	.11875	.0515	-	No difference
	Formal	Afan Oromo	6.473	.002	.2325	.0665	*	1 vs. 3 (p = .002)
		Amharic	1.553	.214	.0175	.0774	-	No difference
		English	3.922	.021	-.0862	.0341	*	1 vs. 2 (p = .036)
Language Use for specific Purposes	Entertainment	Afan Oromo	8.030	<.001	.2025	.0689	*	1 vs. 3 (p = .011)
		Amharic	7.963	<.001	-.2350	.0667	*	1 vs. 2 (p = .002)
		English	4.551	.012	.1725	.0617	*	2 vs. 3 (p = .017)
	Sustainability	Afan Oromo	3.846	.023	.1900	.0720	*	2 vs. 3 (p = .027)
		Amharic	2.713	.069	-.0150	.0752	-	No difference
		English	10.521	<.001	.1100	.0300	*	1 vs. 2 (p < .001)
	Business	Afan Oromo	6.733	.001	.1850	.0710	*	1 vs. 3 (p = .030)
		Amharic	6.689	.002	.2150	.0671	*	1 vs. 2 (p = .005)
		English	11.440	<.001	.1300	.0347	*	1 vs. 2 (p < .001)
Subjective self-assessed proficiency	General	Afan Oromo	13.519	<.001	.3312	.0655	*	1 vs. 3 (p < .001)
		Amharic	15.677	<.001	.2313	.0485	*	1 vs. 2 (p < .001)
		English	25.320	<.001	.3062	.0482	*	1 vs. 2 (p < .001)
	Can-Do	Afan Oromo	13.707	<.001	.6422	.1942	*	1 vs. 2 (p = .003), 1 vs. 3 (p < .001)
		Amharic	13.257	<.001	.7281	.1639	*	1 vs. 2 (p < .001), 2 vs. 3 (p < .001)
		English	28.246	<.001	1.4031	.2221	*	1 vs. 2 (p < .001), 2 vs. 3 (p < .001)
Attitude	Mono (Pro)		0.765	.467	-.050	.054	-	No difference
	Mono (Con)		2.364	.097	.050	.043	-	No difference
	Multi (Pro)		1.840	.161	.025	.043	-	No difference

	Multi (Con)	0.206	.814	.013	.048	-	No difference
Multilingual Personality traits	MPQ Cultural Empathy	8.913	<.001	.446875	.1128	*	1 vs. 3 (p < .001)
	MPQ Open Mindedness	4.542	.012	.285938	.1013	*	1 vs. 2 (p = .016)
	MPQ Social Initiative	33.363	<.001	.937500	.1148	*	1 vs. 3 (p < .001)
	MPQ Emotional Stability	59.714	<.001	1.526563	.1403	*	1 vs. 3 (p < .001)
	MPQ Flexibility	5.258	.006	.335938	.1215	*	1 vs. 3 (p = .019)

Note: * indicates significance at p < .05 level. # Agent group ID: 1 = Student agent; 2 = Parent; 3= Teacher

Table 10: Comparison between multilingual characterization of agent groups associated with Private schools

Variable		Language	F	p	Mean Difference	SD	Sig.	Bonferroni Comparison
Language use with interlocutors	Intimate	Afan Oromo	3.661	.029	.27805	.10296	*	Students > Teachers
		Amharic	14.096	<.001	.45320	.08782	*	Students > Parents
		English	7.181	.001	.25574	.07164	*	Students > Parents
	Formal	Afan Oromo	5.468	.006	.2878	.0931	*	Students > Teachers
		Amharic	.900	.410	.0877	.0731	-	Students ≈ Parents
		English	.423	.657	.0203	.0513	-	Students ≈ Parents
Language use Purposes	Entertainment	Afan Oromo	6.520	.002	.2585	.0921	*	Students > Teachers
		Amharic	1.019	.365	-.0201	.0852	-	Students ≈ Parents
		English	1.349	.264	.05049	.07963	-	Students ≈ Parents
	Sustainability	Afan Oromo	3.470	.035	.2244	.0965	-	Students > Teachers
		Amharic	.413	.663	.0024	.0796	-	Students ≈ Parents
		English	2.325	.103	.1350	.0652	-	Students > Parents
	Business	Afan Oromo	5.492	.005	.2488	.0947	*	Students > Teachers
		Amharic	0.808	.449	.0193	.0852	-	Students ≈ Parents
		English	3.371	.038	.0996	.0574	-	Students > Parents
Proficiency	General	Afan Oromo	11.672	<.001	.3878	.0810	*	Students > Teachers
		Amharic	11.374	<.001	.2884	.0691	*	Students > Parents
		English	17.961	<.001	.3753	.0691	*	Students > Parents
	Can-Do	Afan Oromo	13.083	<.001	1.5945	.3121	*	Students > Teachers
		Amharic	6.032	.003	.6599	.2252	*	Students > Parents
		English	13.673	<.001	1.3189	.3200	*	Students > Parents
Attitude	Monolingualism (Pro)		1.133	.326	-.127	.085	-	Teachers > Students
	Monolingualism (Con)		.487	.616	.052	.070	-	Students ≈ Parents

	Multilingualism (Pro)	.841	.435	-.048	.064	-	Parents Students	>
	Multilingualism (Con)	.559	.573	-.002	.064	-	Parents Students	≈
MPQ	Cultural Empathy	5.569	.005	.39726	.13268	*	Students Parents	>
	Open-mindedness	3.817	.025	.40404	.14983	*	Students Parents	>
	Social Initiative	16.387	<.001	.46334	.12722	*	Students Parents	>
	Emotional Stability	26.855	<.001	.61974	.14967	*	Students Parents	>
	Flexibility	4.836	.010	.36989	.14408	*	Students Parents	>

Note: * indicates significance at $p < .05$ level.

Table 11: Comparison between multilingual characterization of agent groups associated with public schools

Variable		Language	F	p	Mean Difference	SD	Sig.	Bonferroni Comparison
Language use with interlocutor	Intimate	Afan Oromo	1.676	0.193	0.071	0.0933	-	Student Parent >
		Amharic	0.033	0.967	-0.008	0.1062	-	Student Parent <
		English	4.087	0.02	-0.0625	0.024	*	Student Parent <
	Formal	Afan Oromo	1.7	0.188	0.0567	0.0784	-	Student Parent >
		Amharic	4.679	0.012	-0.2869	0.0966	*	Student Parent <
		English	12.419	<.001	-0.1977	0.0404	*	Student Parent <
Language use for purpose	Entertainment	Afan Oromo	2.279	0.108	-0.0751	0.0847	-	Student Parent <
		Amharic	12.708	<.001	-0.46	0.0947	*	Student Parent <
		English	16.66	<.001	-0.2778	0.0505	*	Student Parent <
	Sustainability	Afan Oromo	0.897	0.411	-0.0208	0.0884	-	Student Parent <
		Amharic	5.274	0.007	-0.2813	0.0868	*	Student Parent <
		English	24.956	<.001	-0.149	0.0238	*	Student Parent <
	Business	Afan Oromo	1.987	0.143	-0.0908	0.0873	-	Student Parent <
		Amharic	12.618	<.001	-0.4597	0.095	*	Student Parent <
		English	13.024	<.001	-0.1632	0.0369	*	Student Parent <
Proficiency	General	Afan Oromo	5.76	0.004	0.2494	0.0833	*	Student Parent >
		Amharic	4.898	0.009	0.1737	0.0684	*	Student Parent >
		English	8.197	<.001	0.2369	0.0668	*	Student Parent >
	Can-Do	Afan Oromo	3.784	0.026	0.6951	0.2929	*	Student Parent >
		Amharic	7.056	0.001	0.7981	0.2416	*	Student Parent >
		English	14.863	<.001	1.4974	0.3092	*	Student Teacher >
Attitude	Mono (Pro)		0.379	0.685	-0.072	0.084	-	Student Parent <
	Mono (Con)		3.209	0.045	0.05	0.048	*	Student Parent >
	Multi (Pro)		2.771	0.068	0.1	0.057	-	Student Parent >

	Multi (Con)	0.092	0.912	0.028	0.072	-	Student Parent	>
MPQ	Cultural Empathy	4.987	0.009	0.1489	0.1245	*	Student Parent	>
	Open Mindedness	1.284	0.282	0.1707	0.1325	-	Student Parent	>
	Social Initiative	20.583	<.001	1.0176	0.1626	*	Student Teacher	>
	Emotional Stability	40.19	<.001	1.7331	0.2021	*	Student Teacher	>
	Flexibility	1.134	0.326	0.1639	0.1319	-	Student Parent	>

Note: * p< .05

Table 12a: Comparison between student agents in public and in private schools

Variable		t	df	p (two-tailed)	Mean Difference	Significance
Language use Intimate	Afan Oromo	-0.418	78	0.339	-0.03189	Not Significant
	Amharic	-5.048	78	0.001	-0.45528	Significant
	English	-5.644	78	0.001	-0.35366	Significant
Language use Formal	Afan Oromo	-0.299	78	0.383	-0.0211	Not Significant
	Amharic	-4.033	78	0.001	-0.3696	Significant
	English	-4.688	78	0.001	-0.1955	Significant
Language use for Entertainment	Afan Oromo	-0.819	78	0.208	-0.0637	Not Significant
	Amharic	-4.394	78	0.001	-0.4049	Significant
	English	-6.192	78	0.001	-0.34331	Significant
Language use for Sustainability	Afan Oromo	-0.692	78	0.245	-0.0552	Not Significant
	Amharic	-4.252	78	0.001	-0.3537	Significant
	English	-3.976	78	0.001	-0.1297	Significant
Language use for Business	Afan Oromo	-0.98	78	0.165	-0.0795	Not Significant
	Amharic	-4.617	78	0.001	-0.419	Significant
	English	-3.058	78	0.002	-0.1136	Significant
Attitude towards	mono (con)	1.733	78	0.044	0.073	Not Significant
	multi (pro)	2.028	78	0.023	0.098	Not Significant
Proficiency General	Afan Oromo	-0.481	78	0.316	-0.0134	Not Significant
	Amharic	-0.36	78	0.36	-0.0147	Not Significant
	English	-0.481	78	0.316	-0.0134	Not Significant
Proficiency CAN-DO	Afan Oromo	-1.679	78	0.049	-0.18945	Not Significant
	Amharic	0.734	78	0.232	0.06942	Not Significant
	English	2.563	78	0.006	0.40353	Significant
MPQ	Open Mindedness	0.902	78	0.185	0.09537	Not Significant
	Social Initiative	1.022	78	0.155	0.11351	Not Significant
	Cultural Empathy	1.019	78	0.156	0.11367	Not Significant
	Emotional Stability	1.038	78	0.151	0.11656	Not Significant
	Flexibility	0.913	78	0.182	0.10342	Not Significant

Table 12b: Comparison between parent agents in public and in private schools

Variable		t	df	P(two-tailed)	Mean Difference	Significance
Language use Intimate	Afan Oromo	-0.284	78	0.389	-0.025	Not Significant
	Amharic	0.065	78	0.474	0.00625	Not Significant
	English	-0.78	78	0.219	-0.03542	Not Significant
Language use Formal	Afan Oromo	-1.017	78	0.156	-0.065	Not Significant
	Amharic	0.068	78	0.473	0.005	Not Significant
	English	0.437	78	0.332	0.0225	Not Significant
Language use for Entertainment	Afan Oromo	-0.967	78	0.168	-0.06	Not Significant
	Amharic	0.453	78	0.326	0.035	Not Significant
	English	-0.183	78	0.428	-0.015	Not Significant
Language use for Sustainability	Afan Oromo	-0.766	78	0.223	-0.05	Not Significant
	Amharic	0.77	78	0.222	0.06	Not Significant
	English	-0.787	78	0.217	-0.05	Not Significant
Language use for Business	Afan Oromo	-0.705	78	0.242	-0.05	Not Significant
	Amharic	-0.97	78	0.168	-0.07	Not Significant
	English	-1.032	78	0.153	-0.055	Not Significant
Attitude towards	mono (con)	1.183	78	0.12	0.075	Not Significant
	multi (pro)	-0.842	78	0.201	-0.05	Not Significant
Proficiency General	Afan Oromo	-2.032	78	0.023	-0.175	Not Significant
	Amharic	0.995	78	0.161	0.1	Not Significant
	English	1.207	78	0.116	0.125	Not Significant
Proficiency CAN-DO	Afan Oromo	-1.022	78	0.155	-0.3	Not Significant
	Amharic	-0.193	78	0.424	-0.06875	Not Significant
	English	0.478	78	0.317	0.225	Not Significant
MPQ	Cultural Empathy	2.367	78	0.01	0.34375	Not Significant
	Open Mindedness	2.238	78	0.014	0.34688	Not Significant
	Social Initiative	2.774	78	0.003	0.40313	Significant
	Emotional Stability	3.332	78	0.001	0.54375	Significant
	Flexibility	2.109	78	0.019	0.30938	Not Significant

Table 12c: Comparison between teacher agents in public and in private schools

Variable		t	df	p (two-tailed)	Mean Difference	Significance
Language use Intimate	Afan Oromo	0.241	38	0.406	0.0375	Not Significant
	Amharic	-0.470	38	0.321	-0.0750	Not Significant
	English	-1.751	38	0.048	-0.1250	Not Significant
Language use Formal	Afan Oromo	0.587	38	0.280	0.0900	Not Significant
	Amharic	-1.575	38	0.062	-0.2100	Not Significant
	English	-1.294	38	0.102	-0.0800	Not Significant
Language use for Entertainment	Afan Oromo	0.319	38	0.376	0.0500	Not Significant
	Amharic	-1.244	38	0.111	-0.1900	Not Significant
	English	-1.881	38	0.036	-0.1400	Not Significant
Language use for Sustainability	Afan Oromo	0.319	38	0.376	0.0500	Not Significant
	Amharic	-1.038	38	0.153	-0.1500	Not Significant
	English	-2.122	38	0.022	-0.0800	Not Significant
Language use for Business	Afan Oromo	0.319	38	0.376	0.0500	Not Significant
	Amharic	-1.285	38	0.103	-0.2000	Not Significant
	English	-1.431	38	0.082	-0.0600	Not Significant
Attitude towards	mono (con)	0.000	38	0.500	0.0000	Not Significant
	multi (pro)	0.000	38	0.500	0.0000	Not Significant
Proficiency General	Afan Oromo	0.650	38.0	0.260	0.1000	Not Significant
	Amharic	-	-	-	-	Not Significant
	English	-	-	-	-	Not Significant
Proficiency CAN-DO	Afan Oromo	1.000	38.0	0.162	0.6000	Not Significant
	Amharic	-	-	-	-	Not Significant
	English	-	-	-	-	Not Significant
MPQ	Open Mindedness	0.163	38	0.436	0.0312	Not Significant
	Social Initiative	0.796	38	0.215	0.1875	Not Significant
	Cultural Empathy	-0.234	38	0.409	-0.0437	Not Significant
	Emotional Stability	-0.966	38	0.171	-0.2938	Not Significant
	Flexibility	1.558	38	0.064	0.3625	Not Significant

Table 13c: Spearman Correlation Summary of the variables within the entire teacher agent group

Categories	Correlation Coefficient (r)	Significance (p)
Intimate Amharic - Intimate Afan Oromo	-0.315	0.048
Formal Afan Oromo - Intimate Afan Oromo	0.974	0.001
Formal Amharic - Intimate Amharic	0.781	0.001
Formal Amharic - Formal Afan Oromo	-0.456	0.003
Formal Amharic - Formal English	-0.421	0.007
Formal English - Formal Afan Oromo	0.36	0.022
Formal English - Formal Amharic	0.462	0.003
Entertainment Afan Oromo - Intimate Afan Oromo	0.981	0.001
Entertainment Afan Oromo - Formal Afan Oromo	0.993	0.001
Entertainment Afan Oromo - Formal Amharic	-0.429	0.006
Entertainment Afan Oromo - Formal English	0.333	0.036
Entertainment Amharic - Formal Amharic	0.737	0.001
Entertainment Amharic - Formal English	0.41	0.009
Entertainment English - Formal Afan Oromo	0.325	0.041
Entertainment English - Formal Amharic	0.389	0.013
Entertainment English - Formal English	0.615	0.001
Entertainment English - Entertainment Amharic	0.577	0.001
Sustainability Afan Oromo - Formal Afan Oromo	0.993	0.001
Sustainability Amharic - Formal Amharic	0.866	0.001
Sustainability Amharic - Formal English	0.757	0.001
Sustainability English - Formal Afan Oromo	0.329	0.038
Sustainability English - Formal English	0.551	0.001
Business Afan Oromo - Formal Afan Oromo	0.993	0.001
Business Amharic - Formal Amharic	0.807	0.001
Business Amharic - Entertainment Amharic	0.954	0.001
Business Amharic - Entertainment English	0.613	0.001
Business English - Formal Afan Oromo	0.361	0.022
Business English - Formal Amharic	0.595	0.001
Business English - Formal English	0.84	0.001
Business English - Entertainment Amharic	0.42	0.007
MPQ Open Mindedness - MPQ Flexibility	0.82	0.001
MPQ Social Initiative - MPQ Open Mindedness	0.449	0.004
MPQ Social Initiative - MPQ Flexibility	0.339	0.032
MPQ Emotional Stability - MPQ Flexibility	0.58	0.001

Appendix A: Summary of findings on multilingual agents

Agent Group	Entire	Private School	Public School	Comment
Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nearly all (98.75%) speak Afan Oromo, Amharic, and English Strong proficiency in dominant languages; minimal in Tigrigna, Guragigna Afan Oromo & Amharic common; English used formally 95% support multilingualism; reject monolingualism High cultural empathy, flexibility, open-mindedness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use Afan Oromo and Amharic equally; English plays a major role Slightly lower Afan Oromo proficiency Higher English exposure in formal and informal domains More Amharic use in formal settings Language skills more uniform, suggesting standardized education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Afan Oromo strongly dominant (86.84% report it as L1) Less Amharic in formal domains Lower use of English, especially in informal contexts Higher cultural empathy and flexibility 	<p>Private school students show stronger English and Amharic use but weaker Afan Oromo, possibly affecting local identity. Public school students are stronger in Afan Oromo but have less English exposure, which may limit global engagement. Education policies should promote balance between global and local linguistic competencies.</p>
Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 71.25% speak Afan Oromo, Amharic, and English Moderate English proficiency (67.5%) Afan Oromo used in intimate settings; Amharic in formal ones English limited to business; minimal use of minority languages 92.5% positive toward multilingualism; higher monolingual acceptance in public school parents High variability in linguistic exposure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Balanced use of Afan Oromo, Amharic, and English Higher English use in business and entertainment Wide range in proficiency—from highly proficient to limited exposure Lower cultural empathy and flexibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stronger use of Afan Oromo across contexts Amharic remains prominent in formal settings Lower English usage compared to private school parents Higher multicultural personality scores 	<p>Private school parents tend to have broader exposure to English and global domains, while public school parents maintain stronger ties to local languages and exhibit greater multicultural adaptability. Policies should target multilingual literacy for parents, particularly in public schools, to support English development.</p>

Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 72.5% speak three or more languages • High proficiency in Amharic and English; lower in Afan Oromo • Amharic and English used formally; Afan Oromo in intimate settings • Slightly more accepting of monolingualism (15–20%) • Mixed multicultural personality traits; low emotional stability in public school teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower Afan Oromo proficiency • Amharic and English used across contexts • Higher flexibility and adaptability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher Afan Oromo proficiency due to regional curriculum • More balanced multilingual abilities • Lowest emotional stability, potentially linked to work stress 	Private school teachers are well-suited for globalized contexts due to stronger Amharic and English skills, but need support in Afan Oromo. Public school teachers are more linguistically balanced but face emotional challenges.
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Conclusions, Private school teachers may have stronger English and Amharic proficiency, which can help in globalized education contexts, but their lower Afan Oromo proficiency might be a disadvantage in regional/local communication. Public school teachers are more linguistically balanced, but struggle more with stress/emotional stability, indicating the need for mental health and professional support. Teacher training programs should focus on improving Afan Oromo proficiency in private schools and addressing stress-related challenges in public school settings.

Profiling the three agent groups can be synthesized as follows:

- ✓ Students are the most multilingual and culturally flexible.
- ✓ Parents show more variation in linguistic backgrounds and exposure.
- ✓ Teachers, despite high proficiency, need support in emotional well-being.
- ✓ Public school agents are more culturally empathetic and flexible, while private school counterparts are more globally oriented (stronger English use).
- ✓ Language policies should encourage bilingual/multilingual competence, not just in students, but in teachers and parents.

Appendix B: Multilingual Agent Groups' Comparison by Indicator and School Type

Indicator	Entire Group	Private Schools	Public Schools
Language Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers use Afan Oromo more than students in intimate/formal contexts • Parents use Amharic more in intimate settings • Students use English more for entertainment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students use Afan Oromo more than teachers across contexts • Students use more Amharic and English than parents in intimate settings • No differences in formal Amharic/English use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents use more Amharic and English than students in entertainment, business, and sustainability • Students use less English in intimate settings
Language Proficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers have the highest general and Can-Do proficiency in Afan Oromo, Amharic, and English • Students have the lowest Can-Do proficiency, especially in English 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students have significantly higher general and Can-Do proficiency in all three languages than teachers and parents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students report higher general and Can-Do proficiency in all languages than parents • Students' English Can-Do scores exceed those of teachers
Attitudes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No significant group differences in attitudes toward mono- or multilingualism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No significant group differences in attitudes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students more strongly reject monolingualism than parents, but show similar multilingual support
Multilingual Personality Traits (MPQ)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers score highest in cultural empathy, social initiative, emotional stability, and flexibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students score higher than parents in all MPQ dimensions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students surpass teachers in cultural empathy, social initiative, and emotional stability • No difference in open-mindedness or flexibility

Conclusions, teachers (Whole Group) have the highest language proficiency and strongest multilingual personality traits. Students in private schools are most proficient in all three languages, more engaged in multilingual interactions, and have a higher multicultural adaptability. Students in Public Schools have higher proficiency than parents, but parents use Amharic and English more in daily life. Moreover, students tend to reject monolingualism and have a higher social initiative compared to teachers.

Appendix C: Correlated Indicators by Agency

Agency	Correlated Indicators
Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong correlation between Afan Oromo use in Business & Entertainment ($r = .976$) • General English proficiency aligns with functional Can-Do ability ($r = .616$) • Negative correlation between English proficiency and Formal Amharic use ($r = -0.427$) • Cultural empathy negatively correlates with monolingual attitudes ($r = -0.294$)
Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive correlation between Formal and Business Amharic use ($r = .829$) • Higher English proficiency linked to reduced Amharic use in personal/formal settings • Open-mindedness negatively correlated with Formal Amharic use ($r = -0.243$) • Cultural empathy reduces monolingual attitudes
Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very strong correlation between Formal and Entertainment Afan Oromo use ($r = .993$) • Negative correlation between Formal Afan Oromo and Formal Amharic use ($r = -0.456$) • Business English use strongly aligned with Formal English proficiency ($r = .840$) • Open-mindedness and flexibility strongly correlated ($r = .820$)

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL:

Questionnaire: Instructions and School Type

Participant Code: _____

Instructions: Questionnaires for Participants

Dear participant, this questionnaire contains several sections and is part of my Ph.D. degree at the Multilingualism Doctoral School of the University of Pannonia in Hungary. In my study, I intend to learn in depth what are the important issues in the educational system that may lead to a good multilingual education in Oromia. Multilingualism today is considered an important asset for personal and social advancement.

Thank you for your willingness to fill out this questionnaire. The estimated time to complete the questionnaire is 30'- 40' minutes. As you will see most of the questions are compulsory so that you can submit and move on to the other section. I would be very thankful if you could answer all the questions as this will be of great help.

As you will see this questionnaire is anonymous and needs not to have any personal identification. Should you have any questions or comments, you can contact me directly at: margaa30fayyoo@gmail.com; or give them to the person administering the questionnaire.

Thank you very much again!

Where do you attend your study (your school)

- a. Ambo Secondary School
- b. Ambo Future Generation Hope Secondary School

Demographic Questionnaire

Please answer to the best of your ability to these personal information question

1. What is your age?
2. What gender are you? a. Male b. Female
3. Were you born in Oromia, Ethiopia? a. Yes b. No
4. Where were you raised? (Mention the specific name of the place)
5. Cultural background of a person usually relates to their ethnic group, religion, etc. How would you describe your cultural background?

Language repertoire and proficiency questionnaire

General

Please provide the following information about your languages

1. What languages do you know?

	1 st language	2 nd language	3 rd language	None
Afan Oromo				
Amharic				
Tigrigna				
Guragigna				
English				
Others				

2. Rate your ability in each of these languages (when relevant)?

	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing
Afan Oromo				
Amharic				
Tigrigna				
Guragigna				
English				
Others				

CAN-DO

3a. What can you do in **Afan Oromo**? (on a scale from 0 = no, 1=with difficulty to 5 = easily)

	1	2	3	4	5
a. To count to 10					
b. To ask for direction					
c. To provide simple information about myself (place of birth, family name etc.).					
d. To describe my work, studies, or any other activity at present in an accurate and elaborate manner.					
e. To present and support my opinion on a controversial matter (i.e., air pollution, use of the pill, euthanasia) using examples and explanations.					
f. In a face-to-face conversation with a native speaker of the language, I understand what he says when he speaks slowly and carefully (accommodates his speech to me)					
g. In a face-to-face conversation with a native speaker of the language, I can tell if what he says refers to past, present or future events.					
h. In a face-to-face conversation with a native speaker of the language, I understand him when he speaks to me the way he speaks to another native speaker.					
i. To understand the news on the radio.					
j. To understand a conversation between 2 native speakers					
k. To read personal letters or messages sent to me that were written in a simple language using easy words					
l. To understand newspaper headlines					
m. To understand personal letters that were written by one native speaker to another.					
n. To read folk literature without using the dictionary					
o. To read professional materials without using the dictionary					

3b. What can you do in **Amharic**? (on a scale from 0 = no, 1=with difficulty to 5 = easily)

	1	2	3	4	5
a. To count to 10					
b. To ask for direction					
c. To provide simple information about myself (place of birth, family name etc.).					
d. To describe my work, studies, or any other activity at present in an accurate and elaborate manner.					
e. To present and support my opinion on a controversial matter (i.e., air pollution, use of the pill, euthanasia) using examples and explanations.					
f. In a face-to-face conversation with a native speaker of the language, I understand what he says when he speaks slowly and carefully (accommodates his speech to me)					
g. In a face-to-face conversation with a native speaker of the language, I can tell if what he says refers to past, present or future events.					
h. In a face-to-face conversation with a native speaker of the language, I understand him when he speaks to me the way he speaks to another native speaker.					
i. To understand the news on the radio.					
j. To understand a conversation between 2 native speakers					
k. To read personal letters or messages sent to me that were written in a simple language using easy words					
l. To understand newspaper headlines					
m. To understand personal letters that were written by one native speaker to another.					
n. To read folk literature without using the dictionary					
o. To read professional materials without using the dictionary					

3c. What can you do in **Tigrigna**? (on a scale from 0 = no, 1=with difficulty to 5 = easily)

	1	2	3	4	5
a. To count to 10					
b. To ask for direction					
c. To provide simple information about myself (place of birth, family name etc.).					
d. To describe my work, studies, or any other activity at present in an accurate and elaborate manner.					
e. To present and support my opinion on a controversial matter (i.e., air pollution, use of the pill, euthanasia) using examples and explanations.					
f. In a face-to-face conversation with a native speaker of the language, I understand what he says when he speaks slowly and carefully (accommodates his speech to me)					
g. In a face-to-face conversation with a native speaker of the language, I can tell if what he says refers to past, present or future events.					
h. In a face-to-face conversation with a native speaker of the language, I understand him when he speaks to me the way he speaks to another native speaker.					
i. To understand the news on the radio.					
j. To understand a conversation between 2 native speakers					
k. To read personal letters or messages sent to me that were written in a simple language using easy words					
l. To understand newspaper headlines					
m. To understand personal letters that were written by one native speaker to another.					
n. To read folk literature without using the dictionary					
o. To read professional materials without using the dictionary					

3d. What can you do in **Guragigna**? (on a scale from 0 = no, 1=with difficulty to 5 = easily)

	1	2	3	4	5
a. To count to 10					
b. To ask for direction					
c. To provide simple information about myself (place of birth, family name etc.).					

d. To describe my work, studies, or any other activity at present in an accurate and elaborate manner.					
e. To present and support my opinion on a controversial matter (i.e., air pollution, use of the pill, euthanasia) using examples and explanations.					
f. In a face-to-face conversation with a native speaker of the language, I understand what he says when he speaks slowly and carefully (accommodates his speech to me)					
g. In a face-to-face conversation with a native speaker of the language, I can tell if what he says refers to past, present or future events.					
h. In a face-to-face conversation with a native speaker of the language, I understand him when he speaks to me the way he speaks to another native speaker.					
i. To understand the news on the radio.					
j. To understand a conversation between 2 native speakers					
k. To read personal letters or messages sent to me that were written in a simple language using easy words					
l. To understand newspaper headlines					
m. To understand personal letters that were written by one native speaker to another.					
n. To read folk literature without using the dictionary					
o. To read professional materials without using the dictionary					

3e. What can you do in **English**? (on a scale from 0 = no, 1=with difficulty to 5 = easily)

	1	2	3	4	5
a. To count to 10					
b. To ask for direction					
c. To provide simple information about myself (place of birth, family name etc.).					
d. To describe my work, studies, or any other activity at present in an accurate and elaborate manner.					
e. To present and support my opinion on a controversial matter (i.e., air pollution, use of the pill, euthanasia) using examples and explanations.					
f. In a face-to-face conversation with a native speaker of the language, I understand what he says when he speaks slowly and carefully (accommodates his speech to me)					
g. In a face-to-face conversation with a native speaker of the language, I can tell if what he says refers to past, present or future events.					
h. In a face-to-face conversation with a native speaker of the language, I understand him when he speaks to me the way he speaks to another native speaker.					
i. To understand the news on the radio.					
j. To understand a conversation between 2 native speakers					
k. To read personal letters or messages sent to me that were written in a simple language using easy words					
l. To understand newspaper headlines					
m. To understand personal letters that were written by one native speaker to another.					
n. To read folk literature without using the dictionary					
o. To read professional materials without using the dictionary					

Language use with interlocutors and for what purpose

Questionnaire of use with whom:

Please let us know which language you use with whom.

4. Mark which of your language(s) do you use with whom

	Afan Oromo	Amharic	Tigrigna	Guragigna	English	Others
Father						
Mother						
Brother						
Sister						
Friends at school						
Friends in the social occasion						
Teachers						
Neighbors						
Other relatives						

Questionnaire of use for what purpose:

Please let us know which language is used for each one of these activities.

5. Which of your language(s) do you use when?

	Afan Oromo	Amharic	Tigrigna	Guragigna	English	Others
Watching Tv/ movies/videos						
Religious participation						
Reading literature						
reading academic materials						
listening to music						
listening to radio/news						
shopping						
speaking on the telephone						
social participation						
travelling						
attending classes						
when dreaming						
when sad						
when happy						
when in love						
when in hate						
when counting						
when sending a message for family						
when sending message for girl/boy friend						
when sending message for friend						
when using social media like facebook						
when enjoying						
when playing football/valley ball/pool/tennis						
At home						
At work place						
At the market						
At the bank						
At restaurant/hotel/cafeteria						

Questionnaire on attitude

Please let us know what you think about each of these statements on the scale where 1 = strongly disagree and 4 = strongly agree

6. What do you think about the following statements?

	I strongly agree	I somewhat agree	I somewhat disagree	I strongly disagree
It is important to be able to speak both Afan Oromo and Amharic equally well in addition to English Language				
I only need to speak Afan Oromo in addition to English				
I only need to speak Amharic in addition to English				
I only need to speak Afan Oromo and Amharic				
It makes me confused when I learn three different languages at a time				
Speaking both Afan Oromo and Amharic helps me to get job				
Speaking my mother tongue and English help me to get job				
Speaking two languages is not difficult				
Speaking three languages is not difficult				
knowing more languages makes people to mix and it is really bad				
my children should know all the three languages well				
people who speak more languages have more friends				

MPQ - Multilingual Personality Questionnaire short-version

Please, respond to each statement as honestly as you can

7. To what extent do the following statements apply to you? please rate each statement on a scale from 1 (totally not applicable) to 5 (completely applicable).

	1	2	3	4	5
Pays attention to the emotions of others					
Is a good listener					
Senses when others get irritated					
Getting to know others profoundly					
Enjoys other people's stories					
Notices when someone is in trouble					
Sympathizes with others					
Sets others at ease					
Works according to strict rules					
Works according to plan					
Works according to strict scheme					
Looks for regularity in life					
Likes routine					
Wants predictability					
Functions best in a familiar setting					
Has fixed habits					
Takes the lead					
Leaves initiative to others to make contacts					
Finds it difficult to make contacts					
Takes initiative					
Is inclined to speak out					
Is often the driving force behind things					
Makes contacts easily					
Is reserved					
Worries					
Gets upset easily					
Is nervous					
Is apt to feel lonely					
Keeps calm when things don't go well					
Is insecure					
Is under pressure					
Is not easily hurt					
Tries out various approaches					
Is looking for new ways to attain his or her goal					
Starts a new life easily					
Likes to imagine solutions to problems					
Is a trendsetter in societal developments					
Has feeling for what is appropriate in culture					
Seeks people from different backgrounds					
Has broad range of interests					