Doctoral (Ph.D.) Dissertation

Exploring Language Policy and Practices in Ethiopian Higher Education Institutions towards Multilingualism

– A case study of Mattu University

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STATEMENT

This dissertation, written under the guidance of the candidate's dissertation committee and approved by its members, has been submitted to and accepted by the Department of Modern Philology and Social Sciences as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The content and research methods in this document reflect solely the efforts of the candidate.

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EXPLORING LANGUAGE POLICY AND PRACTICES IN ETHIOPIAN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS TOWARDS MULTILINGUALISM

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the language policy and practices of Ethiopian higher education institutions in relation to multilingualism. Ethiopia has a monolingual policy in its education and training system, which provides for English as the language of instruction at tertiary level, even if it is not the first or second language of teachers or students. The decision to use European languages as the language of instruction in African countries is often influenced by colonial history. However, Ethiopia is the only country that was not colonized by Western powers. Nevertheless, due to the linguistic diversity of students in Ethiopian universities, English is used to accommodate this diversity. The main argument of this article is that the language policy and practice in Ethiopian higher education institutions does not match the actual teaching practice. The findings of the study show that instructors and students frequently switch between English and Afaan Oromo, English and Amharic, and Afaan Oromo and Amharic, indicating the need for a multilingual policy that reflects and regulates the existing multilingual practices. Therefore, policy makers responsible for language in education should consider these findings and conduct further comprehensive studies to re-evaluate language policies and address criticisms of the quality of education in the country.

Key words: *policy and practice, Ethiopia, higher education institutions, multilingualism, monolingual, education and training policy, Afaan Oromo, Amharic*

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

EFA = Education for All

EMI = English as the Medium of Instruction

EPRDF = Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front

ERGESE = Evaluative Research on the General Education System of Ethiopia

ESLCE = Ethiopian School Leaving Certificate Examination

ETP = Education and Training Policy's

MDG = Millennium Development Goals

FDRE = Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

INGO = International Non-Governmetal Organization

L1 = First Langauge

MOE = Ministry of Education

MOI = Medium of Instruction

MT = Mother Tongue

MTBE = Mother Tongue Based Education

MTB MLE = Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education

NGO = Non-Governmental Organization

NYC = New York City

OPHCC = Office of Population and Housing Census Commission

SDG = Sustainable Development Goals

SNNPRS = South Nations Nationalities and Peoples Regional State

TL = Target Language

UNESCO = United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNICEF = United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

US = United States

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the study

The history of formal education in Ethiopia and the rise of English as the dominant medium of instruction illustrate the complexity of linguistic imperialism. It illustrates the interplay of language, power and education and highlights the need for policies that balance global integration with the preservation and promotion of local languages and cultures. Before the Second World War, English was of little importance in Ethiopia (Gebremedhin, 1993: 26). The main administrative and educational languages were Amharic, the official language, and Geez, a liturgical language used in religious contexts. During the Italian occupation of Ethiopia (1936-1941), Italian was introduced as the language of instruction in some areas, but this influence was short-lived. After the evacuation of Italy in 1941, there was a significant change. The Ethiopian and British governments signed an agreement in 1942 that marked the beginning of a new era for English in Ethiopia. This agreement facilitated the importation of teaching materials and examinations from Britain and established English as the dominant language at all levels of education (Alemu, 2004: 4; Heugh et al., 2007: 46).

The need for structured communication in human society is fulfilled through the use of language, a concept that is difficult to define due to its complexity. Linguists generally describe language as a system of symbols used for communication. The organization of this system is divided into different interconnected units, each of which fulfills specific communicative functions (Lyons, 1981). When individuals have the ability to use more than one language, terms such as bilingualism, trilingualism and multilingualism become relevant. In the context of this study, we are primarily concerned with the concept of multilingualism, which has its etymological roots in two Latin words: *multi,* meaning 'many', and *lingua,* meaning 'language' (Bussmann, 2006). Consequently, multilingualism refers to a person's ability to communicate competently in several languages (ibid.). It is worth noting that multilingualism is sometimes used in the context of bilingualism, which refers specifically to the ability to speak two languages at a native level (Lyons, 1981).

In bilingual teaching, two languages are generally used for teaching purposes, with the content being taught in both languages. This approach is a key feature of bilingual teaching, as scholars such as García and Baker (2007) have noted. There are a variety of approaches in the field of bilingual and multilingual education programs. Cummins (2003) has proposed a typology that classifies these programs into five broad types based on the sociolinguistic characteristics of the languages used and the target audiences. Four of these program types are primarily for minority or subordinate group students, while the fifth type is for majority or dominant group students. In the first type, indigenous languages are used as the medium of instruction. Examples include bilingual programs for Native Americans and English in the United States and similar programs for Maori in Aotearoa, New Zealand. These programs often aim to revive languages that have been lost through conquest or colonization. In the second type of program, a national language is used in conjunction with a majority or dominant language. These languages usually have a long-standing social status and may be officially recognized. In some cases, the national language is combined with a language that enables wider communication, such as the use of various African languages alongside English in South Africa, Greek in Ireland and Scotland, Welsh in Spain and Basque and Catalan in Spain. The third category of programs deals with immigrant languages spoken by newcomers who have recently immigrated to a host country. Many bilingual programs in countries such as the United States, the Netherlands and Australia fall into this category and are often intended as transitional programs designed to support students' academic progress.

The fourth type of program is tailored to deaf or hard-of-hearing students. The last group of programs targets dominant or majority group students, such as French immersion programs in Canada and dual language programs in the United States. While the U.S. bilingual or literate programs can fall into the second or third type categories, as they cater to students from linguistic minorities and English L1 students, aiming to promote bilingualism and biliteracy among both groups.

The fourth type of program is designed for students who are deaf or hard of hearing. The final group of programs is aimed at dominant or majority group students, such as the French immigration programs in Canada and the bilingual programs in the United States.

In the United States, bilingual or literacy programs may fall into the second or third category, as they target both language minority and English L1 students and aim to promote bilingualism and biliteracy for both groups. In addition, various program categories have been identified in the area of multilingual education, including transition, maintenance and extension programs. Transition programs aim to move students from their first language to the majority language, which often means cultural assimilation. However, according to the definition of multilingual education that we have adopted here, transition programs do not correspond to the concept of multilingualism and multiculturalism. In contrast, maintenance and enrichment programs do not replace the first language with the second language. Enrichment programs focus primarily on promoting linguistic diversity. Researchers have looked at the advantages and disadvantages of bilingual and multilingual education programs. Historically, bilingualism has been viewed as potentially detrimental to cognitive ability in the twentieth century. Bilingualism was always referred to as "the problem of the bilingual child". Studies from the 1920s to 1950s suggest that individuals who speak multiple languages perform poorly on tests measuring cognitive ability. However, today's research on bilingualism and multilingualism shows numerous advantages. Multilingual people benefit from broader social contacts, better employment prospects, better intercultural understanding, travel opportunities, access to various services and careers that require proficiency in several languages, among other things.

In the twentieth century, the traditional understanding of bilingual and multilingual education was put to the test as scholars around the world raised questions about its impact. Bilingual education is traditionally defined as the use of two languages in the classroom, with the goal of teaching students bilingually and biliterately. However, in minority education, the goal may also be to improve proficiency and fluency in a dominant language (Bakyr, 2011, cited in García et al., 2017: 25). The recognition of bilingualism or multilingualism in education has always been a controversial topic. Some countries favor monolingualism, while others recognize the value of bilingualism or multilingualism in divided societies that are often shaped by colonial influences.

While most U.S. citizens grappled with the conflicts surrounding bilingual and multilingual education, other countries around the world were more open to language courses and learning content. Between 1998 and 2002, three US states – California, Arizona and Massachusetts – passed laws against bilingual education (McField, 2014, cited in Wright et al., 2015: 2). The 2001 "No Child Left Behind" law eliminated any explicit support for bilingual education (Mirkon, 2008). Although these legislative measures are intended to limit bilingual programs, exemptions, loopholes, and differing intentions of policy makers allow many schools to continue or even expand bilingual education initiatives. In California, efforts are currently underway to revise Proposition 227, a law that has had little effect (McGreevy, 2014, cited in Wright et al., 2015: 2). Although Proposition 227 remains in effect, California was the first U.S. state to recognize the valuable language skills of bilingual students by awarding them a "Seal of Biliteracy" on their high school diploma. Other states, including New York and Texas, have adopted this model. This shows that laws alone cannot make the impossible possible, but require the cooperation of students, educators and society.

In addressing current issues of multilingual education, UNESCO and UNICEF advocate multilingual education as an integral part of educational reform in countries that want to ensure uniform access to primary education. Countries with historically homogeneous populations are also turning to bilingual and multilingual education in order to take account of demographic change (ibid.). The European Union's Commission on Multilingualism, established in 2007, aims to promote multilingualism by formulating a language policy that focuses on language learning. This underlines the invaluable importance of bilingualism or multilingualism in a divided society in the age of globalization.

In addition, nations from different regions and continents have officially recognized their status as multilingual states. In Canada, in the USA, for example, both French and English are spoken. In Belgium, Dutch, French and Greek are spoken, while in Switzerland, French, Italian and Romansh are spoken. In Africa, South Africa has recognized 11 indigenous languages as official languages, including Afrikaans, English, Ndebele, North Sotho, Sotho, SiSwati, Tsonga, Tswana, Venda, Xhosa and Zulu. Nigeria

recognizes Hausa and English as official languages, and Kenya designates Swahili and English as official languages (Okal, 2014: 225-227). These African nations have experienced the loss of language, culture and identity under the influence of colonial powers. Nevertheless, they have successfully revived their cultural and linguistic diversity since independence.

Consequently, multilingualism plays an important role in education because it promotes cultural awareness, enhances educational and academic value, stimulates creativity, improves adaptation to society and promotes the appreciation of local languages (ibid.). As a result, bilingual and multilingual education is flourishing and expanding. Compared to other East African countries, Ethiopia, characterised by its diverse nations and nationalities and its complicated demographic composition, has not yet fully embraced multilingualism as more than eighty-five indigenous languages are spoken in households and in various sectors of society. Sociolinguistically, Amharic has historically been the dominant language of the ruling elite, which imposes its use on the wider population (Ali et al., 2019: 51).

1.2. Statement of the problem

Multilingualism is widespread both in Africa and worldwide; however, its value varies between societies and nations and is categorized as official or unofficial. Official multilingualism is usually explicitly enshrined in a country's constitution and is practiced in various areas such as education, legislative procedures, legal activities and international competitions. Multilingual nations, often referred to as multilingual societies, usually have a well-established legal framework and legislation is usually proposed, passed and implemented in parliament. This practice is common in Switzerland, Canada and Belgium, for example.

Africa offers a divided landscape in terms of multilingualism, with some countries officially recognizing it while others take an unofficial stance. Nevertheless, multilingualism is becoming more prevalent across the continent, albeit with adaptations tailored to the respective national education systems. Kenya is an example of a country that is officially multilingual. There, English is the official language, Kiswahili is both a

federal and official language and many indigenous languages are spoken in more than forty tribes.

Multilingualism can be observed in several African countries, where people often speak three languages fluently: their mother tongue, the national language and even the official languages. South Africa, for example, has enshrined official multilingualism in its constitution and recognizes a variety of indigenous languages for educational purposes, although English predominates in schools and higher educational institutions. This constitutional enshrinement of multilingualism in South Africa underscores the importance of language policy in addressing inequality in education systems worldwide.

Accordingly, many educational institutions worldwide have embraced multilingualism as an educational goal and have recognized the importance of teaching languages such as English alongside national and minority languages. Schools have opted for bilingual or multilingual teaching in order to produce students who are proficient in several languages, as they spend a lot of time in the classroom. This approach differs from monolingual teaching and increases the benefits of including minority or low-status languages in the education system.

However, the Ethiopian context offers a different scenario, as the 1995 Constitution of the Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the 1994 Education and Training Policy provide for English as the medium of instruction for secondary and higher education and promote a monolingual educational paradigm. But in multilingual contexts, language education policy at the institutional level does not always match language practice in the classroom (Gorter & Cenoz, 2017: 9). In Africa with similar multilingual societies such as Ethiopia, studies have been conducted to examine the alignment and mismatch between languages in education policy and classroom practice in a multilingual environment. A study in the Republic of Kenya, for example, revealed a discrepancy between policy and teaching practice. There, the mother tongue should be taught as a subject and used as the medium of instruction, but teachers resorted to code-switching between Kiswahili and English when teaching non-language subjects (Nyaga & Anthonissen 2012: 9-10). Similarly, a study in the Republic of South Africa between 1996 and 1998 showed that teachers predominantly used English, especially in mathematics and science lessons, and switched

to the learners' primary languages when rephrasing and interacting (Setati et al., 2002: 4). The findings in Malawi show that although the policy allows Chichewa as a medium of instruction, teachers tend to teach in a local language other than Chichewa, which emphasizes the need for a differentiated understanding of language use (Chilora, 2000: 3). In the Ethiopian context, although the 1995 Constitution of the Ethiopian Democratic Republic and the 1994 Education and Training Policy provide for English as the medium of instruction for secondary and higher education, there is a remarkable discrepancy between the constitutional provision and the actual practice in Ethiopian universities. Given the lack of previous research in this area, it is important to examine language policy and practice in Ethiopian universities with regard to multilingualism in order to address this discrepancy.

1.3. Significance of the study

The findings of this study can provide valuable insights for policymakers to reconsider the structure of Ethiopia's higher education system. Moreover, it identifies the potential obstacles that could impede the successful implementation of multilingualism in Ethiopian higher education and offers potential strategies to mitigate these challenges. Additionally, this study can serve as a foundational resource for individuals interested in pursuing further research in this field.

It's worth noting that the researcher acknowledges the potential benefit of conducting a larger-scale survey. Nevertheless, due to constraints related to limited time and inadequate resources, this study is confined to the context of Mattu University.

1.4. Aims of the study

The overall aim of this study is to examine language policy and practises in Ethiopian higher education institutions, with a focus on multilingualism. In particular, the study aims to assess the integration of multilingualism into the Ethiopian constitution and education and training policies at higher educational institutions in Ethiopia. It also aims to examine the dynamics of multilingualism between instructors and students in the classrooms of the University of Mattu. Furthermore, to determine whether the communicative practises observed between students and nstructors outside the classroom at the University of Mattu reflect the multilingualism of the university community

1.5. Dissertation outline

The dissertation comprises five chapters aimed at providing a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter. In the initial chapter, a general introduction is presented along with an identification of the problem associated with the topic. Moving on to the second chapter, the conceptual framework is introduced, serving as the foundation for subsequent analysis. This section encompasses Ethiopian language classification, the history of Foreign Languages in Ethiopia, the definition of language policy, various types of language policies, the historical development of language policy in Ethiopia's education system, the influence of the Church and Schools on Ethiopian Language Policy, and an exploration of the impact resulting from the monolingual language policy in Ethiopian higher education institutions with regard to multilingualism.

The third chapter delves into the research methodology employed for the practical phase of the study. A detailed explanation is provided for the chosen methods, including data collection, interviews, questionnaires, classroom observations, document analysis, and data analytical methods. Moving forward to the fourth chapter, the research problem is addressed, particularly through the statistical analysis methods outlined in the third chapter. This section offers a comprehensive analysis of the collected data, presenting empirical findings through Figures.

The fifth chapter serves as a culmination, bringing together the insights from all previous chapters. It adopts a discussion format, analyzing the relationship between prior research and the empirical findings of the current study. Finally, the conclusion chapter offers insights into potential changes and improvements that the studied country may need to implement. It acknowledges limitations arising from time and resource constraints and provides suggestions for further enhancement of the Ethiopian language policy in the higher education system, particularly towards fostering multilingualism.

1.6. Theoretical framework

Various scholars have proposed three distinct approaches for studying multilingualism, each driven by different focal points. These approaches encompass territorial perspectives of multilingualism, institutional perspectives of multilingualism, and individual and social perspectives.

The territorial perspective of multilingualism delves into the geographical distribution of languages across different regions, including countries and localities. It seeks to understand the linguistic landscape and its implications. The institutional perspective of multilingualism revolves around examining language practices within various societal institutions, such as those related to social, cultural, religious, educational, or political domains. This perspective encompasses the study of language policies implemented by institutions and using languages for internal and external communication.

Lastly, the individual and societal perspective of multilingualism focuses on language behaviours, encompassing patterns of language use among individuals and definable groups of speakers. This perspective covers issues related to language choice and topics like the pragmatics of speech acts, ethinography of communication, and the acquisition of multiple languages (Wolff, 2010, cited in Mensah, 2014). It's important to note that individual and societal perspectives are intertwined, as it is impossible to comprehensively examine individual multilingualism without considering its broader societal dimensions. Conversely, understanding societal multilingualism necessitates understanding how it impacts individuals (Aronin, 2019).

This study adopts an institutional perspective on multilingualism by scrutinizing language policies and practices within Ethiopian higher education institutions, focusing mainly on Mattu University. Simultaneously, it embraces an individual and societal viewpoint by considering pertinent aspects of individual and societal multilingualism that influence language choices within the institution and the academic achievement of diverse learners at Mattu University.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Ethiopian language classification

Ethiopia is located in East Africa and borders Sudan to the west, Kenya to the south, Somalia to the southeast, Djibouti to the east and Eritrea (formerly part of Ethiopia) to the north. Ethiopia is often referred to as the "Horn of Africa" due to its distinctive horn-shaped geographical location on the African map. Historical records indicate that Ethiopia was once considered a major civilizational centre of the world (Henze, 2000: 30). Ethiopia is the second most populous country in Africa (Malar, 2009: 1) with a population of more than 110 million people. According to various researchers, there are more than 85 languages in Ethiopia. Lewis (2009), for example, has listed 86 languages.

These languages belong to two language families: Afro-Asiatic and Nilo-Saharan. The Afro-Asiatic languages belong to the Cushitic, Omotic and Semitic families. Afaan Oromo has the most speakers of the Cushitic languages, followed by Somali and Afar. Other important languages of the Cushitic family are Sidama, Kambata and Hadiyya. According to Gordon (2005), 47 languages belong to the Cushitic family. These Cushitic languages are mainly spoken in the eastern and central parts of Ethiopia.

The Omotic family is only spoken in Ethiopia in the Omo Valley in the South Nations Nationalities and Peoples Regional State (SNNPRS). This language family was initially classified as West Cushitic, but was later renamed Omotic. The main Omotic languages are Wolaita, Gamo, Gofa and Dawro, which have a significant number of speakers.

The Semitic languages consist of Amharic, Tigrinya, Geʿez and Gurage. Amharic has the most speakers among the Semitic languages, followed by Tigrinya and the Gurage languages. Geʿez has no native speakers, but is widely spoken throughout the country as a classical religious language in the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church. The Semitic languages of Ethiopia are spoken in northern and central

The Ethiopian Nilo-Saharan languages are spoken in the western part of Ethiopia on the border with Sudan and South Sudan. The total population of the Ethiopian Nilo-Saharan languages amounted to less than 500,000 in the 1994 census (OPHCC 1998). Apart from

the Semitic languages that use the Ethiopian alphabet, others, especially the Cushitic languages (where most minority language groups live), use the Latin alphabet.

2.2 Geographical distribution

Since 1991, Ethiopia has been divided into eleven federal regional states and two city administrations, namely Afar, Amhara, Benishangul-Gumuz, Gambella, Harari, Oromiya, Somali, Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region, Tigray, Sidama National Regional State and Southwest Ethiopia Region, in addition to the Addis Ababa City Administration and Dire Dawa.

The distribution of languages in Ethiopia corresponds to the regional administrative boundaries for the five main languages: Afar, Amharic, Afaan Oromo, Somali and Tigrinya. Apart from the regional state of Amhara, Amharic is spoken in all cities in the country and serves as a lingua franca (Meyer, 2006; Meyer & Richter, 2003).

Tigrinya is spoken in the regional state of Tigray. Afar is spoken in the regional state of Afar. Somali is spoken in the Somali regional state. In contrast, Afaan Oromo is spoken in the Oromia regional state, the Amhara regional state (in the Kamise special zone in Oromiya), the Somali regional state, the Sidama regional state, the Harari regional state, the Benishangul Gumuz region, the Gambela region and the city administration of Dire Dawa, as the Oromia region covers the largest area in central, western and southern Ethiopia.

The SNNPRS is the most diverse region and consists of 56 ethnic groups. The main languages spoken in the state include the Gurage Cluster, Silti, Sidama, Wolaita, Hadiyya, Kambata, Gedeo, Gamo and Dawro. Two regions were newly created by referendum and were part of the SNNPR. These are Sidama, which was established as Sidama National Regional State on July 4, 2020, and the Southwest Ethiopia region, which was established on November 23, 2021.

2.3. History of Foreign Languages in Ethiopia

In Ethiopia, traditional education has been practiced for a long time, especially by the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. In contrast, modern education has a short history that began

in the early 20th century with the Menelik II School, the first modern school officially opened in Addis Ababa in 1908. The history of foreign languages in modern Ethiopia is closely linked to the introduction and expansion of modern education.

The beginning of the introduction of foreign languages was mainly in the period between the establishment of modern schools and the invasion of fascist Italy (1908 to 1935). The main aim of education during this period was to create citizens who were proficient in various foreign languages such as French, Italian and Arabic (Bishaw & Lasser, 2012). In this regard, the focus of education during this period was on language teaching (Pankhurst, 1974). Furthermore, curriculum selection and design were determined by educational experts from France, and French was used as the medium of instruction until 1935 (Bishaw & Lasser, 2012; Leyew, 2012). Apart from the state schools, "missionary schools based abroad began to flourish and were able to use other foreign languages such as English, German, Swedish and Italian" (Leyew, 2012: 7).

The fascist Italian government changed everything from the ground up during its five-year (1935-1941) occupation of Ethiopia. According to Negash (2006), during this period schools were either closed or used as military camps and there was a complete shift from French to Italian language domination. According to Bishaw & Lasser (2012: 57), "all instruction in the government-run schools was mainly in Italian".

During the Italian occupation, Emperor Haile Selassie I, the then Ethiopian King of Kings, went into British exile to gain the support of the international community and the League of Nations to condemn the invaders. As a result, the British government received considerable support in ousting the fascist Italian government. Following this support, the Ethiopian government opened a new chapter of acquaintance with Britain, and Britain influenced the entire educational system of Ethiopia until the mid-1950smid1950s (Addo & Anteneh, 2006; Bishaw & Lasser, 2012; &; Teka, 2009). In line with this, Bishaw & Lasser (2012: 57) stated that the British advisors have greatly influenced the Ethiopian education system.

The British influence on the Ethiopian education system has gradually deteriorated since the Americans replaced the British educational advisors in the mid-1950s. The supremacy

of the Americans was further strengthened after the General Agreement on Technical Cooperation between the governments of Ethiopia and the United States in the 1960s. This period, mainly from 1965 onwards, was the time of American domination Bishaw & Lasser (2012).

Although dominance shifted from Britain to American hegemony, English was the dominant foreign language in the education system. In this context, Leyew (2012: 15) clarified that during this period, "Amharic was favored by the local languages and English by the foreign languages".

2.4. The role of English in Ethiopia and its Current Status (1991 to date)

English is the most widely used international language in the world (Cha, 2007 & Seidlhofer, 2005). In Ethiopia, the government and many people consider English as a gateway to the rest of the world, opening access to better jobs and travel opportunities. Nowadays it is considered socially prestigious to be fluent in English. There are also reasons at state level why people want Ethiopians to be able to speak English. Learning the global language could improve business prospects and help the country to compete internationally. The general status of English is becoming more common in various contexts: education, commerce, research, publishing and governmental and non-governmental organizations.

As stated in the FDRE document (1994: 24), Ethiopia's current education and training policy stipulates that "English will be the medium of instruction for secondary and higher education". Furthermore, the same document prescribes the inclusion of English in education from grade one throughout the country, with an emphasis on the development of basic communication skills (FDRE MOE, 2009).

Although education and training policy recommends English as the medium of instruction at secondary and tertiary levels, implementation varies from region to region. In most regions, English is taught from Year 7, in a few as early as grade 5 (FDRE MOE, 2009).

For example, Tigray and Oromia National Regional States introduced English as a medium of instruction from grade nine. At the same time, Addis Ababa city

administration and Amhara National Regional State begin from grade seven. In contrast, the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and People (SNNP) regional State initiates English instruction from grade five, primarily due to the diverse linguistic backgrounds of students in certain areas of this region. English is thus preferred to address this linguistic diversity among students

Although Western countries never colonized Ethiopia, except during the five years of the Italian invasion, various foreign languages were introduced into the Ethiopian education system. Among these foreign languages, English is the most popular language after French and Italian. It is still the most popular foreign language in Ethiopia today and is used as a subject and medium of instruction at various levels of education. English is also used in the Ethiopian education system as the working language of various governmental and non-governmental organizations.

2.5. Defining language policy

A language policy is a strategic plan for managing potential conflicts that may arise from multiple languages, especially in public institutions, countries or large organizations that operate across different nations. This policy defines which languages should be used and developed in these contexts. In linguistically diverse communities, a language policy ensures the fair allocation of language rights to individuals and groups. As Shohamy noted in 2006, language policy, whether explicit or implicit, serves as a primary means of controlling and enforcing language behavior in decisions regarding languages and their use in education and society. She also notes that language policy determines which languages are preferred, where, when and by whom they are used. Shohamy (2006) distinguishes between overt and covert language policies. Overt language policy refers to language policy that is explicit, formalized, legally binding, codified and easily recognizable.

In contrast, covert language policy pertains to implicit, informal, unspoken, grassroots, and underlying language practices. She believes that this distinction between overt and covert language policies helps highlight the differences between narrower and broader interpretations of the term "language politics". Furthermore, Shohamy points out that the explicitness of a policy does not guarantee its effective implementation. Frequently, the

actual application of the policy, as seen in language usage, may contradict the stated policy.

Language policy, which is about language choices, is closely intertwined with language culture, as Schiffman explained in 1996. He defines language culture as a broad range of elements such as ideas, values, beliefs, attitudes, prejudices, myths, religious tenets and other cultural aspects that people bring to their linguistic interactions because of their cultural background. Language culture also refers to how spoken language is transmitted and formalized, and influences a culture's view of literacy and respect for written texts.

Schiffman (1996) argues for an approach to the study of language policy that takes into account both explicitly stated and covert de facto policies. He argues that this approach better accounts for the discrepancies between legal provisions and actual practice. Schiffman believes that a definition of language policy that focuses exclusively on its explicit and overt aspects falls short. In his opinion, such a definition neglects or underestimates the cultural perceptions of language, which can significantly influence the implementation of a language policy.

Shohamy (2006) also adopts this distinction when she talks about "real" and "declared" language policy. She claims that real language policy can be observed, understood and interpreted. She contrasts this with the declared policy in official documents, which often does not correspond to the language practice of a particular community. Language policy exists even when the authorities do not explicitly create or define it.

Even if there is a formal, written language policy, it cannot guarantee or ensure that its effects on actual language use are consistent (Spolsky, 2004: 8). Therefore, covert language policy can be identified by examining language practices. He has proposed a framework that clarifies the difference between policy and practice. First, he refers to what he calls "language beliefs", i.e., the ideologies that underlie all language policy. Secondly, there is "language practice", which he defines as the ecology of language, focusing on actual language practices in a particular context. Thirdly, he introduces the term "language management", which refers to the formulation and promulgation of a clear plan or policy regarding the use of language in an institutional setting, usually, but not necessarily, written down in a formal document.

According to Crawford (2005) in Getachew and Derib (2006: 4), language policy is:

I. Language policy refers to the official actions taken by a government through legislation, judicial rulings, executive orders, or other means, with the following objectives:

a. To regulate the use of languages in public settings.
b. To encourage the development of language skills that align with national priorities.
c. To establish and safeguard the rights of individuals or groups in acquiring, using, and preserving languages.

II. Government regulation of its language, including measures to facilitate clear communication, train and recruit staff, ensure due process, promote political participation, and access public services, procedures, and documents.

As Calvet (1998) notes, the possession of authority is crucial in formulating language policy. That is, language policy is the responsibility of the government.

2.6. Types of language policies

Language policy varies from place to place and from time to time, depending on the political orientation of governments and the nature of the existing society. Language policy seems to be divided into overt (explicit, formalized, de jure, codified, manifest) policy and covert (implicit, informal, unspoken, de facto, grassroots, latent) aspects of a policy; what is usually ignored, of course, are the covert elements of policy. Many researchers (and policymakers) believe or have taken at face value the overt and explicit formulations and statements about the status of language varieties and ignore what is happening on the ground, in the field, at the grassroots, etc. Fortunately, it is recognized in some circles that some dichotomy must be acknowledged; Gessinger (1980) posits a difference between explicit and implicit policy in the following way:

> The term "language policy" can be understood in both a narrower and broader sense, but it's important not to confuse these two definitions. They differ fundamentally in one key aspect: narrow or explicit language policy involves social decision-making specifically focused on the aspects of speakers' lives that are directly influenced by language. In contrast, structural language policy refers

> to the actions of social groups or governmental bodies that integrate those facets of life that are influenced by language into the broader realm of overall political practice (Gessinger, 1980: 22-23 in Schiffman, 1996: 14).

Gessinger (1980) distinguishes between explicit and structural, the latter incorporating linguistic conditions into the basic assumptions of the state's political structure and modus operandi, which is different from what I call language culture, but its structural language politics would certainly be a component of what language culture would entail.

Before proceeding, it would be appropriate to ask why countries need language policies. Using languages for various purposes, such as education, administration, communication, etc., does not cause problems in monolingual countries. However, as Getachew and Derib (2006) noted, in multilingual countries such as Ethiopia, the issue creates problems, and language policies usually support the use of languages.

2.7. Historical development of language policy in Ethiopia's education system

Language and language use in Ethiopia have a long and complex history of development behind them. Ethiopia is a multilingual, multicultural, multiethnic and multireligious country with diverse social structures and practices. Kings, emirs, sheikhs, queens, emperors, juntas and prime ministers who ruled Ethiopia pursued different language policies to suit their political ideologies.

In the period before Hailesellasie I, the language policies of the various regimes in Ethiopia had common features. Although the rulers had different ideologies and political milieus, their language policies were covert (de facto), endoglossic and assimilationist. Thus, as a rule, one or two languages were used without written documents or other evidence. The status quo was accepted as the rule, and people in the country were expected to master these languages in order to communicate with the governments.

2.7.1. During the Reign of Minilik II (1889-1909)

Modern education was introduced in Ethiopia at the beginning of the 20th century and officially began with the opening of the Minilik II school ('Ecole Imperiale Minilik II') in 1908 (McNab, 1989: 77). The Ethiopian Orthodox Church, which had a virtual monopoly on education at the time, was critical of the establishment of a secular school, fearing that

the school would corrupt the social and religious values and norms of society and the church (Heugh et al., 2007: 45). The aim of the modern school was therefore limited to the teaching of European languages such as French, English and Italian. The secret of teaching these languages was that they were essential for maintaining the country's autonomy by providing it with elites who could negotiate the interests of the monarchy through the 'so-called international languages' (Heugh et al., 2007: 45).

In addition to European languages, the curricula of the first school also included languages such as Arabic, Amharic, and Geez, as well as subjects such as arithmetic, science, physical education, and sports (Anshu, 2004: 3). This indicates that the first curriculum of modern education in the country was dominated by language education.

2.7.2. During the Reign of Haileselassie I (1930-1974)

Evidence shows that French was the only language of instruction until 1925, when the second state elementary school (Teferi Mekonnen Primary School) was opened (Yohannes, 1998: 208). At the latest with the opening of this school, English shared the status of the second foreign language used as MOI. Since then, the two languages (French and English) remained the languages of instruction until the Italian occupation of Ethiopia in 1936 (ibid.).

The choice of this second MOI was not without reason. The first reason was that no school used a foreign language as MOI, apart from the few traditional ecclesiastical and Quranic schools that used Geez and Arabic respectively. The second reason was that the contemporary traditional schools of the time were limited in every way. The educational goal was to train capable elites who would facilitate the functioning of a modern state and accelerate the centralization process (Simon, 1993: 26). Thus, under the pretext of using English as an additional MOI, the Emperor was able to persuade both Britain and America to establish new schools and modernise the old ones (ibid.).

After the Italian occupation, however, the modern education system was completely destroyed (Bender, 1976: 320). Bender further explains that after the occupation of Addis Ababa in May 1936, the Italian invaders initially decided to reject any national language for the conquered country (ibid.). Consequently, by an edict of 1936, they propagated six main local languages as the language of instruction in the six administrative units of their

East African empire by making Italian the primary language of instruction (Heugh et al., 2007: 46).

Thus, Tigrinya and Arabic in Eritrea, Amharic in Amhara, Amharic and Oromo in Addis Ababa, Harari and Oromo in Harar, Oromo and Kaficho in Sidama and Somali in Somali were used in their respective areas (ibid.). The language policy pursued by the fascists was not for educational purposes but to divide and rule the nation along ethnic and religious lines. Such a policy was seen as a separatist movement, as Italy's attempt to combat "nationalist sentiments" (McNab, 1989: 78).

After the evacuation of the Italians in 1941, English became the predominant national language at all levels of education (Simon, 1993: 26). As a result, the Ethiopian and British governments agreed in 1942 to import both teaching materials and examinations from Britain, and this arrangement lasted until 1958/59 (Anshu 2004: 4; Heugh et al., 2007: 46). However, in the early 1960s, Amharic was officially declared the language of instruction at the primary level (grades 1-6) due to the Ethiopian Constitution of 1955, which declared Amharic as the official language of the country (McNab, 1989: 79).

The MOI's switch from English to Amharic at primary level dates back to a study conducted by the Department of Research and Curriculum Development (DRCD) in the early 1960s. According to Heugh et al. (2007: 46), there were two reasons for changing the language of instruction from English to Amharic at the primary level. The first reason was that children were handicapped by having to learn a foreign language that more than 60% of them would not need after leaving school (Stoddart, 1986: 9-10). The second reason was that much of the subject matter was taught incorrectly or inadequately due to the language barrier (Heugh et al., 2007: 46-47). This change undoubtedly enabled Amharic-speaking learners to start with the known and learn through a familiar language, which makes more pedagogical sense than starting with the unknown and learning through an unfamiliar language in the initial stages (ibid.).

Nevertheless, this language policy of the imperial government was criticised and rejected because it pursued the goal of assimilation by using only one language (Amharic) throughout the country despite the country's linguistic diversity (Hameso, 1997: 157).

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Education and Fine Arts conducted a general assessment of primary education in 1962 and made some recommendations in 1963/4.

Tamene (2000) states that one of the recommendations was:

> to introduce English in grade 3 because the simultaneous introduction of two languages, Amharic and English, in grade 1 would be challenging for children who do not speak Amharic. Based on these recommendations, a new English curriculum was designed for secondary education in 1963/4. According to this curriculum, the teaching of English in secondary education extended over six years, with the first two years (grades 7 and 8) being "experimental years," which later became junior secondary education. The document states that intensive English language courses would be offered nine hours per week in grades 7 and 8 (Tamene, 2000: 13).

Towards the end of Haile Selassie's reign, however, not much attention was paid to the quality of education in general and the improvement of English education in particular due to the political situation in the country. Thus, the university students' movement under the slogan 'land to the plough', which led to a liberation campaign that thoroughly considered the issue of nationalities and languages, was intensified and led to the end of the system in 1974 (Balsvick, 2005: 278).

2.7.3. During the "Derg" Regime (1974-1991)

After the military government took power in 1974, it proclaimed that the problem of nationalities could be solved if "each nationality has the right to determine the content of its political, economic and social life, to use its languages, etc." (McNab, 1989: 84). Thus, during the National Literacy Campaign in non-formal education, which started in 1975, fifteen Ethiopian languages (including Amharic) were used as MOI, while Amharic continued to serve as MOI in formal primary education (Heugh et al., 2007: 88; McNab, 1989: 184). In traditional education, the military government made some controversial changes regarding the relative importance of Amharic as MOI compared to EMI. On the one hand, Amharic was used on a trial basis in seventy experimental junior secondary schools (grades 7 and 8) instead of EMI (McNab, 1989: 86). On the other hand, the

Ethiopian School Leaving Certificate Examination (ESLCE) required a grade in English, not Amharic, for admission to university (ibid.).

Nonetheless, the Ministry of Education conducted a study on Evaluative Research on the General Education System of Ethiopia (ERGESE) by Stoddart (1986) to obtain information on the use of MOI in the country's education system. Based on his field surveys, Stoddart, who gave English the status of a 'second language' in Ethiopia, explained the English proficiency of the vast majority of Ethiopian students who use English as a medium of instruction.

Even in the classrooms, students do not have sufficient English proficiency to understand what they hear from their teachers or read in their textbooks, let alone actively participate by speaking and writing. At best, students rely on memorization without actively engaging in critical and creative thinking. At worst, this results in some or perhaps even many students, whose English skills do not even allow for effective memorization, spending most of their class time simply copying notes that the teacher has written on the board (Stoddart, 1986: 6-7).

Stoddart's (1986) designation of English as a "second language" in Ethiopia is therefore misleading because, as he convincingly argues, Ethiopian students could not even use TL effectively in class, let alone as a second language (Berhanu, 2009: 6). Stoddart's (1986) study also shows that the use of Amharic as the language of instruction in elementary school, especially among non-Amharic speaking children, and the use of English as the language of instruction in middle and high school seriously affects the quality of education. In his report, he emphasised that the role of EMI is insignificant so that it is no longer appropriate to call it EMI; "rather, it has become a medium of obstruction" (7).

As a result, he recommended the establishment of an additional lesson for Amharic and the urgent need to replace English with Amharic as MOI in secondary schools (ibid.). From the recommendation, it can be concluded that the report ignored the status of English as a world language, so it was necessary to pay special attention to it. Thus, ERGESE should have recommended how the provision of English could be improved to enhance students' TL proficiency rather than suggesting that it should be abandoned at secondary school level.

In general, the imperial and 'Derg' regimes were similar in that both pursued a monolingual education policy at the primary level, although research findings from both governments showed that the quality of education was affected by the use of Amharic (for non-Amharic speaking children) and English as the language of instruction at the primary and secondary levels respectively.

2.7.4. The present practice (1991 to date)

After the fall of the 'Derg regime' in 1991, the history of the languages of Ethiopian nations and nationalities changed. The Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) focused, among other things, on the rights of nations and nationalities to use their languages. For example, the fifth article of sub-articles 1 and 2 of the constitution ratified in 1995 states that (1) "all Ethiopian languages shall enjoy equal recognition and (2) Amharic shall be the working language of the federal government" (FDRE Constitution, 1995: 3).

The new policy on languages of instruction in elementary school, which is the strongest manifestation of the new government's language policy, states that learning in one's mother tongue (listen, MT) is a right of the learner and has educational benefits. To quote, "[c]onsidering the educational advantage for the child to learn in MT and the right of nationalities to promote the use of their languages, primary education is provided in the nationality languages" (MOE, 1994: 23). As a result of this language policy, there are many languages that are currently used as MOI in elementary school. In addition, Amharic, Afan Oromo and Tigrinya are taught as subjects up to high school level. In addition, Amharic, Afan Oromo, Tigrinya, Wolaytinya, Gammo, Sidama and Kafa are used for the training of primary school teachers (Heugh et al., 2007: 105). This shows that more importance is being attached to the development of the languages and cultures of the nationalities than ever before.

In addition to the indigenous languages, English also plays an important role in Ethiopian education and other areas of society. Articles 3.5.5, 3.5.7 and 3.5.8 of the 1994 Education and Training Policy are evidence of the importance of English. The articles state that (a) English will be the medium of instruction for secondary and higher education, (b) English

will be taught as a subject from grade one, and (c) the necessary steps will be taken to strengthen language teaching at all levels (FDRE Constitution, 1995: 3).

At various points in Ethiopia's history, political motives thwart any systematic approach to the policy process. For example, the historic education sector review programme initiated in the early 1970s to undertake fundamental education reform in the country was aborted before implementation because it was politicised and polarised by the conflicting political objectives of the stakeholders, which eventually contributed to the fall of the imperial regime in 1974 (Ayalew, 1999).

The formulation and implementation process of the current language policy is also a typical victim of this unintended trend. Shortly after the current government took power as a transitional government in 1991, it convened a conference for peace and democracy in Addis Ababa from July 2-6, 1991 (Ayalew, 1999). Among other things, the conference adopted a policy directive that provided for the immediate introduction of primary education in the five main ethnic languages. It was also decided that the languages could be written in different scripts. Accordingly, the Latin alphabet replaced the Ethiopian alphabet for the Cushitic languages (where most of the minority language groups live), while the Ethiopic alphabet was retained for the Semitic language groups.

This decision raises some legitimate questions. First, who did the conference involve in this important political decision? The meeting was composed of political parties claiming to represent different ethnic groups. However, as some scholars argue (e.g., Ayalew, 1999), there is no evidence that the speakers of the respective languages were consulted to examine their needs. The language of instruction policy was supported by high-ranking officials from the very beginning. Therefore, it did not take long for it to appear as a political agenda and for various partners to be involved in its development.

In retrospect, it seems worthwhile to ask which circles were involved in the formulation of the official document (even if it was written long after the introduction of several languages).

The formulation of a general education policy (of which language policy was an important part) was delegated to five sub-working groups with a total of about 42 members (Hameso, 1997). Most of the participants in the working groups were from the

Ministry of Education, Addis Ababa University and the Ministries of Development (such as Health, Agriculture, Science and Technology). After reviewing the draft, the Ministry of Education held several meetings with teachers in Addis Ababa and seven other regional cities.

The sad part, however, as noted by some authors, e.g., Hameso (1997), is that the results of the meetings with the educators were not incorporated into the final policy. An evaluation of the draft against the comments supposedly made by the Ministry of Education reveals nothing of substance but a rubber stamp. Worse still, by that time (and to date), the Ethiopian Teachers' Union had split into two opposing factions (one pro-EPRDF/government and the other independent). As a result of this conflict, the independent teachers' union in particular has not made any significant contribution to improving the draft.

To summarise, although Ethiopia is a multilingual country, for much of its history only one language (Amharic) was used as the language of instruction in elementary school. It was not until 1974, when the socialist government came to power, that the use of ethnic languages (also called "nationality languages"," as the current government uses this terminology synonymously with "ethnic languages" in its official documents) for teaching purposes was made an issue. Why has it taken so long for ethnic languages to become a political issue in Ethiopia? Part of the answer to this question can be found in the country's history, particularly in its system of government. For several centuries, Ethiopia was ruled by a feudal monarchy.

Therefore, it was completely unthinkable for the imperial regime to address ethnic issues on the basis of democratic values. The government's determination to remove ethnic languages from the political agenda could also be linked to the country's long history of independence. Successive imperial regimes advocated the use of a single national language to preserve the integrity of the country. The introduction of other languages for educational purposes was seen as a harbinger of national disintegration. In all cases, the imperial regime was not far-sighted enough to recognise the danger of imposing a single national language on the multi-ethnic nation, which amounted to "a "defacto declaration of war on the others" (Hameso, 1997: 2).

The socialist government that came to power in 1974 moved from promoting one language as an instrument of national unity to promoting the use of other languages according to its political orientation. One notable effort during this period was the political decision to implement adult literacy programs in fifteen ethnic languages (Ayalew, 1999). The literacy program (campaign) started in 1979 and only ended with the fall of the socialist government in 1991. Another notable policy decision of the socialist regime was the transcription of these languages into the Ethiopian script (traditionally used for the country's Semitic languages), most of which previously existed in unwritten form. However, these languages were confined to the non-formal education sector and the government did not push for them to be used as languages of instruction in the formal system (Ayalew, 1999). Therefore, Amharic (a Semitic language) remained the only national language used as the language of instruction for formal education at the primary level.

When the current government came to power in 1991, the stage was set for ethnic languages to become a major political issue again. Two factors, among others, reinforced the need for this change. The first was the political orientation of the government. After replacing the totalitarian socialist regime, the government introduced "Western democracy" and the values associated with it. Freedom, equality, justice, truth and respect for human rights became the government's agenda (Tefera, 1999). The second factor was that the ruling party, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), gave ethnic-based politics an unprecedented importance in the country's history. The EPRDF, which mainly represents the Tigraway (Tigrians) ethnic group, labeled the Amhara ethnic group as oppressors and all non-Amhara ethnic groups as oppressed whose languages, traditions and cultures were suppressed (Tefera, 1999).

Amharic was the official language of the Ethiopian empire (Bulcha, 1997) and is required for recruitment and promotion in the civil service and other well-paid jobs – proficiency in Amharic measures student success. For over a century, the Oromos and other ethnic groups have been forced to communicate with Amharic-speaking lawyers, teachers, judges, policemen, doctors, security officers and others. Very often, the Oromos and other ethnic groups have to pay for translators. This language policy denies the Oromo

and other ethnic groups the right to access information and develop their literature. As a result, they have been excluded from literature, art, science and music. Oromos and other ethnic groups can buy Abyssinian books, magazines and newspapers and listen to Abyssinian music, which creates jobs and business opportunities for Abyssinians (Bulcha, 1997).

In its attempt to eliminate these inequalities, the current government has made the issue of ethnic languages its top agenda and political priority. In this sense, it can also be argued that it was an opportune time to tackle the issue. However, the question is how this laudable issue was addressed (i.e., the policy process), as there is no indication that the respective speakers of the languages were consulted to know their needs. Senior officials have supported the language of instruction policy from the beginning.

2.8. Contribution of the church and the schools in the history of Ethiopian language policy

The current state of Ethiopian language policy cannot be presented without showing the historical connection between Amharic, Geez and the traditional church school system. The traditional church schools served to educate the people until they were replaced by modern schools (Pankhurst, 1955: 232). The Ethiopian Orthodox Church schools were mainly used to teach the religious beliefs, values and practices of the Ethiopian Church at that time. The system consisted of three different, successive stages. These levels can be referred to as elementary, secondary and advanced. The first level taught reading and writing in Ge'ez and Amharic. The second level taught "Zema Bet" or "School of Music". The third level was called "Kiné Bet", which means "School of Poetry". In all cases, the focus was on training priests and deacons for service in the Orthodox Church (Messay, 2006). Gradually, however, Geez was restricted to pastoral ministry, while Amharic, especially under Tewodros II, became the language of administration, court and communication. It can be inferred from this that the leaders used indigenous languages. However, the focus was only on Amharic and Geez, among many other indigenous languages of Ethiopia, as the heads of state and church at the time were from these languages. The Ethiopian ruler of the time (Tewodros II) wanted to unify Ethiopia under

a centralised power and was the first Ethiopian monarch to have the Ethiopian royal chronicle written in Amharic. This can be seen as a de facto covert language policy.

2.9. Ideology behind the language policy

The explicit reason for the language policy of the imperial regime was the creation of a centralised, homogeneous state. It was assumed that the various ethnic groups (more than 80 in number) living on the territory of Ethiopia would gain territorial legitimacy through the adoption of the Amharic language. Therefore, language policy was to serve as the main instrument of nation-building and illustrate the close link between language and politics. This was well understood by the various Ethiopian ruling elites, all of whom sought to suppress the linguistic identities of the population.

The basic ideology of the imperial language policy generally aims to unite the different linguistic communities. In such a situation, everyone was expected to fit into the monolingual and monocultural pattern of behaviour that was considered the norm in the country. In all government activities, care has been taken to ensure that every member of a linguistic community can use the dominant language - Amharic. This has contributed to Amharic gaining prestige and superiority over other languages. As Herriman and Burnaby (1996: 8) note, the objectives of language policy vary according to context. Accordingly, the objectives of the imperial language policy seem to be to solve language-related problems and to promote national unity through language. However, this language policy of the imperial government was criticised and rejected because it pursued the goal of assimilation as it favoured the use of a single language throughout the country for communication, education and office work despite the linguistic diversity in the country.

2.10. Politics of the languages and stigmatization of other languages in Ethiopia

In the past three Ethiopian regimes, education was highly politicised. Schools promoted the ideology of the government and provided a home for political unrest (Netsanet Gebre-Mariam 2002, cited in Begna, 2006). Therefore, it has always been a challenge to design and implement language policies that meet the needs of language minority students. Key challenges include questions such as: How can we address the linguistic needs of minority students while maintaining high academic standards? Should the role of the minority language be cultural maintenance or facilitation of native language instruction?

To what extent does the use of the minority language prepare the child for the global world?

Moreover, Ethiopian language policy has its basis in conquest, military and political subjugation as well as economic exploitation and socio-economic marginalisation (see Bulcha, 2002; Holcomb & Ibsa, 1990; Jalata, 2005 mentioned in Begna, 2006). The aforementioned authors added that the present status of English, French, Portuguese and Russian shows how successfully and ruthlessly the principle of language imposition was applied (Phillipson, 1999, cited in Begna, 2006). The colonial rulers claimed that their colonial motives were a "civilising mission". Accordingly, they claimed that language was neutral and that the imposition of a colonial language would have no social, political or health consequences for the colonised. However, examining overall language use, practices, and policies in Ethiopia might reveal that "language is not value-free and is intertwined with power" (Begna, 2006: 8, citing Wright, 2001). Imperial language use and practices could not escape this reality of selfish representation and "royal" propagation.

Amanuel Raga (2012: 219) gives an example of how Ethiopia has linguistically stigmatised Afan Oromo and other nationality languages for centuries due to negative attitudes towards their speakers. He describes that from the 19th to the 20th century, Afan Oromo and other nationality languages were threatened by the Amharic-speaking ruling elites who had imposed a policy called Amharization in the name of political unity. Amharization, which lasted for a century, did not promote any language and culture other than Amharic and the Amhara culture. As a result of this policy, the use of Afan Oromo and other nationality languages was also banned in any form of public communication (Mekuria, 1997). Robichaux (2005, cited in Raga, 2012) has argued that Amharization was not simply a means of nation-building but involved cruel and racist intentions to suppress the Afan Oromo and other nationality languages and identities that ended up in the creation of fixed ethnic boundaries between the other Ethiopian nations and the Amhara.

According to Kembo-Sure (2003: 252 in Amlaku, 2010), policy makers should take into account the following considerations for a good language policy: "impact on human

rights of minorities, economic benefits of each language, national integration, government efficiency, group identity and personal identity, esthetic expression". The scholar added that politicians and politically engaged experts usually disregard one or more of the above points when making decisions. It is a pity that since Ethiopia has existed as a sovereign country, its language use, practices and policies have never met these and several other requirements that could facilitate development and change.

Amlaku (2010), citing Heugh and colleagues (2006), further explains that such high-level policy documents do not guarantee a clear understanding of what they mean in implementation. Therefore, institutions and activities such as language education policy, language planning, language management and their components (status planning, corpus planning, acquisition planning, etc.) are needed in the hierarchy of institutions and decision-making bodies.

Amharic was seen as a language that represents the nation and brings people together in various spheres of life such as education, public service, social interactions, trade and business. It was used to teach, communicate and conduct transactions. (Getachew & Derib, 2006; Hirut, 2007). The use of Amharic before Hailesilassie I was de facto a language policy, as there was neither a written constitution nor a political document. From Hailesilassie I onwards, constitutions were written, but there were no clear statements on language policy, and the use of Amharic as the national language was relatively "de jure".

As mentioned earlier, the political motive of the imperial regime was the policy of "one nation – one language and culture" The practical status of Amharic as a national language had a historical background that began in mediaeval Ethiopia. At that time, Amharic was referred to as the language of the king and emperors and was only used at court and in administration (Henze, 2000: 78). However, the physical and political geography of the state was different from the modern one.

Emperor Haileselassie I adopted the modern situation and the issue of a unified language. That is, a unified Ethiopia in terms of territorial boundaries, central administration and language policy as had been practiced by his predecessors. This can be seen as natural given the process of forming a nation-state (Fairclough, 1989: 56). In the meantime, it is

worth considering the Ethiopian situation of the languages of "nations, nationalities and peoples" vis-à-vis the Amharic language. Spolsky (2004: 174) puts the number of languages spoken in Ethiopia at 82, but of these languages, Amharic was declared the preferred language, a policy adopted by the regime of Emperor Haile Selassie. The International Dictionary of World Languages points out that the current status and widespread use of Amharic is primarily due to the Amharicization policies of previous Ethiopian governments in the 20th century. However, the actions of Yohannes IV may be questionable in this regard.

Getachew and Derib (2006) argue that Emperor Hailesellassie's single language policy, Amharic, was because it was a kind of alignment with the language policies of other African countries that had gained independence from colonialism and that this would be a sign of unity in any African state.

Such an argument is justified by referring to the Ethiopian student movement in the 1960s, which itself avoided such ethnic and linguistic divisions among Ethiopians, which can be seen as an expression of a unified perception with other African nationalists (Kifle, 1993: 51). He adds that the Abyssinian character of Ethiopian nationalism and identity was taken for granted. For example, the neglect of all other languages in favour of Amharic was not mentioned (52).

However, these views are contradictory. On the one hand, the emperor's actions were a continuation of the royal policies of his predecessors in a stricter sense. And on the other hand, the student movements and other African nationalists stand by it, but only temporarily. So even if these two views seem to coincide, they are only coincidental. On this basis, the imperial regime's policy of preferring Amharic is motivated by its political nature of Amharization (Kifle, 1993).

It is important to know that in the times of kings, queens and emperors, not all people accepted the choice of a common/official language. As a rule, this was one of the reasons for political conflicts in the world and Ethiopia on the periphery. In this context, Corson (1996) states the following:

> When geogaphy, political boundaries, religion, ethnicity, and language coincide, there is usually little conflict over language policy, and minority groups whose

> political aspirations and language practices differ from the monolingual majority often find little room to make a claim for multilingualism. However, when categories such as geography, ethnicity, and religion intersect language and literacy, the potential for controversy and even conflict multiplies (Corson, 1996: 115).

Corson (1996) noted that a properly planned language policy could avoid the potential political problems of identifying the language needs of the nation in the various communities and cultural groups it encompasses and the role of language in general and individual languages in particular in the life of the nation. It also examines the resources available and identifies strategies for the management and development of language resources that can be aligned with the interests of the nation through the work of an appropriate planning agency. Language policy also differs according to the political orientation of governments and the nature of society at a particular time. Some governments pursue an overt policy. Others pursue a covert language policy (Getachew & Derb, 2006).

2.11. Mother-tongue-based multilingual education

Multilingual teaching (MTB) is a teaching technique that specialises in building a bridge between the student's mother tongue and one or more other languages used at school. Let us say a young child has difficulty expressing an idea in their language of thought and communication. In this case, it becomes a challenge for them to understand the corresponding concepts in the second language (L2) (Pinnock et al., 2011: 8). Therefore, the main goal of multilingual MTB teaching is to cultivate children's cognitive skills and reasoning so that they can successfully use their national language in the classroom, similar to a broader national or global linguistic exchange. The children's cultural background, environment and mental elements also play a crucial role in the robust execution of multilingual MTB training. The early years of teaching and learning are all about listening and speaking, analysing and writing, engaging children in conversation and encouraging them to speak in a language they are most familiar with and can use to communicate without difficulty (Pinnock, 2009: 11).

As a rule, this language is the child's local or first language, referred to as L1. Multilingual MTB training is a method that allows children to learn a language they already know by anchoring the subject in their familiar environment and their cultural and historical past. This technique allows children to systematically and regularly acquire a 2nd or third language while simultaneously grasping the subject matter in the new language. This technique is in line with the social constructivist concept of familiarization.

Multilingual MTB teaching is therefore an academic program that considers and acknowledges the child's way of life and context as inspiration for knowledge acquisition (Pinter, 2017: 17). It is a dependent software that focuses on language acquisition and cognitive improvement, creating a solid instructional foundation (Barac et al., 2014: 4). In addition, it takes into account the child's cultural and intellectual heritage as well as their environment to address the fundamental pedagogical principle that learning must build on what is already known before introducing new standards (Rata, 2018: 168). Multilingual MTB teaching is a program in which the child's mother tongue is used as the medium of instruction for all subjects in the early years of schooling and a second or third language is gradually introduced as the child progresses in their education (Pinnock, 2009: 11). In this context, it is important to note that the mere use of the mother tongue as a subject is not considered MTB MLE (Skutnabb-Kangas & Heugh, 2012: 2). In this context, Van der Walt (2013: 6) explains that bilingual or multilingual education means that students use different languages in unique ways, relying on word choice and language types to support their knowledge acquisition and the achievement of their educational goals.

Van der Walt (2013: 6) emphasizes that focusing on a single language for children's education not only runs counter to notions of social justice, but also hinders powerful learning and the right to access expertise. MTB MLE, on the other hand, advocates early teaching in a language that children know and observes the introduction of a second language (L2) for broader communication. This approach emphasizes the importance of children mastering their first language at the basic academic level, a crucial step in facilitating the acquisition of a second or third language.

Using the primary language (L1) in the early years of education does not mean excluding other school languages such as Amharic or English, which are added in later years as subjects or, in the case of Ethiopia, as Medium of Instruction (MOI) (Derash, 2012: 11). Instead, the aim is to give children the opportunity to begin their learning adventure now in a language they already know and with a challenge that resonates with their environment and their cultural and historical past. They can then systematically and gradually move on to new languages and content. Skattum and Brock-Utne (2009: 105) urge that advocacy of multilingual practice should not be understood as a rejection of world languages for wider linguistic exchange. Rather, it is about selling flexible language policies in education that facilitate the teaching and learning of a nearby language and a language that supports the subsequent understanding of other languages for wider linguistic exchange.

According to Baker (2006: 293), mother tongue education (MTE) plays a crucial role in the development of first language (L1) skills for both majority and minority language youth throughout their educational journey. It also has the advantage of preserving minority languages. Both Baker (2006: 293) and Dutcher (2004: 11) emphasise the importance of MTE as a fundamental aspect of children's educational achievement. They base this on historical quotes from the UNESCO Act (1953) entitled "Use of Vernacular Languages in Education":

1. "The best way to teach a child is to teach it in its mother tongue. From a psychological point of view, their minds instinctively use the system of meaningful symbols to express and understand themselves. From a sociological point of view, it serves as a means of finding identity within their community. Pedagogically, children learn faster when they are taught in a language they are familiar with than in an unfamiliar language medium" (UNESCO, 1953: 11).
2. "Emphasis must be placed on teaching in the mother tongue and continuing to use this language during lessons. It is strongly recommended that students begin their education in their mother tongue, as they will recognize it better, allowing for a smoother transition between their home and instructors life" (UNESCO, 1953: 47-48).

In both quotations, valid reasons are given for using one's mother tongue as the primary medium of instruction. Consequently, both ideas suggest the introduction of multilingual teaching in MTB. Skutnabb-Kangas and Heugh (2012: 2) claim that the choice of language in which different subjects are taught in school is crucial for students' classroom performance and impact. Furthermore, studies by Blaz (2018) and Mustafawi and Shaaban (2019) have found that languages are essential for neighbourhood, local, national, and global conversation.

According to Gopang and colleagues (2018: 207), the use of mother tongue as MOI in schools is an appropriate approach that not only benefits new generations in terms of education and the acquisition of external scientific knowledge, but is also essential for the preservation and promotion of societies' indigenous languages.

The effectiveness of MTB multilingual education depends on several factors, as outlined by Ball (2011: 6). These factors include:

- attitudes and behaviours of parents and communities,
- individual and social factors that influence proficiency in the language of instruction,
- access to school,
- inclusion in education,
- the status of the mother tongue (whether it has high or low status and whether it's a majority or minority language),
- the quality of instruction.

While these factors are critical to the success of any educational program, they are especially important in areas where minority languages are spoken and children use their native language. Skutnabb-Kangas and Heugh (2012: 272) also highlight critical factors that are essential for the successful implementation of multilingual MTB education, including:

- teacher quality and working conditions,
- improved quality and availability of curriculum materials,
- enhanced instructional support to help children comprehend their lessons,
- community participation to support the development of schools.

Furthermore, Malone (2016: 16) identifies what she refers to as the essential components necessary for the success and sustainability of MTB multilingual education. These ten components are as follows: preliminary research, realistic implementation plan, awareness raising and mobilization, acceptable alphabets, curriculum and instructional materials, reading and learning materials, teacher recruitment and training, monitoring and evaluations, supportive partnerships, supportive MTB MLE policy. Malone (2010, 2016) describes why and how each element must be applied in order to carry out the programme. Accordingly, their reasons are summarised below:

1. Preliminary research: This component emphasizes the need for policy makers to find organizations or individuals capable of conducting preliminary research in each language community. Such research will help to identify the language that students speak at home and in their communities. It also identifies available national, regional and local resources that can support the program. In addition, factors at these levels that may hinder the implementation and sustainability of the program will be identified.
2. Supportive policy: This component focuses on the development of a language policy that promotes mother tongue education (MTE). It is important to ensure that education sector leaders and relevant officials involved in MTE align their efforts with this policy. Without such a policy, it will be difficult to mobilize the necessary material and human resources for the program. A supportive policy is crucial in this context.
3. Supportive partnership: A supportive partnership is crucial for the joint efforts of stakeholders, including INGOs and local NGOs, with the government to play a prominent role in the successful implementation of the programme.
4. Raising awareness and mobilization: Raising awareness and mobilizing key stakeholders are key objectives. This includes providing all stakeholders with the information, support and motivation needed to implement and maintain a mother tongue education system. This component is to ensure that parents understand the purpose and benefits of such an education system and have confidence that their children will benefit from it. It is also about supporting community leaders for

multilingual MTB education and expanding awareness efforts from the local community to the national level.

5. Acceptable alphabets: The development of alphabets is an important aspect of multilingual MTB teaching, especially for languages that do not have a writing system. The process involves various steps, such as language surveys, language analysis, the creation of sample alphabets, testing of these alphabets, revisions, and obtaining approval from speakers of the language, linguists, and other stakeholders.
6. Curriculum and instructional materials: The development of curriculum materials that align with the MTB MLE packet middle objectives is essential. These materials should help students achieve their research.
7. Reading and learning materials: A rich collection of books and analysis materials is crucial to help students learn, test and write. Therefore, the creation of quality native language materials is central to the success of MTB MLE programs, and it is recommended that native speakers be involved in the development.
8. Recruitment and training of teachers: Effective teachers are central to the implementation of quality educational programs. They must be highly motivated and understand the importance of MTB MLE for children's educational success. Ongoing support and adequate training are essential for teachers to ensure student success.
9. Realistic Implementation Plan: A well-defined and practical plan is necessary to achieve the goals of the programme and meet the expectations of the stakeholders. This plan should take into account the components outlined in Malone's diagram.
10. Monitoring and evaluation: This component is of great importance for the success of MTB MLE programs. A well-structured and well-designed monitoring and evaluation plan contributes significantly to the success of the program.

In summary, each component of MTB MLE is critical, and understanding its implementation is critical to the success of the programme.

2.11.1. Mother-tongue-based multilingual education and its impact on the development of other sectors

Education has recently taken center stage and become a central issue in politics and society. It is the cornerstone for economic transformation and the promotion of civil society in developed and developing countries (Joshi & Verspoor, 2012: 49). Education is a crucial factor in driving a country's development. Joshi and Verspoor note that discussions between governments and international organizations increasingly revolve around "learning" or "lifelong learning" rather than just "education" This shift is in line with the political and economic drive to create a knowledge-based economy and society for the future. Many scholars and educators agree that Mother Tongue Based Multilingual Education (MTB MLE) is a means of promoting social, economic and political progress.

In this context, Ouane and Glanz (2010: 16-20) explicitly emphasize the importance of MTB MLE as a tool for conflict resolution because it respects the cultural and linguistic identities of different ethnic groups. They emphasize that the recognition of diversity does not undermine the unity of a nation, as individuals can identify with the state amidst their multiple identities. They also emphasize the direct impact of MTB MLE on the environment. As Wolff explains in Ouane and Glanz (2011: 53), the importance of language vitality for development is often underestimated outside professional circles. Wolff (2011: 53-54) emphasizes that given the multilingual nature of almost all African societies, effective communication for development in Africa requires the use of multilingual strategies for the following reasons:

- Development strategies need to be conveyed when stakeholders come from diverse linguistic backgrounds.
- Communication predominantly occurs through spoken or written language, whether in a foreign, official, indigenous, or local language.
- Effective communication relies on shared language proficiency and language repertoires. For development, local people and advisors or consultants must communicate using languages the local population understands

Numerous scholars have examined the role of education in promoting individual freedom and self-determination, as well as its centrality and pride in the pursuit of development

(Djité, 2008: 53). Some studies emphasize the close link between education and productivity, a crucial factor for development. Although development is often associated with economic growth, it must also encompass other important areas such as education and health. It is a harsh reality that an uneducated (illiterate) population faces significant challenges in escaping poverty and adopting a more progressive way of life. The need to educate every generation is undeniable. A workforce in poor health will struggle to produce enough output to benefit both the individual and the nation. Brock and Alexiadou (2013: 2) refer to key frameworks such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Education for All (EFA) documents. They emphasize that a central theme running through the MDGs and SDGs is "development" and highlight the importance of formal education for national development, particularly for economic progress.

Wolff (2011: 65) emphasises the significant impact of mother tongue-based multilingual education (MTB MLE) on social and economic development. In terms of social development, he highlights MTB MLE as a mechanism for conflict resolution through the recognition of linguistic and cultural diversity. In this context, Wolff (2011: 65) emphasises three important points:

- The recognition of cultural identities has helped to resolve conflicts rather than exacerbate them, because cultural identity is not usually the cause of disputes.
- Multilingualism is, at its core, about belonging. Individuals inherently possess multiple identities (e.g., gender, religion, nationality, profession, ethnic groups and social affiliation) and identify with and share the values of different social groups. The recognition of diversity is therefore not contradictory to the unity of a nation, as identification with the state is only one facet of an individual's identity.

There is no evidence of a negative correlation between economic development and linguistic and cultural diversity. There is evidence that economic growth is strengthened because empowered and creative people can make an important contribution in a diverse environment.

UNESCO (2014a: 144) summarizes the above points by saying: "Education empowers individuals to break free from the cycle of persistent poverty and prevents the transmission of poverty across generations". This underlines the important role that education plays in alleviating poverty.

A report supported by UNICEF (2016: 12), which focuses on an initiative on language, education and social cohesion in Malaysia, highlights that including the mother tongue of minority language groups in the education system is a way to honor their culture, history and traditions. These elements are important aspects of development and serve as a means to prevent discrimination between minority and majority languages.

In this context, the choice of the language of instruction becomes even more important, as it ensures that the culture and history of a particular community is deeply rooted in its language. Equitable and universal education is crucial to creating a just, healthy and socially inclusive society. Similarly, Djité (2008: 79) argues that sustainable development is unattainable without language, as language forms the basis for communication and understanding and is a prerequisite for all other forms of learning. For Djité, mother tongue education (MTE) embraces the basic principles of learning and recognizes the existing knowledge and practices within each language community. Brock and Alexiadou (2013: 95-96) emphasize the importance of education for sustainable development and the need to design education policy with this in mind.

Modernization theory, which focuses on educational growth, goes beyond the productive skills of individuals and encompasses changes in their attitudes in all areas of life (ibid.). This theory emphasizes internal or domestic factors that contribute to development, including the development of industrial and commercial infrastructure, investment in human capital, and changes in individual attitudes, skills, and social relationships. A key internal factor, particularly in the area of education, is a community's sociolinguistic heritage — its mother tongue – a key factor in development. Djité (2008: 53-54) emphasizes the link between education and productivity by referring to a study conducted in 13 developing countries. This study found that a four-year primary school education increases the productivity of small businesses by 7-10. All economists and education

experts unanimously recognize the paramount role of education for development and particularly emphasize the importance of mother tongue education (MTE).

2.11.2. Models, principles, and practices in mother-tongue-based multilingual education

The success of mother tongue multilingual education (MTB MLE) depends on several critical factors. The most important are the development of an appropriate curriculum, comprehensive teacher training and a well-structured plan for parent or language community involvement. In addition, the bilingual/multilingual education model used, policies and implementation processes are equally critical to the effective delivery of the program.

There are two main viewpoints on the role of language in education, and the disagreement between them centers on how much a child's first language or mother tongue should be used to teach the curriculum.

The subtractive and early exit model promotes the continued use of an official or foreign language as the primary and foundational language within the education system, while assigning less importance to mother tongue education (MTE). According to Heugh (2011: 113-115), the subtractive model involves learners moving from their mother tongue to an official or foreign language as early as possible. In some cases, the subtractive or early exit model may even result in the official or foreign language being used as the medium of instruction (MOI) from the first year of school. This is sometimes referred to as the 'submersion model', meaning that the child is immersed in the second language. This approach often results in a 'survival of the fittest' or 'sink or swim' scenario, which aims to quickly transition minority language speaking students from home to the dominant language of schooling.

In contrast, the additive and late exit model promotes the use of the mother tongue as the primary medium of instruction (MOI), while an additional language, often a foreign language, is slowly integrated into the educational system. This view corresponds to the additive and late exit model of MTB MLE. Weber (2014: 2) notes that the additive model is robust, while the subtractive model is weak. The additive model strives to promote both majority and minority languages to improve education for bilingual and multilingual

students. Its overarching goal is to use the L1 or mother tongue as the MOI, while the official language is taught as a subject until children have reached a high level of effective use of the official or foreign language. Proponents of this model argue that the L1 or mother tongue should not be abolished as the MOI.

2.12. Language and education

Heugh (2011:107) points out that numerous international and continental education programs have underestimated the importance of moth tongue for education. For example, many African countries have implemented initiatives such as the Organization of African Unity's Language Action Plan and the Asmara Declaration of 2000. These countries are actively working to ensure that the first language or mother tongue of pupils is used as a medium of instruction, both in the classroom and as a subject in schools. Accordingly, many African countries are making considerable efforts to move away from the use of colonial languages as the primary medium of education. Ethiopia has made considerable efforts to use local languages as the primary medium of education. However, this transition has not extended to higher educational institutions in Ethiopia. The language of instruction is the medium in which instruction is conducted and it is the language in which instructional materials are written. It is the medium for communication between teachers and students in the classroom. MOI, on the other hand, refers to the language used for teaching and learning, while it includes the basic curriculum of an educational system (Ball, 2011: 1).

The choice of language of instruction, often referred to as MOI (Medium of Instruction), is an essential part of a country's language and education policy. This decision falls within the realm of language planning, particularly corpus planning, and is not a political decision. Educational policy makers can prescribe the use of several languages for teaching purposes. Choosing the appropriate language for teaching remains a constant challenge for policy makers as it has a significant impact on the quality of education. While some countries opt for a single language of instruction, which is often the official or predominant language, other countries adopt educational strategies that give national or local languages an important role in the school curriculum (Ballinger et al., 2017:4 9). Children who do not speak a second language but are taught in that language are often

disadvantaged in the education system. In many African countries, the national language is still the colonial language, in most cases English and French. Historically, as Tolleson and Tusi (2010: 3-4) point out, the former national language of the colonial states was adopted by a limited number of schools as the language of instruction (MOI). This was done to appeal to an exclusive group of indigenous communities and to ensure that these members of the community could rise in the ranks of the social elite and had power, wealth and status. These groups acted as intermediaries and supporters, bridging the gap between the colonizers and the colonized and encouraging community goodwill and loyalty to the colonizers.

In some cases, the indigenous language of the colonized society was used as an alternative or transitional language. Regardless of the method used, the ultimate goal of education during colonization was the subjugation and oppression of the colonized. The colonizers' policy was linguistic assimilation for political domination. This deprived the minority language communities of the right to use their mother tongue as MOI in the formal education system.

The roles of MOIs include being an active vehicle for the promotion and revitalization of language and culture and playing a fundamental role in "inclusive transmission" (Tollefson & Tusi, 2010: 2). The authors note that MOI policies ignore the social, political and linguistic status of language groups. This means that MOI shows which language group has more economic, political and social power. The society or language group whose language is used as MOI has greater economic, social and political advantages than other groups whose language is not given this opportunity.

Although Ethiopia is a sub-Saharan country, it has no history of colonial conquest, apart from the five-years of Italian occupation during the Second World War. This means that there was no specific colonial MOI for formal education in this country. However, despite the availability of modern education facilitated by Western languages, especially English, there is a perception among many members of the community that the only way to knowledge and modern education is through Western languages, especially English. As a result, English is used as a medium of instruction in Ethiopian universities and secondary schools, while it is only taught as a minor subject in elementary school.

2.13. Studies on language-in-education policy and practice in multilingual contexts

Language in education policy in multilingual contexts is always a concern for educators. To date, no local studies have been conducted on language policy and practice in multilingual Ethiopia at the tertiary level of education. However, several studies have been conducted in Africa with similar multilingual societies as in Ethiopia to investigate the correspondence and mismatch between languages in education policy and teaching practice in a multilingual environment. The first study was conducted in the Republic of Kenya. There it was determined that the mother tongue should be taught as a subject and used as a medium for teaching. However, according to the results, this is not practiced in the classrooms. For example, in the rural school, the teacher who speaks Kikamba L1 teaches Kiswahili as a subject language and uses Kikamba as a medium of instruction. In addition, research findings have shown that the language is taught less frequently in urban schools where Kiswahili is chosen as the mother tongue. This practise is still contrary to policy because there is so much switching between Kiswahili and English when teaching non-language subjects (Nyaga et al., 2012).

Another study conducted in the Republic of South Africa between 1996 and 1998, particularly in mathematics and science classes, showed that teachers predominantly used English and switched to the learners' main language(s) when formulating in public classes and when interacting with individual learners or small groups. Students had more discussions in their groups or pairs in their main language or in their main language and English, which opened up more opportunities for learning from conversations in many classrooms (Setati et al., 2002).

The research conducted in Malawi showed that the country's language education policy allows Chichewa as the language of instruction. However, some teachers could not speak Chichewa fluently as it is not their mother tongue. This study showed that many of these teachers switched to teaching in a local language other than Chichewa with which they were familiar and only switched to Chichewa when Ministry of Education officials entered their classrooms (Ministry of Education, 1996 in Chilora, 2000).

In 2009, Li Wei and his colleagues investigated language education policies in Chinese supplementary schools in the UK, focusing on bilingual and multilingual students and

teachers. These schools are geared towards educating British children in Chinese and their policy is to use only Chinese language. However, as the research showed, teachers and students use a large amount of English and switch languages frequently and regularly inside and outside the classroom.

The other study was conducted in an ESL classroom in Québec. Québéc's language policy allows “teachers and students to speak only English and not to use French, their first language, in the English-speaking classroom” (Ministry of Education, 2006a; 2006b in Bouchard, 2015). However, research findings have shown that first language use in classrooms varies widely and that even teachers who claim not to use their first language do so in practice (Canagarajah, 1995, Duff & Polio, 1990 in Bouchard, 2015).

From the above research findings, it can be concluded that language in education policy does not always match classroom practice in multilingual contexts.

2.14. Bilingualism and bilingual education

The understanding of bilingualism and bilingual education should begin with the definitions of "bilingualism" and "bilingual education" Baker (2001) defines bilingual education as education in more than one language, which may include more than two languages. On the other hand, García (2009: 9) refers to bilingual education as an instance in which the communicative practices of learners and teachers involve multiple multilingual practices that ensure that learners get the most out of these practices. Lambrecht (1974), referred to by García et al. (2011: 2), explains that bilingualism can be either subtractive or additive. In education, subtractive bilingualism means a system in which the L1 as MOI is displaced and replaced by the L2. This leads to a monolingual system in which one L2 is the only language of instruction for a certain number of learners. In additive bilingualism, an L2 is added to an L1 as an MOI without the L1 being lost. Subtractive and additive bilingualism are opposed by the terms 'linguistic minorities" and 'linguistic majorities". According to García et al. (2011: 2), linguistic minorities usually experience subtractive bilingualism because they learn a language other than their L1. In other words, the L1 of the minorities is taken away from them when they learn the language of schooling. On the other hand, learners who are part of the linguistic majority in a multilingual environment typically experience additive

bilingualism. This is because they are likely to acquire the language of schooling and their mother tongue. The argument in favour of additive bilingualism is that it is socially and cognitively beneficial, while subtractive bilingualism results in the learner's native language being substituted as the MOI, reducing the value of the L1 for knowledge acquisition.

García et al. (2011: 1) propose the terms "recursive" and "dynamic" bilingualism in view of the changes that bilingualism has undergone in the 21st century. The theoretical basis of these two new forms of bilingualism is that the language practices of bilinguals are more complex and intricate than simply linear (García et al., 2011: 3), as suggested by additive and subtractive bilingualism. According to García et al. (2011: 3), recursive bilingualism refers to cases in which bilingualism ceases after a community's language practices have been supported. In this situation, minority communities that have suffered language loss attend bilingual schools in hopes of revitalising their language through a cursive bilingualism process. Since they already have an L1, they are not born as simple monolinguals. Instead, they synthesise parts of their pre-existing language practice. They practice a bilingualism that is constantly evolving (García et al., 2011: 3). Dynamic bilingualism, on the other hand, refers to a differentiated language practise that attempts to adapt to the multilingual learning environment. Dynamic bilingualism refers to the variable use of multiple languages that enable multilinguals to communicate in multilingual environments. García et al. (2011), in a case study of two high schools in New York City (NYC), report how bilingual instruction that is actively utilised can impact the reality of bilingual students. Instead of a top-down approach in which school authorities and teachers promote bilingualism, bilingualism was promoted through the bilingual language practices of students and teachers (García et al., 2011: 2).

Schools promoted Spanish-English bilingualism in the education of their Latino students even though some of the students were not proficient in either language (García et al., 2011: 10). The authority of this approach stemmed from the school's policy, which stated that a student was allowed and encouraged to switch to their native language in subjects where the focus was on acquiring content knowledge if they had difficulty understanding the content of the MOI. The term "multilingualism" refers to (i) the ability of a person to

use two or more languages, often in different languages, and (ii) the phenomenon of a community of speakers who know and use several languages. The term "multilingualism" is often used as an antonym to the term "monolingualism"," which refers to the knowledge and use of a single language at an individual or community level.

According to Bourdieu (1991), the term "monolingualism" has its origins in the concept of "linguistic habitus"," which represents the totality of indeterminate dispositions for thinking, evaluating, and using languages. Gogolin (1994) describes the "monolingual habitus" as the firmly anchored habit of assuming monolingualism as the norm in a language community. In other words, the monolingual habitus refers to the prevailing linguistic notion that assumes the homogeneity of languages and cultures in a nation state. In education, this means that only certain official languages are suitable as MOI. Applied to teaching, the "monolingual habitus" means that it is wrongly assumed that all learners are a homogeneous group and can be taught with a single language (Gogolin, 1994). Academic interest in multilingualism focuses on two main aspects: understanding the linguistic competence of people who speak several languages and examining the conditions under which these languages are acquired and used. Multilingualism usually leads to people living their daily lives in two or more languages. In some circumstances, the different languages represent different cultures. This does not mean that there is a harmonious, unhinderengeous relationship in many cultural communities. The possibility of a "culture of multilingualism" is also being considered, in which the knowledge and use of different languages is one of the characteristics of a particular culture.

It should be noted that the term "multilingualism" only covers one aspect of multiculturalism - the aspect of multilingualism or linguistic diversity. Becoming multilingual therefore in most cases means turning away from intercultural communication (Ludi, 2000: 16). "Intercultural communication skills" are defined as a combination of knowledge and attitudes towards other cultures, their norms and the specific communication skills necessary to actively communicate with people from other cultures (Ting & Toomey, 1999: 226-229).One distinction that often facilitates any discussion of multilingualism is the distinction between individual and societal multilingualism mentioned in the introduction. Individual multilingualism focuses on the

multilingual individual and what it means to know and use more than two languages. Societal multilingualism is primarily concerned with the intertwining of languages in a community where people with different languages live. Studies on sociological multilingualism also look at political, economic, social, educational, cultural and other determining forces. A multilingual society is therefore a society in which more than two languages are used, and many speakers are therefore bilingual or multilingual. However, there may also be some monolingual speakers of a single community language.

2.15. Definitions of multilingual education

Multilingual teaching means the use of two or more languages as a medium of instruction (MOI). Multilingual and bilingual education have similarities as they involve the use of multiple languages in the classroom, as stated by Baker (2001) and García (2009). In 1999, UNESCO introduced the term "multilingual education" in General Conference Resolution 12 to refer to the use of at least three languages -one regional or national language and one international language. Hornberger (1990: 213) explains that multilingual education is a form of bilingualism "in which communication in two (or more) languages takes place in or around writing"

2.16. Concerns in multilingual education

According to Hornberger (2009), multilingual education is considered a beneficial approach to preparing future generations to actively participate in building democratic societies in today's globalized and intercultural world. It recognizes the knowledge that learners already possess. It aims to empower them as important participants in society at local, national and global levels (Hornberger, 2009: 2). In this approach, multiple languages are included in the curriculum to encourage the development of diverse language practice in children. Acceptance and tolerance of a wide range of languages in the classroom is an essential prerequisite for the success of this approach. Hornberger (2010: 1-3) argues that multilingual education can only be effective if it is recognized and supported in national policy. Furthermore, successful implementation depends on collaboration between teachers and local communities. Hornberger emphasizes the need for bottom-up support to ensure the success of multilingual education programs. Furthermore, models for multilingual education must consider the linguistic and socio-

cultural history and goals of the context. Hornberger (2009: 10) suggests that hybrid multilingual teaching practices offer teachers and learners the opportunity to acquire academic content using the linguistic resources they already have while developing new ones. Finally, teaching practices that promote the transfer of languages and skills across languages and modes can increase the effectiveness of multilingual teaching.

Hornberger's work highlights the benefits of multilingual education in preparing future generations to actively participate in a diverse society and emphasizes the importance of supportive policies and collaboration between educators and communities.

Therefore, implementing multilingual education in Ethiopia can have profound benefits at both the societal and individual levels. Scientifically, it enhances cognitive flexibility and cultural awareness, which translates into a more educated and harmonious society and better-equipped individuals. By fostering mutual respect and social cohesion, and by providing students with valuable cognitive and practical skills, multilingual education stands as a powerful tool for advancing both personal and societal goals in a multicultural world.

Multilingual individuals often outperform monolinguals on tasks requiring cognitive flexibility. This is attributed to their constant practice in managing multiple linguistic systems, which enhances their ability to shift attention and adapt to new situations (Bialystok, 2011). Multilingual education exposes students to multiple languages and, by extension, multiple cultures. This exposure fosters an appreciation for cultural diversity and helps students develop a broader worldview. Multilingual education can improve overall educational outcomes by developing critical thinking and problem-solving skills, which are beneficial across all areas of study. Learning a new language often involves learning about the culture associated with that language. This process helps students recognize and respect cultural differences, enhancing their ability to interact effectively in a multicultural environment.

A population educated in several languages is likely to have a better understanding and tolerance of other cultures. This can lead to less social tension and more harmony between different language groups. When individuals develop greater cultural awareness,

they are more likely to respect and value the contributions of different cultural groups, promoting an inclusive society. In an increasingly globalized world, proficiency in multiple languages is a highly valued skill. Multilingual people are often more competitive in the labor market and have access to a wider range of career opportunities (Grin, 2001).

Therefore, Ethiopian education policy should incorporate multilingual education at different levels and ensure that students from different linguistic backgrounds receive quality education in both their mother tongue and additional languages.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

This chapter initiates with an overview of the research methodology. It covers various aspects, including the general research method and paradigm. The employed approaches, research setting, data source, sample population, sampling methods, data collection tools, procedures for data collection, and processes engaged in data analysis are all discussed.

3.1. The research paradigm and approach

This subsection addresses the research paradigm, which Creswell (2007: 19) defines as "fundamental beliefs that guide actions". It also outlines how the mixed methods approach is used in this single study (cf. Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004: 17).

Commentaries on the research paradigm debate argue that the struggle over the importance of one paradigm over others is irrelevant, as each paradigm represents an alternative thesis with its own merits (Guba, 1990: 27). Creswell (2007: 19-27) identifies several schools of thought in the paradigm debate or the so-called 'paradigm wars'. At one end of the debate are the 'purists' who argue that paradigms and methods should not be mixed. Another school of thought are the 'situationists', who argue that certain techniques can be used in certain situations. In contrast to the 'purists', the pragmatists argue against creating an artificial separation between qualitative and quantitative research paradigms. They argue that both approaches should be used effectively.

Numerous researchers and theorists who engage with mixed methods research also closely link mixed methodology with pragmatism. For instance, Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004: 17) encapsulate the philosophical stance of mixed methods researchers by asserting, "[w]e concur with fellow proponents of mixed methods research that the incorporation and examination of pragmatism by research methodologists and empirical researchers will yield productive results, as it offers a practical and meaningful philosophical and methodological middle ground". Pragmatism also offers a practical and results-oriented method of inquiry that is iterative, leads to further action, and removes doubt. It offers a way to select a mix of techniques that help researchers better answer many of their research questions (ibid.). Guba and Lincoln (2005: 200) discuss how mixed methods can reconcile positivists and post-positivists in such a way that both

methods can be used simultaneously. Therefore, pragmatism has a solid philosophical position in the mixed methods or methodological pluralism camp. Therefore, this study favours pragmatism, the worldview of mixing qualitative and quantitative research methods.

The main objective of this study is to examine language policy and practices in Ethiopian higher education institutions in relation to multilingualism, particularly at the University of Mattu. To achieve this goal, an exploratory research design is used. Quantitative and qualitative approaches were used in the study to effectively describe the main findings of the study.

Some studies require only a single method, while others require multiple methods depending on the research questions they are designed to answer. For example, researchers who want to find out the causal relationship or outcome of phenomena resort to experimental or quantitative research methods in where all external variables must be controlled to prove that the effect is the result of an independent variable (Dornyei, 2007: 21). In contrast, in research that aims to explore the processes involved in a phenomenon, such as classroom research, the combination of the two methods may be more appropriate (Dornyei, 2007: 148).

Although they acknowledge the differences between the two approaches, Scott and Usher (2011: 98) claim that the assumption that the quantitative and qualitative approaches are two different and opposing approaches to the study of the social world is challenged. They even go so far as to say that the two methods are not separate research paradigms and can be usefully employed within the same study. This mutual enrichment of qualitative and quantitative methods has also gained acceptance among researchers as the advantage of embedding one method within the other has become more popular (Creswell & Clark, 2007: 9-10; Sarantakos, 2004: 52).

According to Dornyei (2007: 56), the mixture of the two methods has a complementary function because, firstly, it enables not only overlaps but also different aspects of a phenomenon to be viewed from different perspectives. It also helps to obtain a more comprehensive and complete portrait of the subject when applied sequentially, as in the

case where the result of the first method explains the need for the second. It also works when researchers want to expand the scope and breadth of a study by including multiple components. Second, using mixed methods in a single study maximizes the validity of the results through method triangulation. Method triangulation is a way of testing the validity of a study's findings using multiple methods (validation by convergence) (Creswell & Miller, 2000: 127).

In this study, the compelling reason for using the mixed methods approach is to attempt to broaden the understanding of the subject by drawing a relatively more complete picture of the situation by examining the various aspects, i.e., the existing language policy documents in relation to their practice at the University of Mattu with multilingualism. This is also reflected in the formulation of the research questions. RQ1 addresses the question of how the Ethiopian Constitution of 1995 and the Education and Training Policy of 1994 deal with multilingualism in higher education. In addition, RQ2 identifies and determines whether the communicative practices between students and instructors outside the classroom at the University of Mattu represent multilingualism in the university community, and RQ3 examines the language practices of students and instructors inside the classroom. Accordingly, the first research question (RQ1) generates qualitative data through interviews with experienced instructors at the University of Mattu and document analysis, which requires descriptive qualitative data analysis. The remaining questions (RQ2 & RQ3) generate quantitative data that require descriptive and content analysis of the quantitative data. To summarise, this study combines quantitative and qualitative approaches.

3.2. Research setting

The research was conducted on the African continent and in Southern Europe in Ethiopia, in the regional state of Oromiya, at the University of Mattu. It is one of the third-generation public universities in southwestern Ethiopia and was founded in 2011. It is located about 600 km from the capital, Addis Ababa. It is obvious that Ethiopia has been in civil war since 2020. The movement of people is/was unsafe throughout the country, except in some parts of the country. Since southwestern Ethiopia was safe, the researcher chose Mattu University. Most of the students also prefer this university to feel safe. Since

the academic calendar was skewed all over the country due to the war, there was no standardised academic calendar. Therefore, the researcher was forced to collect the data in summer. The people of Ethiopia are linguistically diverse and speak over 85 local languages as mother tongues (Central Statistics Agency, 2008). This situation is also reflected in higher education in the country (Mendisu and Johannessen, 2016), as many local languages are taught as school subjects and some are used as teaching aids in elementary school (Seidel and Moritz, 2009); therefore, students come to universities multilingual. According to the researcher's experience, linguistic diversity can be observed at the University of Mattu. It is common for students and instructors on campus to use different local languages to communicate with each other. This shows that students and instructors at the university come from different ethnic groups who use different languages as mother tongues and second languages. This is a practical proof of the metaphor "the higher education in the country represents the small Ethiopia". Mattu is the capital of the Ilu Abba Bor Zone in the Oromiya region. This city is home to many ethnic groups from different regions. Languages such as Afaan oromoo, Amharic, Anguak, Nuer, English, Tigrigna, Kefa and Guragigna are spoken. Apart from English, the other languages spoken in Mattu are indigenous languages.

Mattu University has developed a wide range of written materials available in both soft and hard copy formats for the library. These efforts have significantly enhanced the library's circulation, periodicals, reference, internal documentation reading services, and have also expanded digital library and internet services. The Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Day is a national holiday in Ethiopia coincided for ethnic groups of Ethiopia since fully guaranteed under Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Constitution on 8 December 1994. Officially started observation in 2006, the day affirms economic and political affinity and equal rights of the "nations of Ethiopia" by culture and language with harmony and tolerance. Therefore, Mattu University offers this celebration. The language used for official documents at the university is English. As English language is the MOI from secondary school to tertiary education level, teachers have knowledge of English and certificate for language is not required. However, this does not mean that English is used for communication outside classroom contexts and all teachers are not equally proficient in English.

3.3. Source of the data

There are about 46 universities in Ethiopia. Each of these universities can represent a small Ethiopia as almost all student and instructor members are from Ethiopian nations and nationalities studying and teaching there. Based on these and other criteria, instructors and students are selected as primary data sources for this research. As a secondary data source, an overview of the 1995 Ethiopian Constitution and the 1994 Education and Training Policy is provided to determine whether they address multilingualism in Ethiopian higher education.

Kumar Y. (2006: 94) suggests 10-20% of the accessible population as a sample for descriptive types of research. According to Mattu University, there are a total of 2,327 first-year students for the 2022/2023 academic year, of which 1,113 are male and 1,214 are females. From this group, 15% of the first-year students, i.e., a total of 349 students (167 men and 182 women), were selected. As for the participants in the study, there are a total of 697 people, of which 590 are male and 107 females. In addition, 108 participants, 66 males and 42 females, were selected from various colleges representing different disciplines, including the College of Social Sciences and Humanities, the College of Natural and Computional Sciences, the College of Education and Behavioral Sciences, the College of Engineering and Technology, the College of Business and Commerce, the College of Health Sciences, and the school of Law. Seven experienced instructor members from six Colleges and one School of Mattu University were selected to prepare for an interview. A total of 464 respondents participated. The sampling method used was stratified random sampling for both instructors and students. Stratified random sampling is a probability-based technique in which the population is divided into different strata and a sample is drawn from each of these strata. The resulting subsamples form the final sample of the study. The strength of this method is that all population groups are represented in the final sample. The stratification of the population is based on one or more significant criteria such as gender, age, ethnic background, race, or economic status, but mainly on criteria that can be related to the research topic (Sarantakos, 2012: 197). For this study, the stratum was formed based on their college/school. Purposive sampling technique was used for the survey. Purposive sampling involves asking participants to provide sufficient information for analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2013: 56).

3.4. Data gathering tools

Multiple sources of information are required as it is impossible to rely on a single source to obtain comprehensive data. In order to achieve the objectives of this study, four data collection tools are used (questionnaire, observation, interview and analysis of language policy documents). These instruments, without which the study would be incomplete, are used in an appropriate manner to obtain relevant information for the research under investigation.

3.4.1. Document analysis

Documents are 'social facts' that are produced, shared and used in a socially organized way (Atkinson & Coffey, 1997: 47). Universities are responsible for the federal government. In this regard, regions have no authority to legislate for higher education institutions, with the exception of regional colleges that train primary school instructors. As a result, there are no local or regional laws that relate to higher education institutions. Therefore, the Ethiopian Constitution of 1995 and the Education and Training Policy of 1994 were examined to see how they address multilingualism in higher educational institutions in Ethiopia.

3.4.2. Classroom observation

Classroom observation provides a clear picture of what the actual teaching and learning process looks like, and the richness and credibility of the information it can provide makes it a desirable tool for data collection (Hancock et al., 2001). To obtain additional information about this study, the researchers utilized non-participant observation in the classroom. This method provides a first-hand account of individuals' actions rather than relying solely on their verbal statements. Observation is of paramount importance when used as the main source of data in a study as it approaches reality directly in its physical structure and examines events as they unfold (Sarantakos, 2004: 232). Dornyei (2007: 169) also notes that the main advantage of observational data is that it allows researchers to witness people's actions directly without relying solely on their verbal accounts. In particular, observation provides researchers with a wealth of data about classroom interaction behavior. It can quickly provide insight into the extent of conversation between teachers and students (Allwright & Bailey, 1991: 65). Since the main purpose of

this study is to examine language policies and practices at Mattu University in relation to multilingualism, observation is considered the primary tool for data collection. Researchers divide observation into two types: participant observation and non-participant observation. In participant observation, Sarantakos (2004: 220) suggests that researchers join the group they wish to study and observe it from the inside. This type of observation is unsuitable for the present study because the researcher cannot enter the class as a student, as his classmates can easily recognize him. In non-participant observation, the role of the observer is purely professional and focuses on documenting specific behaviors (both verbal and non-verbal) of students and teachers. This is done through the use of a tally sheet system and written field notes to ensure the reliability and validity of the data (Cohen & Manion, 1985: 103). A checklist was developed for the observation, which was slightly adapted from Cohn et al. (2013) and Mensah (2014).

3.4.3. Questionnaire

Questionnaires are a widely used and helpful tool for compiling survival data by providing structured, often numerical data. According to Seliger and Shohamy (1989: 172), the main advantage of a questionnaire is that it can be conducted for a large group of people at the same time. If anonymity is guaranteed, participants are more willing to disclose personal information. As a larger number of participants complete the survey at the same time, the data becomes more accurate (ibid.). Participants are willing to express their feelings in a questionnaire more quickly and easily than when answering the same questions. Teachers, instructors and students at the University of Mattu were asked to complete the quiz (108 instructors and 349 students, 457 in total). The aim of this survey is to determine the multilingualism practices of students and teachers inside and outside the classroom of Mattu University, one of the higher educational institutions in Ethiopia. The questions used to describe the multilingualism practices of students and teachers inside and outside the Mattu University classroom were simply adapted from (Mensah, 2014; Cohn et al., 2013) who conducted research on language policy and practice in a multilingual Namibian high school classroom and developed a questionnaire to explore multilingual language use respectively. The researcher developed the remaining sections of the questionnaires based on the literature reviewed. The researcher validated the developed instruments as follows: Prior to the actual data collection, the instruments were

drafted and shared with colleagues to obtain valuable comments and critiques on the strengths and weaknesses of the instruments. After incorporating the insights gained, decisions were made and submitted to the consultant for further analysis, critique and evaluation. Questionnaires were then distributed to 457 respondents, including 349 first-year students and 108 instructors. Both Students and instructors were asked twenty close-ended questions.

3.4.4. Interview

The interview is the most frequently used method in qualitative research. Its main purpose is to provide a structured platform for interviewees to articulate their thoughts in their own words in a dialogue between two people (Leonard, 2003: 166). A key feature of interviews is their adaptability compared to other research methods, allowing the interviewer to reflect further on the basis of the interviewee's answers and clarify ambiguities in their statements (Gall et al., 1996: 289). It enables detailed information gathering, clear formulation and a flexibility that cannot be achieved with other methods (Seliger & Shohamy, 1989: 166). A structured interview is used because it allows the responder to pass on new and often unexpected information quickly and comprehensively compared to a structured interview (Seliger & Shohamy, 1989: 167). Several teachers from the University of Madrid were purposively selected for the study. There are many types of studies and their usefulness depends on the information needed (Sarantakos, 2004: 268). Structured, unstructured and semi-structured knowledge are discussed below: First, a structured survey usually uses a structured instrument in which all respondents are asked the same questions in the same order and the answers are amenable to statistical analysis (Sarantakos, 2004: 268). Kothari (2004: 98) clarifies that a structured survey is very similar to a questionnaire because it uses a standard format with predetermined questions in a fixed order. Since the guide is aimed at policy practitioners who can explicitly say what Ethiopia's educational policy practice is at Mattu University, the author is not interested in providing policy practitioners with a structured guide that can be answered 'yes' or 'no' or 'right' or 'wrong' Secondly, the unstructured question, as the name implies, uses unstructured questions that contain a range of possible questions, the order and wording of which can also be changed. The flexibility of the unstructured interview allows the researcher to gain a deeper insight into the respondent's mind and is

more suitable for most qualitative studies (Sarantakos, 2004: 268). In unstructured interviewing, the interviewee is allowed a greater degree of freedom through non-directive discussion, where the researcher takes a limited role and allows the interviewee to narrate as they see fit, it gives the interviewee the best opportunity to direct persuasion (Cohén et al., 2000: 270). However, Kothari (2004: 98) argues that feedback from unstructured environments is difficult to convey because it is uncontrollable. He further argues that this can affect the reliability ("reproducibility") of the data produced (ibid.). Another point is that it can be difficult for the researcher to compare responses because the researcher can change the order of the questions and ask them in different ways or phrase the same question differently. In other words, coding, transcribing the recorded data and organising and comparing the data becomes very difficult and time consuming. Considering Kothari's experience, the researcher has been reluctant to use unstructured information. Thirdly, the structured approach somehow lies between the structured and unstructured approaches (Sarantakos, 2004: 269). It consists of specific and defined questions that are asked in advance, while some elaboration of the questions and answers is possible (Nunan, 1992: 149). In addition, the structured approach allows information to spread quickly, so that new and often unexpected information is added compared to the structured approach (Seliger & Shohamy, 1989:167). The structured approach is preferred in this study because it is based on statistical and closed questions that require obtaining more information and do not allow for uncontrolled persuasion. Accordingly, based on the literature reviewed, the researcher designed an interview guide with nine open-ended but semi-structured questions for the seven interviewees.

3.5. Procedures

In this research, the researcher followed a series of steps for data collection. Initially, an extensive review of relevant literature was undertaken to gather ample information to guide the study's focus. Next, research objectives and questions were formulated to provide a clear direction for the research. Subsequently, data collection tools were created, followed by the completion of a document analysis. Following this, a questionnaire was distributed to both student and instructor members. Then, classroom observations were conducted. Finally, selected instructors from Mattu University were interviewed.

3.6. Methods of data analysis

After collecting relevant data using the four instruments, the researcher categorized, analyzed, and appropriately interpreted the data. Quantitative and qualitative techniques should complement and not rival camps (Flick, 2002). Therefore, these methods were used in this study. The data obtained from the questionnaires are analyzed quantitatively using SPSS and simple descriptive statistics (percentage) because they can reduce the data and make it easier to understand (Vadde & Kumar, 1999). The classroom observation, interview, and document analysis information were analyzed qualitatively.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

4.1. Analysis of the data

In this chapter, we examine and explain the data, along with the key discoveries from the study. The information gathered from the questionnaire was organized into Figures and presented for analysis. Furthermore, the data collected through document analysis, classroom observation, and interviews was qualitatively interpreted and organized into various themes. In this regard, an attempt was made to present and analyze the overall data gathered by different instruments under the themes: the consideration of multilingualism in higher education institutions in Ethiopia's language policy, the practices of multilingualism between instructors and students in the classroom, and outside the classroom of Mattu University. For the study of multilingualism in higher education institutions in Ethiopian language policy, a document analysis guide was prepared to analyze the 1995 Ethiopian constitution and 1994 Education and training Policy. An interview was also conducted with selected teachers. For the practices of multilingualism between instructors and students inside and outside the classroom of Mattu University, both instructors and students were asked to tick the alternatives given before each question.

4.2. Questionnaire results

The questionnaire for students and instructors consists of two parts (see Appendix A and B). The first part of the questionnaire for students refers to their personal data. The second part of the questionnaire is about their language skills and their language practice inside and outside the classroom with their classmates, instructors, and the society in and around Mattu University. Similarly, the first part of the questionnaire for the instructors relates to their personal data, while the second part relates to their language proficiency and language practice inside and outside the classroom with their students, staff, and the society in and around Mattu University.

4.3. Students' data analysis

As can be seen from Figure 1, of the total of 349 (167 male and 182 female) selected. 256 (73.4%) were of Oromo ethnicity, 47 (13.5%) were Amhara, 41 (11.7%) belonged to other ethnic groups, 3 (0.9%) were Tigre and 2 (0.5%) were Somali.

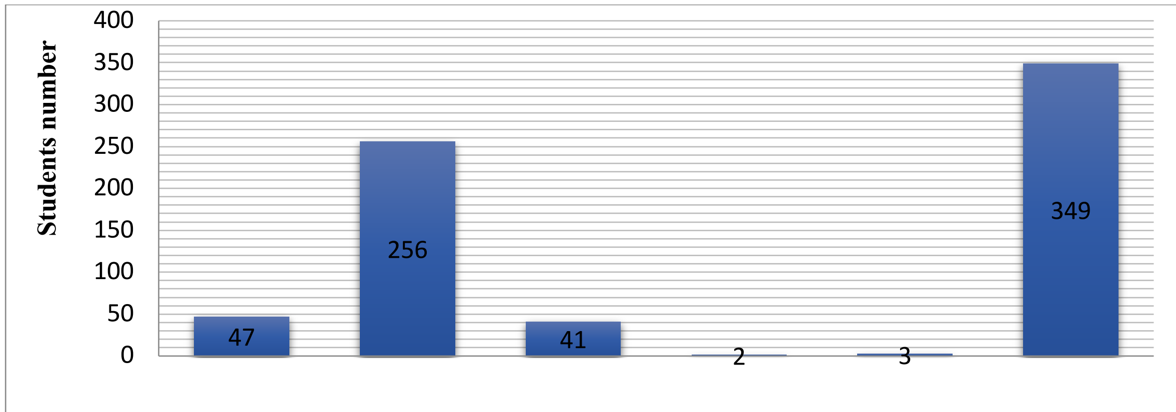

Figure 1: The nation of the respondents (Appendix A Part I)

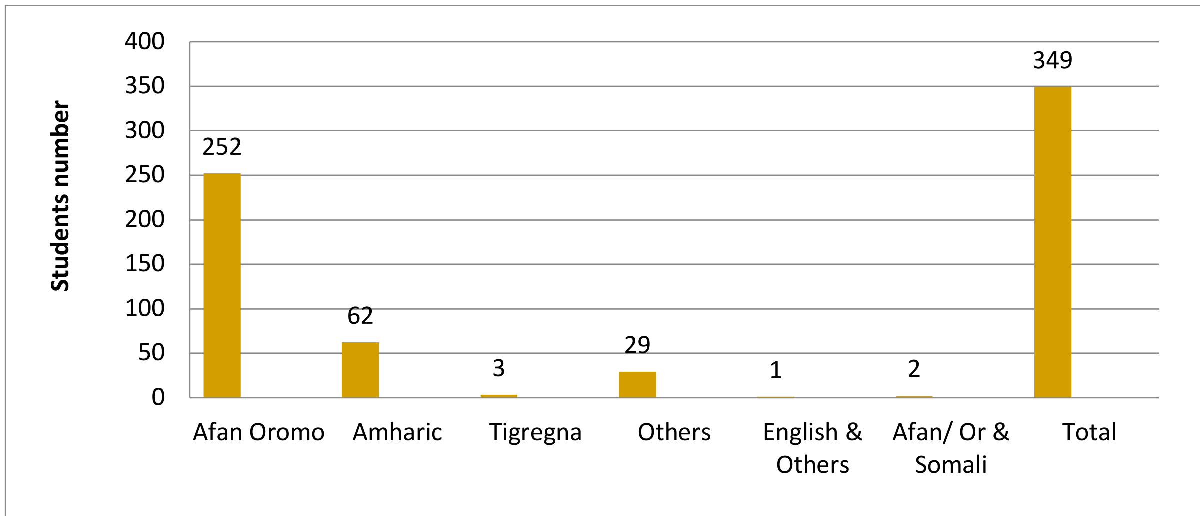

Figure 2: Student respondents' first language (Appendix A Part II)

As shown in Figure 2 above, students were asked about their first language. The responses showed that 252 (72.2%) students indicated Afan Oromo as their first language, while 62 (17.7%) indicated Amharic as their first language. In addition, 30 (8.3%) of the respondents indicated their first language as "Other" and 3 (0.9%) as

Tigregna. A small proportion, namely 2 (0.6%) students, reported a combination of Afan Oromo and Somali as their first language.

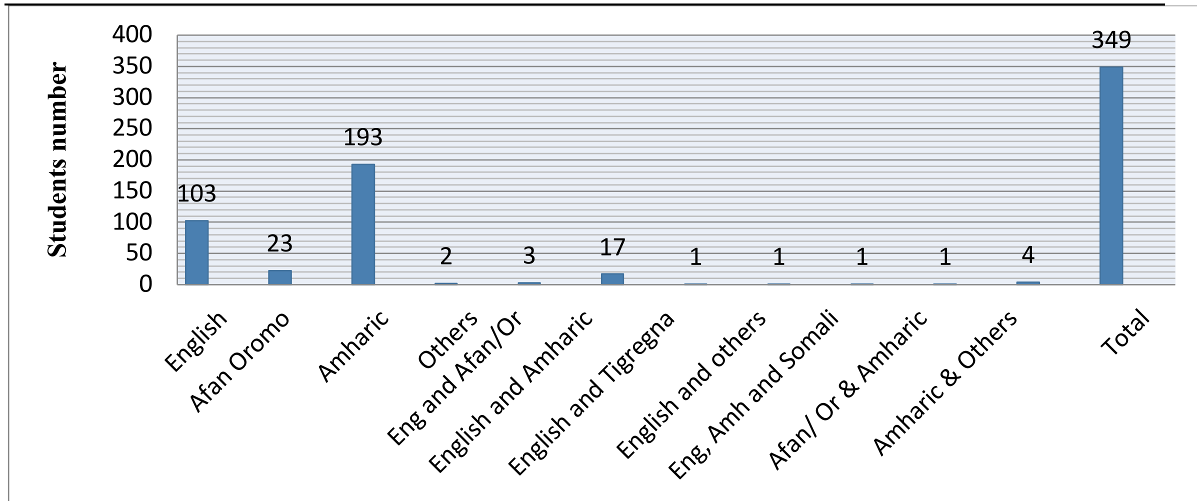

Figure 3: Student respondent's second language (Appendix A Part II)

According to the data in Figure 3, 193 (55.3%) reported Amharic, 103 (29.5%) English, 23 (6.5%) Afan Oromo and 17 (4.9%) English and Amharic as their second language. In addition, 4 (1.1%) indicated Amharic and another language, 3 (0.9%) English and Afan Oromo, 2 (0.6%) "other", 1 (0.3%) English and Tigregna, 1 (0.3%) English and another language, 1 (0.3%) English, Amharic and Somali, and 1 (0.3%) Afan Oromo and Amharic as their second language. Looking at the meaning of bilingualism and multilingualism from the perspective of different scholars, multilingualism usually refers to the ability to use three or more languages. In comparison, bilingualism is described as the use of two languages, which is a single case of multilingualism and not the other way around (Aronnin, 2019). According to this definition, most respondents are bilingual or multilingual.

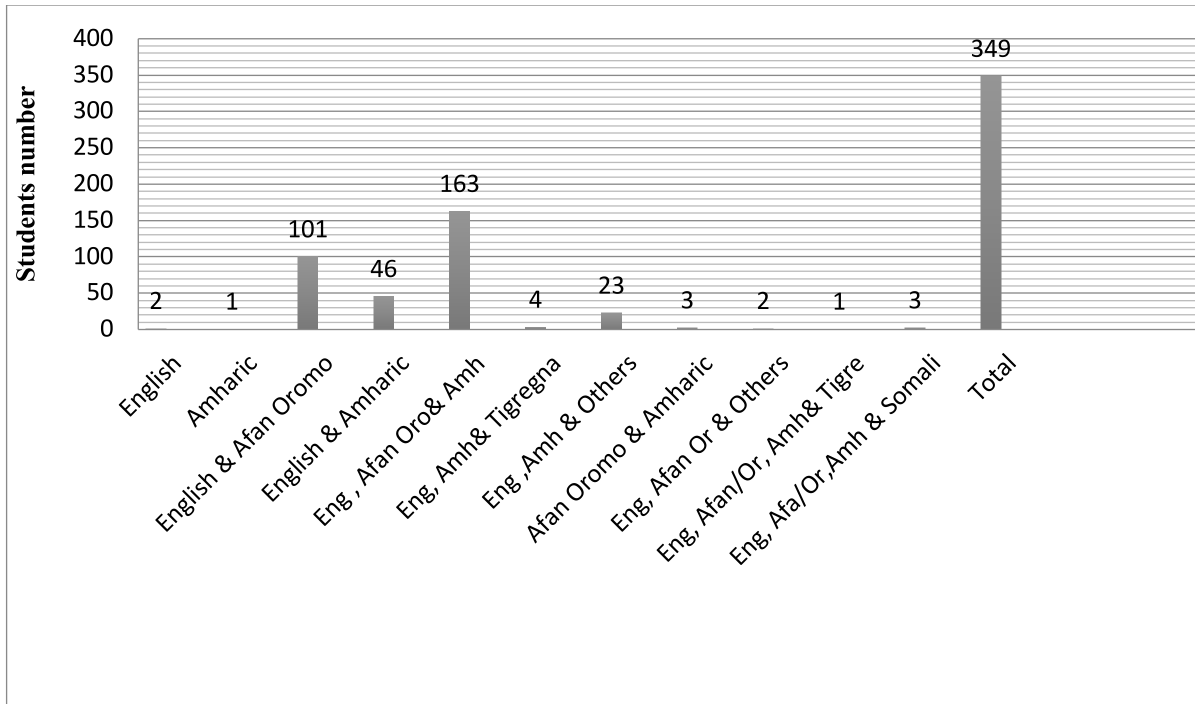

Figure 4: Language students can hear (Appendix A Part II)

In Figure 4 above, we can see how many students were able to identify the languages they could speak. 163 (46.7%) could speak English, Afaan Oromo and Amharic. The next two languages are Afan Oromo and English with 101 students (28.9%) and English and Amharic with 46 students (13.2%). Some of them can speak three or more languages at the same time. For example, 23 (6.6%) can speak English, Amharic and other languages. The others spoke a combination of English and another language. Only one student could speak Amharic. These results show that most of these students are proficient in more than one language. This corresponds to bilingualism or multilingualism, where students speak several languages due to their circumstances (Grosjean, 2008, cited in Navracsics, 2016).

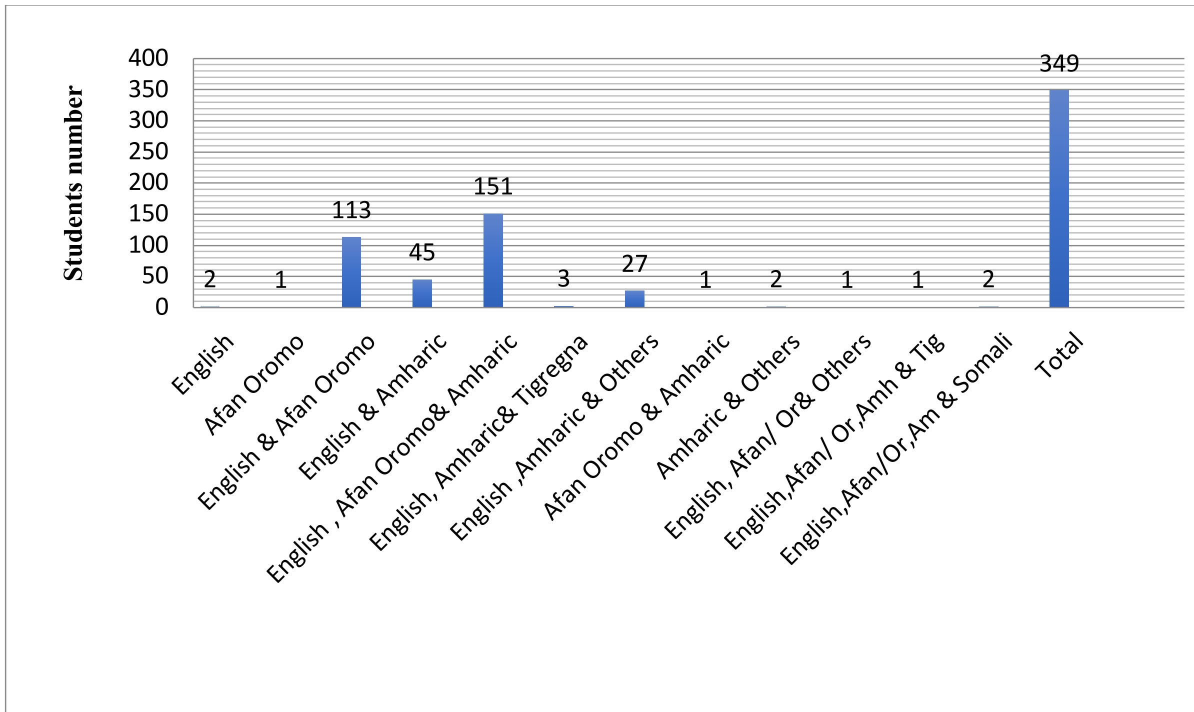

Figure 5: Language students can speak (Appendix A Part II)

Speaking more than one language is a talent. People use at least two languages in everyday life – the first for their cultural group and the second for general interaction (Navracsics, 2016). As can be seen in Figure 5, the researcher asked students about the language(s) they can speak. The result showed some interesting statistics. 151 (43.3%) students can speak English, Afan Oromo and Amharic, 113 (32.4%) can speak Afan Oromo and English, 45 (12.9%) can speak English and Amharic and 27 (7.7%) can speak English, Amharic and other languages. Only a few students reported combinations of languages they can speak. English, Amharic and Tigregnga were reported by 3 (0.9%) respondents. Among the respondents, the following language combinations were reported: English and Amharic were indicated by two respondents, representing (0.6%) of the sample. The combination of English and Afan Oromo in conjunction with Somali was reported by one respondent, which corresponds to (0.3%). Afan Oromo was also indicated by one respondent, also at 0.3%. The combination of Afan Oromo with Amharic was indicated by two respondents and accounts for 0.6%. English in combination with Afan Oromo and other languages was indicated by one respondent,

accounting for 0.3%. Finally, English, Afan Oromo, Amharic and Tigregna were indicated by one respondent, representing 0.3%. In accordance with the criteria for assessing the language needs of bilingual persons, these respondents can be classified as bilingual or multilingual persons.

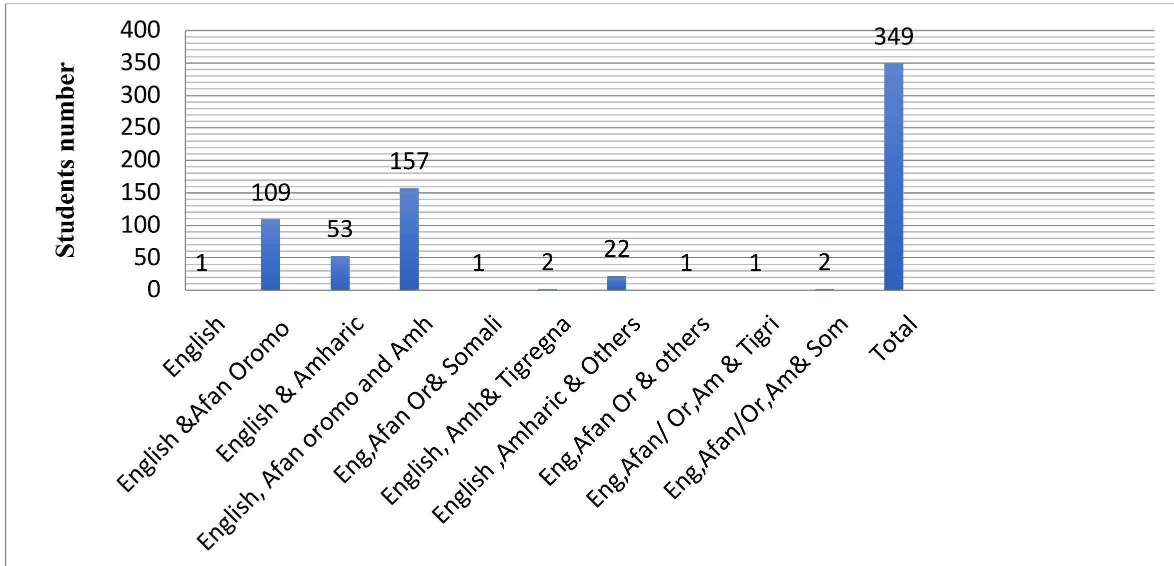

Figure 6: Language students can read (Appendix A Part II)

The data presented in Figure 6 above illustrates the range of languages that students are proficient in reading. Within this context, 157 students (45%) have indicated their ability to read English, Afan Oromo & Amharic, while 109 students (31.2%) possess the capability to read both Afan Oromo and English. Furthermore, an additional 53 students (15.2%) of the total) have affirmed their proficiency in reading both English and Amharic. In addition, a cohort of 22 students, making up 6.3% of the sample, exhibit competence in reading English, Amharic, and other languages. Furthermore, a minority of students have displayed more extensive multilingual reading skills, including two students (0.6%) who can read English, Amharic, and Tigrigna, two students (0.6%) with the ability to read English, Afan Oromo, Amharic, and Somali, one student (0.3%) who is capable of reading English, Afan Oromo, and Somali, one student (0.3%) with proficiency in English, Afan Oromo, and other languages, and one student (0.6%) who exhibits proficiency in reading English, Afan Oromo, Amharic, and Tigrigna.

In accordance with Aronin's (2019) concept of individual multilingualism, which pertains to an individual's capacity to effectively comprehend and employ two or more languages, it can be reasonably inferred, based on the collected responses, that the student participants possess multilingual capabilities.

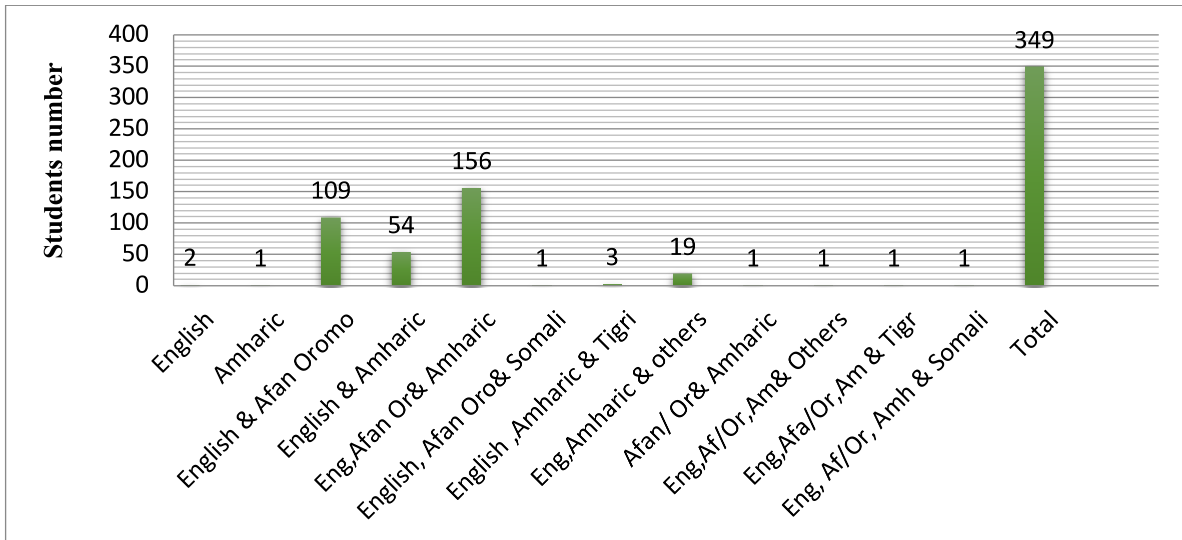

Figure 7: Language students can write (Appendix A Part II)

The data presented in Figure 7 above provide insights into the students' writing skills. Specifically, 156 students (44.7%) reported proficiency in English, Afan Oromo and Amharic, while 109 students (31.2%) were able to write both Afan Oromo and English. In addition, 54 students (15.5%) showed competence in writing English and Amharic and 19 students (5.4%) demonstrated the ability to write both English, Amharic, and other languages. In addition, a small proportion of students demonstrated multilingual writing skills, such as 3 students (0.9%) who could write English, Amharic and Tigrigna, 2 students (0.6%) with proficiency in English, 1 (0.3%) English, Afan Oromo, Amharic and Somali, 1 student (0.3%) who could write English, Amharic and Somali, 1(0.3%) English, Afan Oromo and Somali, one student (0.3%) with competence in English, Afan Oromo and other languages and one student (0.3%) who demonstrated competence in writing English, Afan Oromo, Amharic and Tigrigna. Finally, 1 student (0.3%) demonstrated proficiency in English and Tigrigna. Following Aronin's (2019) concept of individual multilingualism, which describes an individual's ability to actively use and

master two or more languages, it can be concluded based on the results of the study that the participants in the study have multilingual skills.

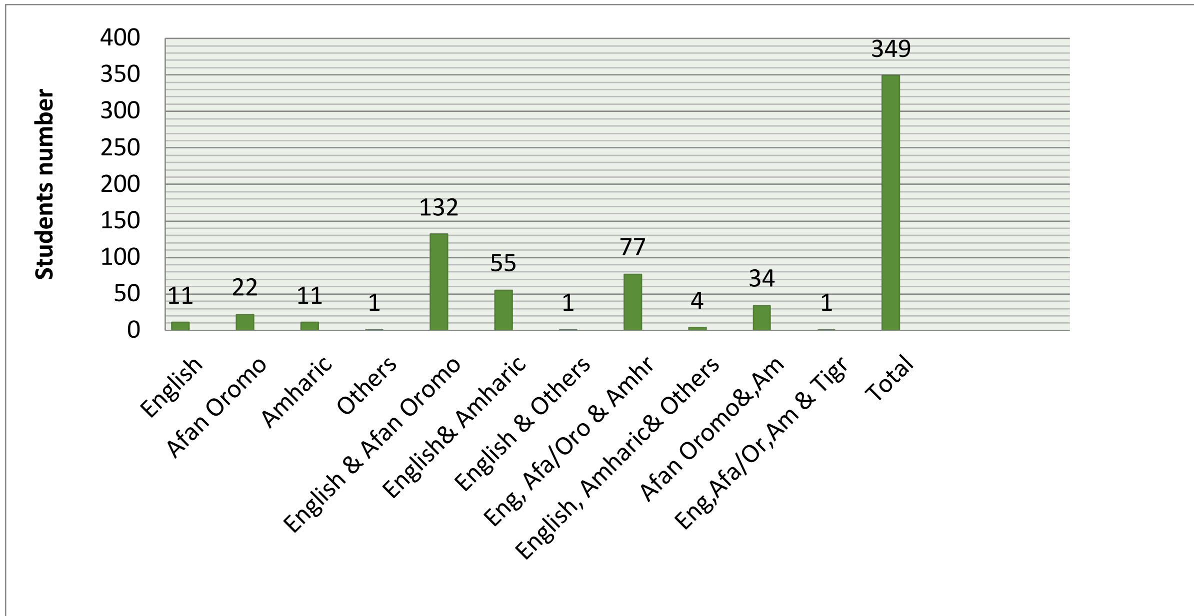

Figure 8: Language/s students often use to answer and ask questions in the classroom (Appendix A Part II)

As can be seen in Figure 8, students were asked about the languages they typically use to ask and answer questions in class. The results show that 132 students (37.7%) use a combination of English and Afan Oromo for this purpose. In addition, 77 students (22.1%) reported using English, Afan Oromo and Amharic, while 55 students (15.8%) used a combination of English and Amharic and 34 students (9.7%) used both Afan Oromo and Amharic. In addition, some students reported using other languages for this interaction, including Afan Oromo by 22 students (6.3%), English by 11 students (3.2%), Amharic by 11 students (3.2%), and English, Amharic and other languages by 4 students (1.1%). Some students reported using English in combination with other languages, 1 (0.3%), and there were 1 (0.3%) case where students used a combination of English, Afan Oromo, Amharic and Tigrigna to ask and answer questions in the classroom.

It is worth noting that classroom observations (see Appendix D) confirmed that students used English, Afan Oromo and Amharic when asking and answering questions. Teacher

interviews (see Appendix ‘C) and classroom observations have also shown that teachers have no objection to students using these languages when answering questions

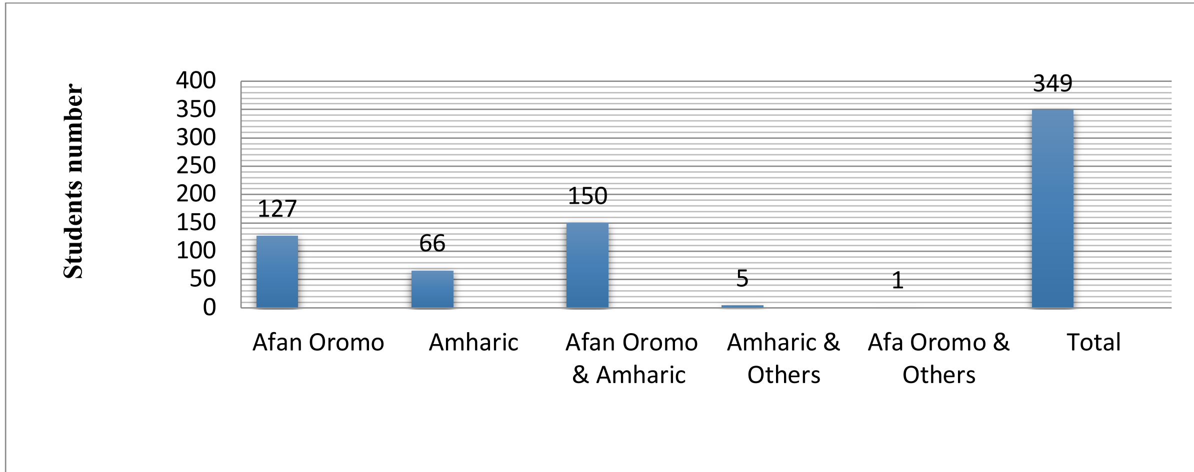

Figure 9: Language/s spoken in the classroom other than English (Appendix A Part II)

As can be seen in Figure 9, students were asked about the languages they use other than English to communicate in the classroom. The results show that 150 (43%) students use both Afan Oromo and Amharic, 127 (36.4%) use Afan Oromo, 66 (18.9%) use Amharic, 5 (1.4%) use Amharic and other languages, and 1 (0.3%) use Afan Oromo and other languages.

In line with these findings, interviews with the teachers and classroom observations (see Appendix C and D) support the validity of this language practise. The interviews revealed that students often use Afan Oromo and Amharic to explain contexts when they have difficulty understanding a content. This highlights that in multilingual contexts, language policy at the institutional level does not always match actual language practise in the classroom (Gorter & Cenoz, 2017).

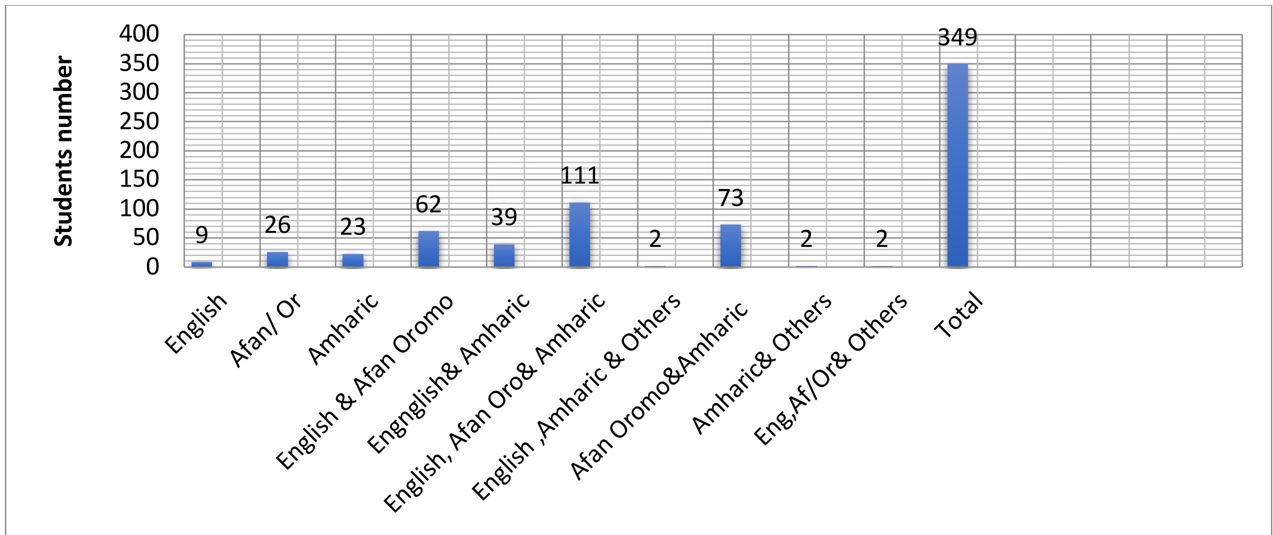

Figure 10: Language/s often used during group/pair work (Appendix A Part II)

Figure 10 shows students' preferences in terms of the languages they usually use for group or pair work in the classroom. The data shows that 111 students (31.8%) indicated that they often use English, Afan Oromo and Amharic. In addition, 73 students (20.9%) indicated that they frequently use Afan Oromo and Amharic, while 62 students (17.8%) indicated that they regularly use English and Afan Oromo for collaborative work.

In addition, the study shows that 39 students (11.2%) often use English and Amharic, 26 students (7.4%) mostly use Afan Oromo, 23 students (6.6%) prefer Amharic, 9 students (2.6%) use English and 2 students (0.6%) use English, Amharic and other languages. Moreover, 2 students (0.6%) employ Amharic and other languages, while another 2 students (0.6%) use English, Afan Oromo, and other languages. Data collected through classroom observations confirm these findings. It is worth noting that despite Article 3.5.7 of the 1994 Education and Training Policy, which states that "English will be the medium of instruction at secondary and higher levels" (TGE, 1994, p. 24), students frequently switch back and forth between English and Afan Oromo and between English and Amharic. This discrepancy illustrates that language practices in the classroom do not match the policy of languages in education for higher education.

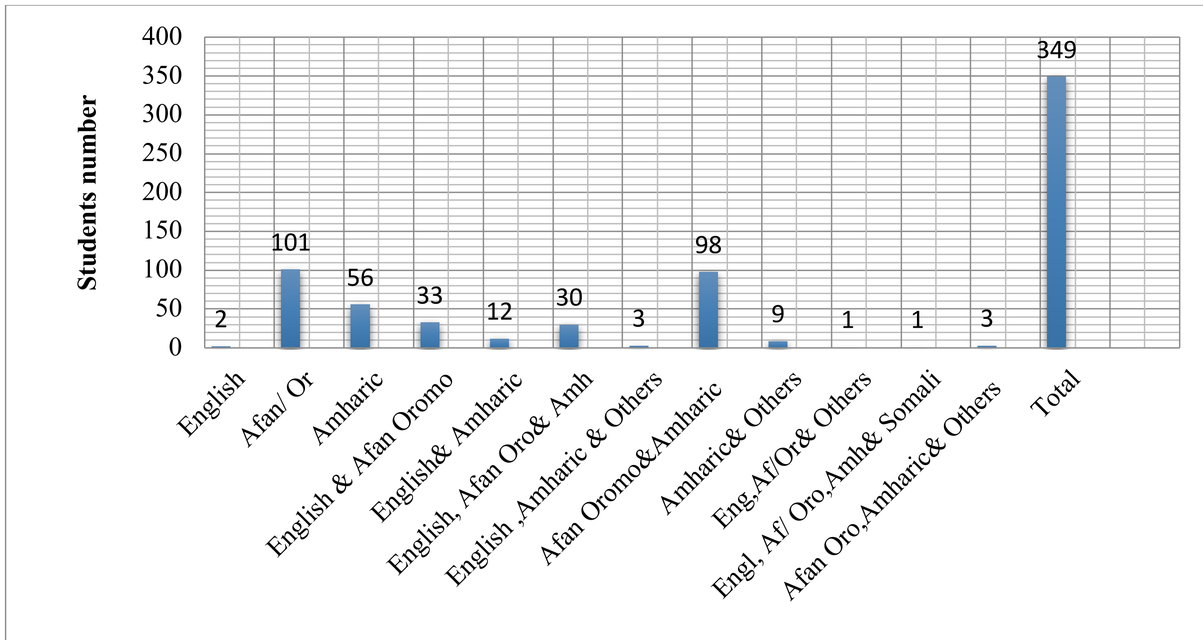

Figure 11: The language/s used to communicate with other students outside of the classroom (Appendix A Part II)

As can be seen in Figure 11, students were asked about the languages they use to communicate with their classmates in various academic situations outside the classroom, which offer a variety of benefits. Specifically, 101 students (28.9%) choose Afan Oromo, 98 (28.1%) prefer a combination of Afan Oromo and Amharic, 56 (16%) choose Amharic, 33 (9.5%) communicate in English and Afan Oromo and 30 (8.6%) use English, Afan Oromo and Amharic for these types of interactions.

In addition, smaller subgroups of university students use different language combinations. These combinations include 12 students (3.4%) who use English and Amharic, 9 (2.6%) who use Amharic and other languages, 3 (0.9%) who use English, Amharic and other languages, 3 students (0.9%) use Afan Oromo, Amharic and other languages, 2 students (0.6%) use English, 1 student (0.3%) uses English, Afan Oromo and other languages and 1 student (0.3%) uses English, Afan Oromo, Amharic and Somali.

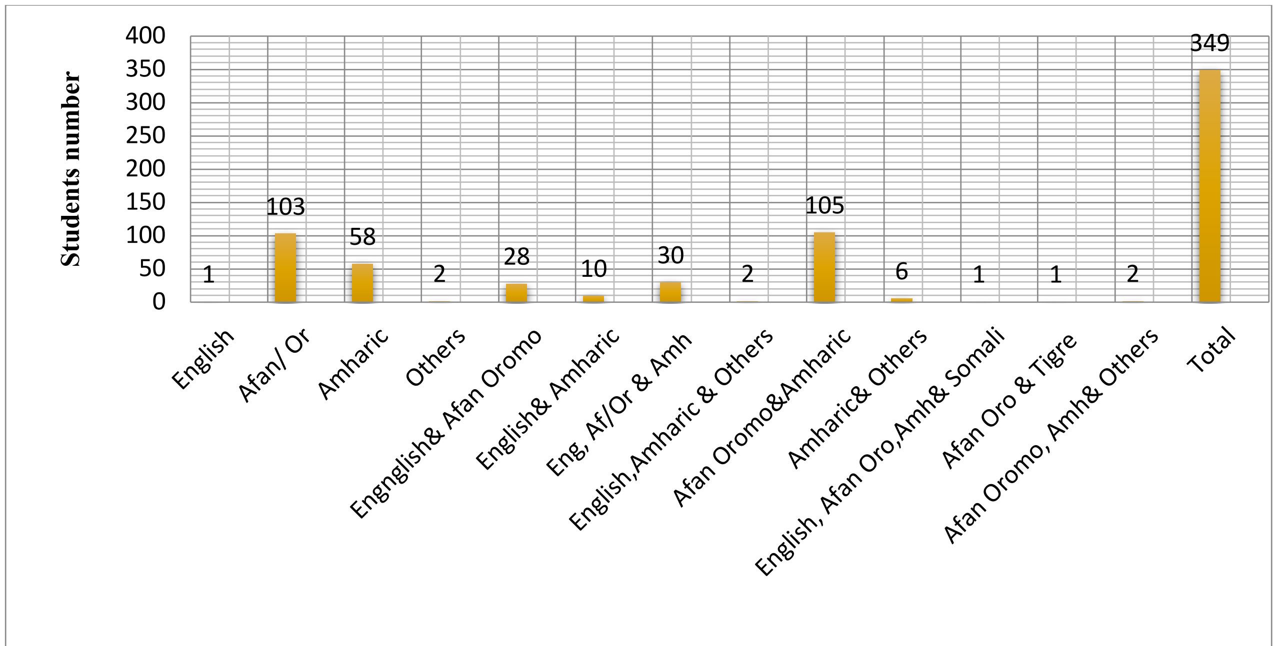

Figure 12: Language/s used by students in the dorm to communicate with each other (Appendix A Part II)

As shown in Figure 12, when students were asked about the languages they use to communicate with each other outside the classroom, the data showed clear preferences. Specifically, 105 students (30.1%) use Afan Oromo & Amharic, 103 students (29.5%) opt for Afan Oromo, 58 students (16.6%) choose Amharic, 30 students (8.6%) communicate in English, Amharic and Afan Oromo, and 28 students (8.0%) use English & Afan Oromo for these interactions. In addition, a smaller group of students use different language combinations for this purpose, including English and Amharic (10 students, 2.9%), Amharic and other languages (6 students, 1.7%), Afan Oromo, Amharic and other languages (2 students, 0.6%), English, Afan Oromo, Amharic and Somali (1 student, 0.3%), Afan Oromo and Tigriga (1 student, 0.3%), and English (1 student, 0.3%). Interviews with teachers confirm these patterns of language use outside the classroom (see Appendix C)

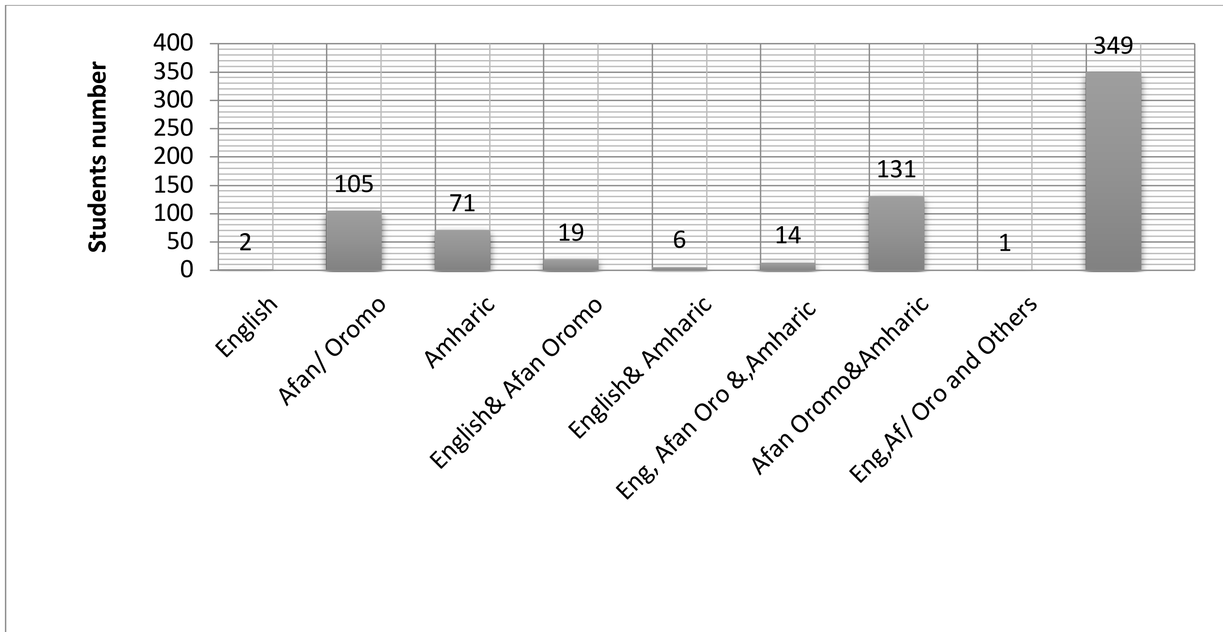

Figure 13: Language(s) used to talk to vendors when shopping (Appendix A Part II)

Figure 13 illustrates the languages used by students when interacting with salespeople while shopping. Of the surviving students, 131 (37.5%) reported using both Afan Oromo and Amharic, 105 (30.1%) reported using Afan Oromo exclusively, and 71 (20.3%) reported using Amharic when interacting with the vendors while shopping. 19 students (5.4%) reported using English and Afan Oromo, 14 (4%) use English, Amharic and Afan Oromo, 6 students (1.7%) use English and Amharic, 2 students (0.6% use English only and 1 student (0.3%) uses English, Afan Oromo and other languages when dealing with customers while shopping.

These results indicate that the majority of the students predominantly use Afan Oromo and Amharic when dealing with the vendors around the university. From this, it can be concluded that the students are bilingual because bilingualism is the ability to use two languages, which is a particular form of multilingualism, and not the other way around (Aronin, 2019).

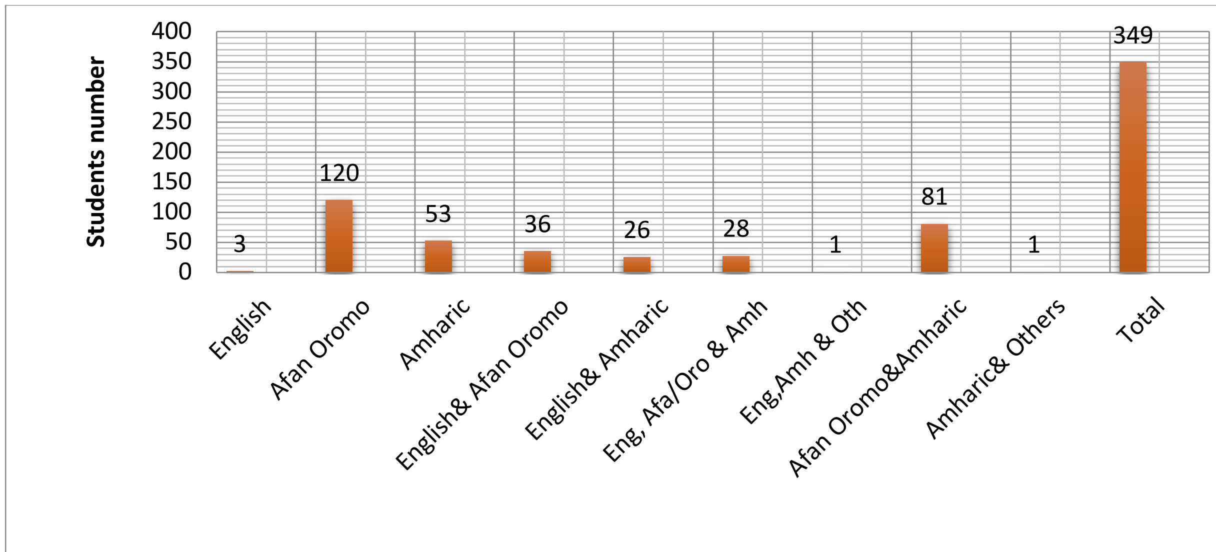

Figure 14: Language/s used to communicate with a teacher at the office (Appendix A Part II)

The data presented in Figure 14 show that students were asked about their language use outside the classroom when interacting with their teachers in the office. The responses show that many students use different languages for these interactions. Specifically, 120 (34.4%) of the students surveyed reported using Afan Oromo. Also, 81 (23.2%) students reported using Afan Oromo and Amharic while 53 (15.2%) reported Amharic as their choice. Moreover, 36 (10.3%) students indicated that they communicate using English and Afan Oromo and 28 (8%) use English, Afan Oromo and Amharic. In addition, 26 (7.4%) students reported using a combination of English and Amharic. In addition, 3 students (0.9%) chose English, 1 student (0.3%) chose Egilish, Amharic & other languages and 1 student (0.3%) chose Amharic and other languages. Considering the European Commission's description of multilingualism as "the ability of societies, institutions, groups and individuals to interact routinely with more than one language in their daily activities" (Cenoz 2013: 5), it is clear that a significant majority of students can be categorised as multilingual.

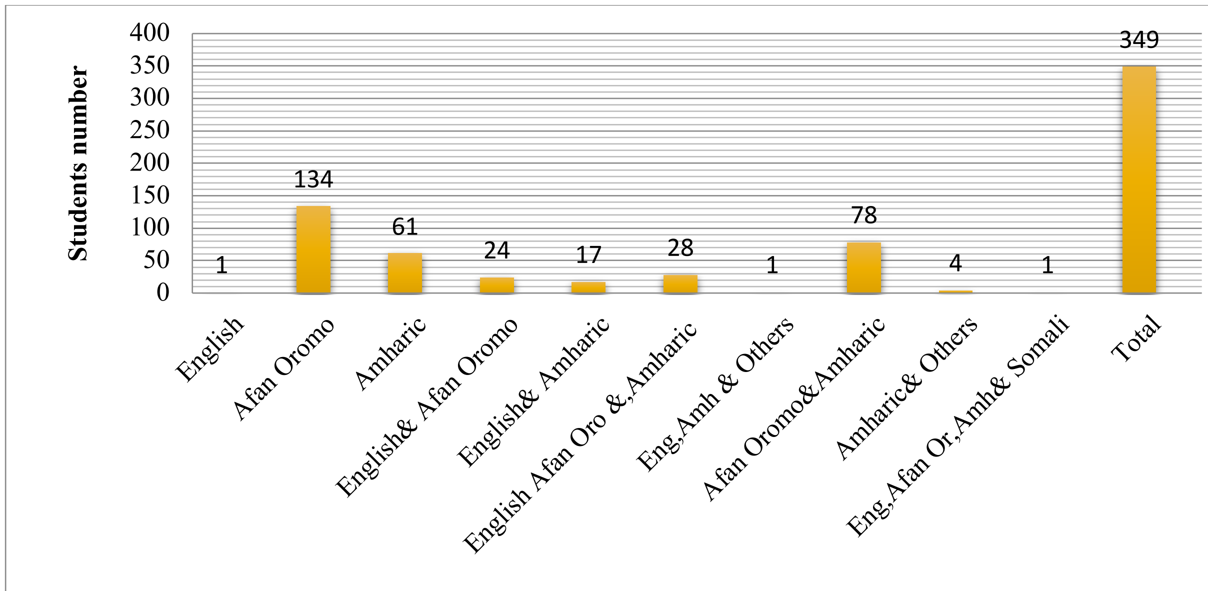

Figure 15: Language(s) used to communicate with administrators to enforce cases (Appendix A Part II)

As shown in the data presented in Figure 15, students were asked about the languages they use when presenting their cases or findings to university administrators. The results show a wide range of languages used for this purpose. About 134 students (38.4%) of the respondents indicated that they use Afan Oromo for these types of interventions. In addition, 78 (22.3%) students reported using a combination of Afan Oromo and Amharic, while 61 (17.5%) reported Amharic as their preferred language for interacting with administrative staff. On the other hand, 28 students (8%) opt for English, Afan Oromo and Amharic when communicating their cases and 24 students (6.9%) use a mixture of English and Afan Oromo. 17 (4.9%) students use English and Amharic simultaneously. In addition, a small group of students use other languages to articulate their concerns to the school administration, e.g., 4 (1.1) Amharic and other languages, 1 (0.3%) English and Amharic in combination with other languages and 1 (0.3%) English, Afan Oromo and Amharic in combination with Somali. These results are supported by the findings from the interviews with the teachers (see Appendix C).

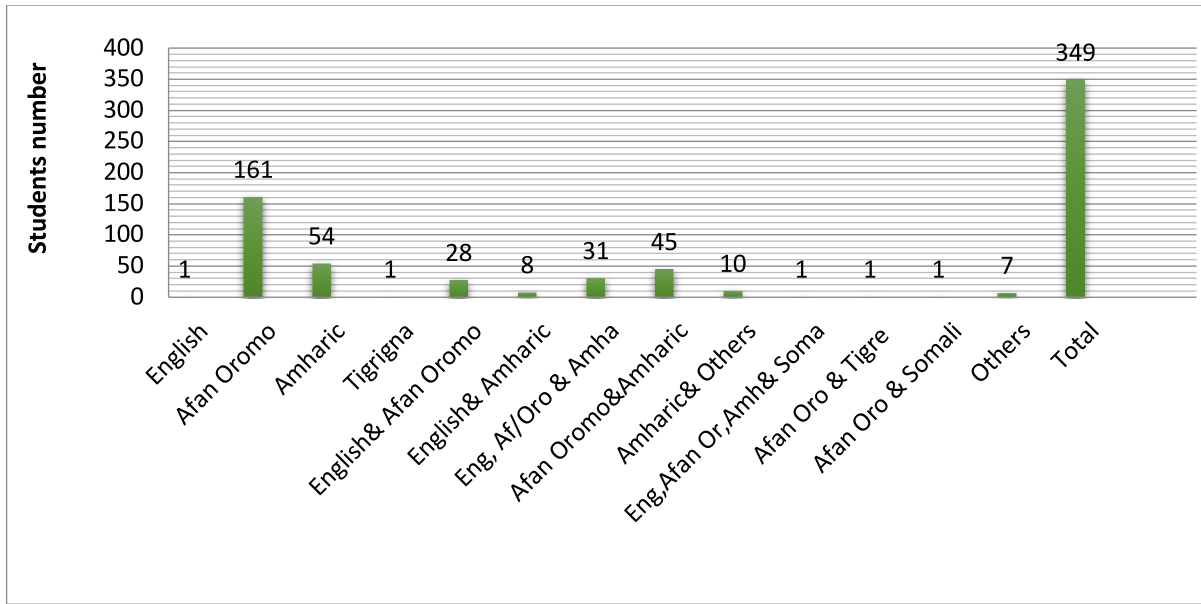

Figure 16: Language/s used to exchange culture (Appendix A Part II)

According to the data presented in Figure 16, students were asked about the language(s) they use to communicate with friends about their culture. The responses are as follows: 161 students (46.1%) indicated they use Afan Oromo, 54 students (15.5%) indicated they use Amharic, 45 students (12.9%) indicated they use both Afan Oromo and Amharic, 31 students (8%) indicated they use English, Afan Oromo and Amharic, 28 students (8%) indicated they use both Afan Oromo and English, 10 students (2.9%) indicated they use Amharic & Other, 8 students (2.3%) indicated to use Amharic and English, 7 students (2%) indicated to use Other, 1 student (0.3%) indicated to use Afan Oromo and Somali, 1 student (0.3%) indicated to use English, 1 student (0.3%) indicated to use Tigregna, 1 student (0.3%) indicated to use English, Amharic, Afan Oromo and Somali, and 1 student (0.3%) indicated to use Afan Oromo and Tigregna.

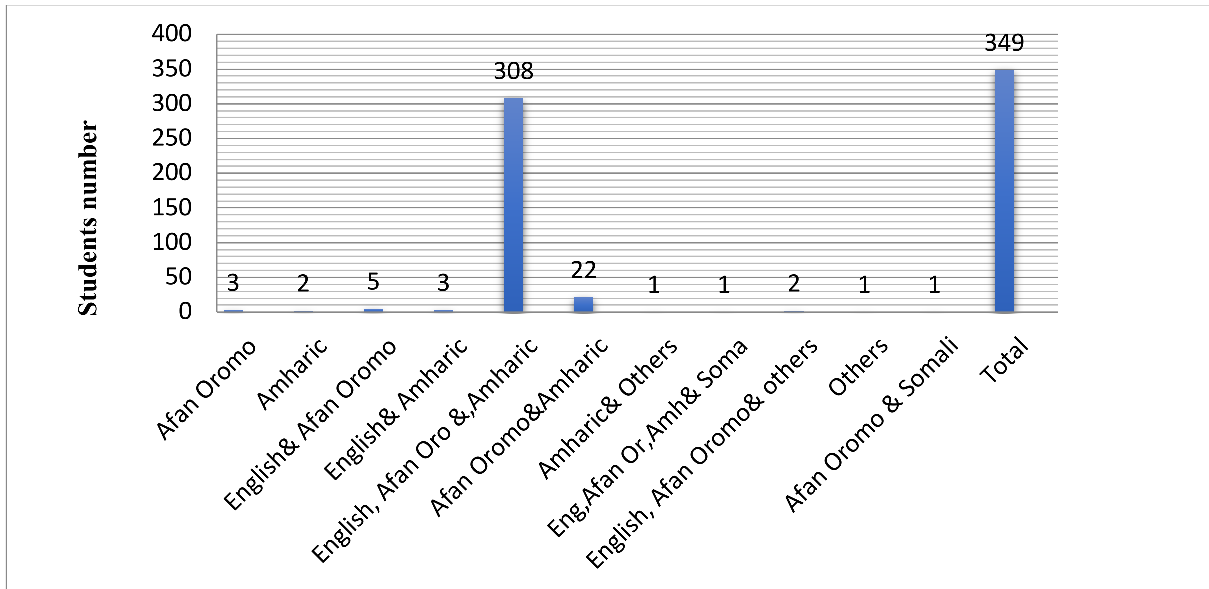

Figure 17: Language/s used by Administrators to make welcome speech (Appendix A Part II)

As shown in Figure 17, students were asked about the languages used by university administrators when delivering welcome speech for students. The responses included a variety of languages: 308 (88.3%) indicated English, Afan Oromo and Amharic, 22 (6.3%) Afan Oromo and Amharic, 5 (1.4%) Afan Oromo and English, and 3 (0.9) English and Amharic.9%), Afan Oromo 3 (0.9%), Amharic 2 (0.6%), English, Afan Oromo & Other 2 (0.6%), Other 1 (0.3%), Amharic and Other 1 (0.3%), English, Afan Oromo, Amharic and Somali 1 (0.3%) and Afan Oromo and Somali 1 (0.3%).

From the predominant feedback from the students, it can be deduced that the administrators of the university use a combination of English, Afan Oromo and Amharic when having conversations, which is a sign of multilingualism in this academic institution.

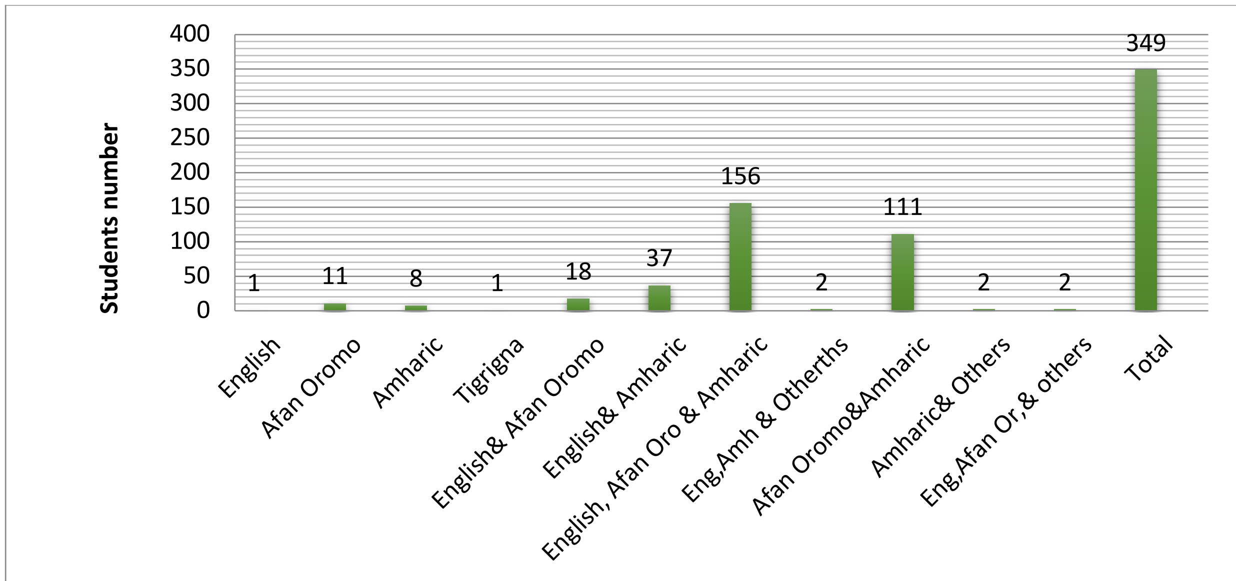

Figure 18: Language/s used to watch television programmes in students' cafeteria (Appendix A Part II)

The data presented in Figure 18 shows students' choices when it comes to the languages in which they prefer to watch TV programs in their cafés. Providers offer a wide range of languages for this leisure activity. Of the surviving students, a sizeable group of 156 students (44.7%) indicated that they preferred watching TV programs in English, Afan Oromo and Amharic. This was closely followed by 111 students (31.8%) who opted for television programs in Afan Oromo and Amharic. In addition, 37 students (10.6%) reported watching programs in English and Amharic, while 18 students (5.2%) preferred English and Afan Oromo content and 11 students (3.2%) opted for Afan Oromo. Smaller groups of students indicated that they preferred programs in Amharic (8 students, 2.3%), in Amharic and other languages only (2 students, 0.6%), and in English along with other languages (2 students, 0.6%). There were also some cases where participants reported watching programs in different languages, e.g., Amharic and other languages (2 (0.6%)), English and Tigrigna, each accounting for a small proportion of responses (1 (0.3%)). These results illustrate the different language choices of students enjoying the television program in their cafes.

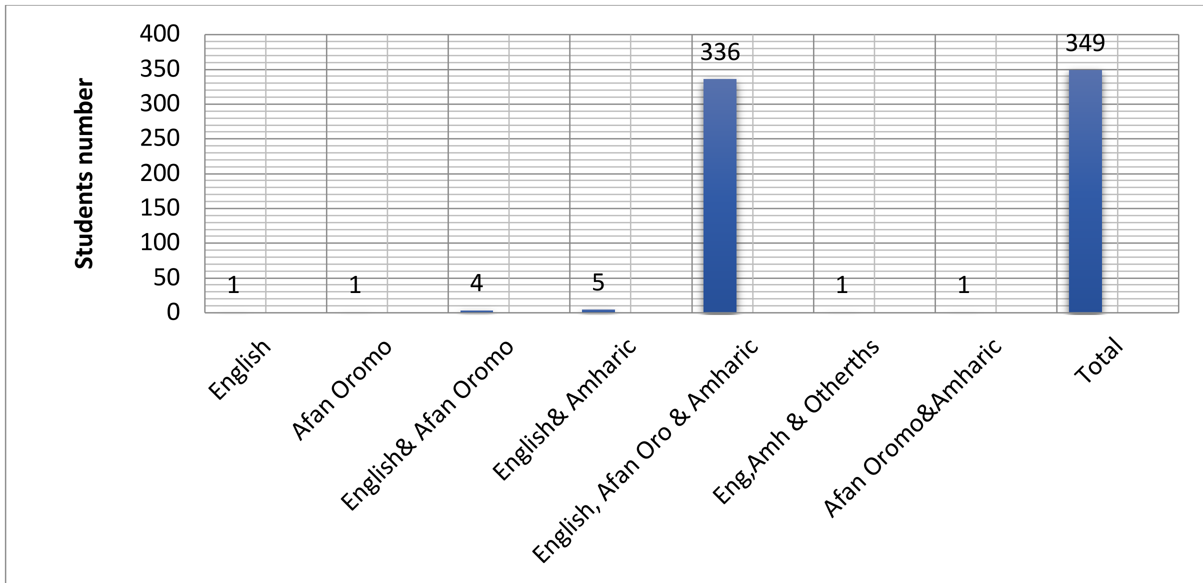

Figure 19: Language/s books, magazines, and newspapers in the library are written with (Appendix A Part II)

As can be seen in Figure 19, the students were asked about the languages in which the books, journals and newspapers in the university library are written. The survey revealed that a clear majority of 336 students (96.3%) identified English, Afan Oromo and Amharic as the languages in which these materials are written. A small proportion of respondents indicated a combination of languages: 5 students (1.4%) indicated English and Amharic, 4 students (1.1%) English and Afan Oromo, 1 student (0.3%) indicated English, 1 student (0.3%) Afan Oromo, 1 student (0.3%) English, Amharic and other languages and 1 student (0.3%) Afan Oromo and Amharic.

From the available information from the students, it can be concluded that the media available in the university library are written in three languages and thus promote a culture of multilingualism.

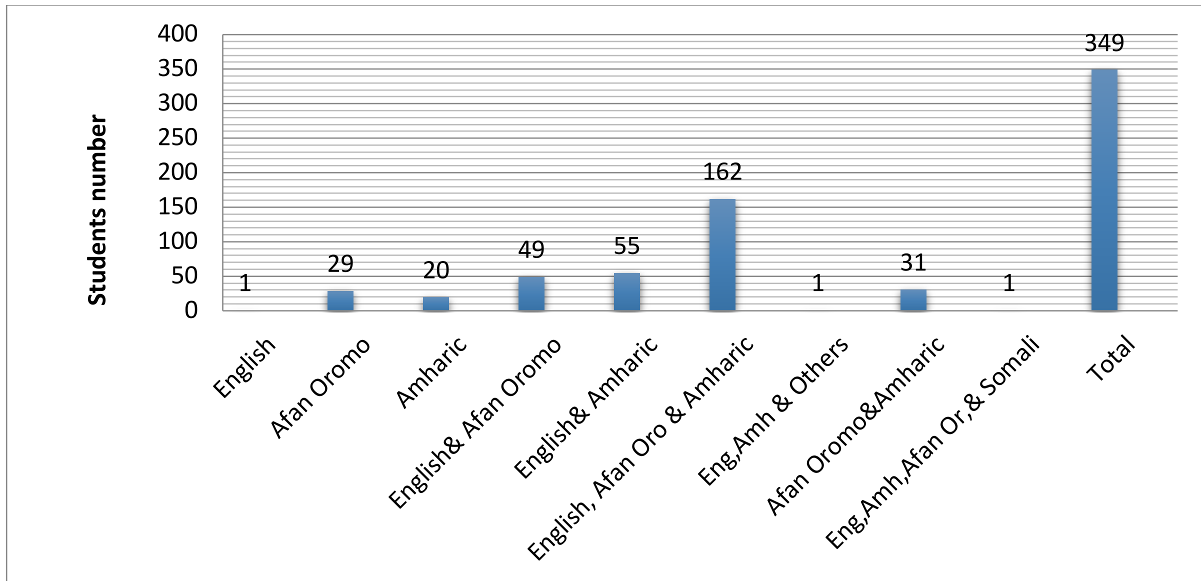

Figure 20: Language(s) movies, plays, and concerts students attend at the university are written with (Appendix A Part II)

As shown in Figure 20 above, students were surveyed about the languages in which the movies, plays, and concerts they attend at the university are presented. The responses reveal a diverse range of language choices for these cultural events. Out of the surveyed students, a significant majority of 162 students, comprising 46.4% of the respondents, reported attending events where the movies, plays, and concerts are primarily presented in English, Afan Oromo, and Amharic. Additionally, a notable number of students mentioned the use of other languages for these events, including English and Amharic 55(15.8%), English and Afan Oromo 49(14%), and Amharic and Afan Oromo 31(8.9%).

Furthermore, some students indicated attending events in which Afan Oromo 29 (8.3%) were used, as well as those where Amharic 20 (5.7%) and 1 English (0.3%) alone were the languages of choice. In rare instances, students mentioned events featuring a combination of English, Amharic, and other languages 1(0.3%), and events in English, Amharic, Afan Oromo, and Somali 1 (0.3%). These findings signify that the university offers cultural events in multiple languages, thereby highlighting the existence of multilingualism. Multilingualism, as defined by the development of the four fundamental language skills needed to meet the demands of the environment (Grosjean, 2008, as cited

in Navracsics, 2016), empowers students to experience movies, plays, and concerts in English, Afan Oromo, and Amharic. This proficiency enables them to effectively engage with these cultural offerings, enriching their cultural experiences.

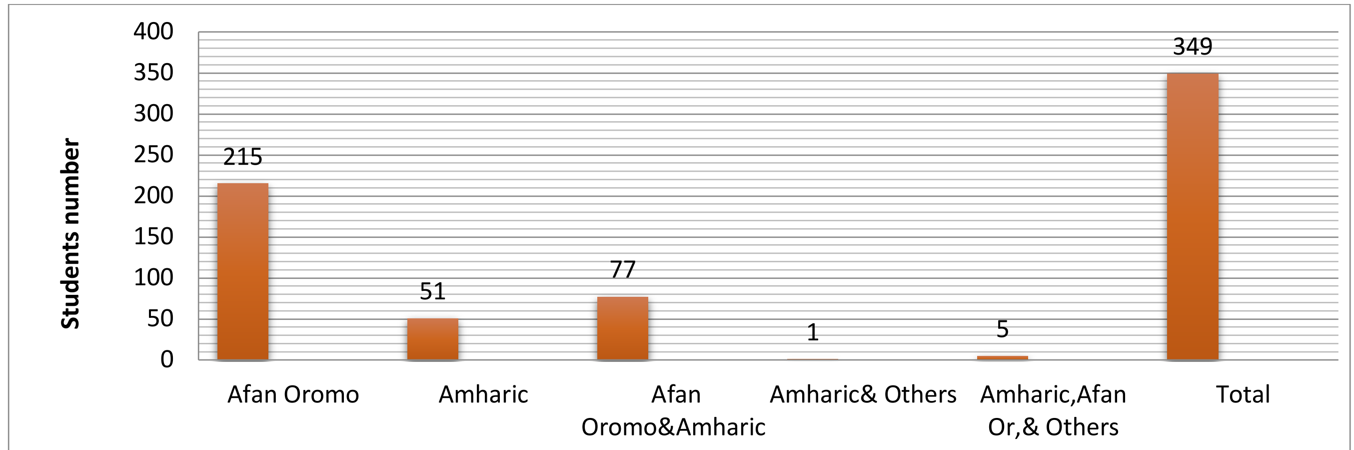

Figure 21: Besides English Language(s) to be introduced as a medium of instruction in Ethiopian universities (Appendix A Part II)

As shown in Figure 21, students were asked about which local language/s to be introduced as a teaching tool in Ethiopian universities beside English. Respondents expressed a range of viewpoints on this issue. The vast majority of the students, 215 of them accounting for 61.6% of the responses, were in favor of introducing Afan Oromo as a language of instruction alongside English. In addition, 77 students (22.1%) indicated that they would like to use Afan Oromo and Amharic as the language of instruction. In addition, 51 students (14.6%) prefer Amharic as the language of instruction, and a smaller proportion of students favor the introduction of Amharic, Afan Oromo alongside other languages (5, 1.4%) and a combination of Amharic and other languages (0.3%). These figures indicate that there is great interest among students in the introduction of local languages as a medium of instruction in higher educational institutions. This interest is underpinned by the experiences of teachers who emphasize the importance of this activity within the academic community (see Appendix C).

4.4. Instructors' data analysis

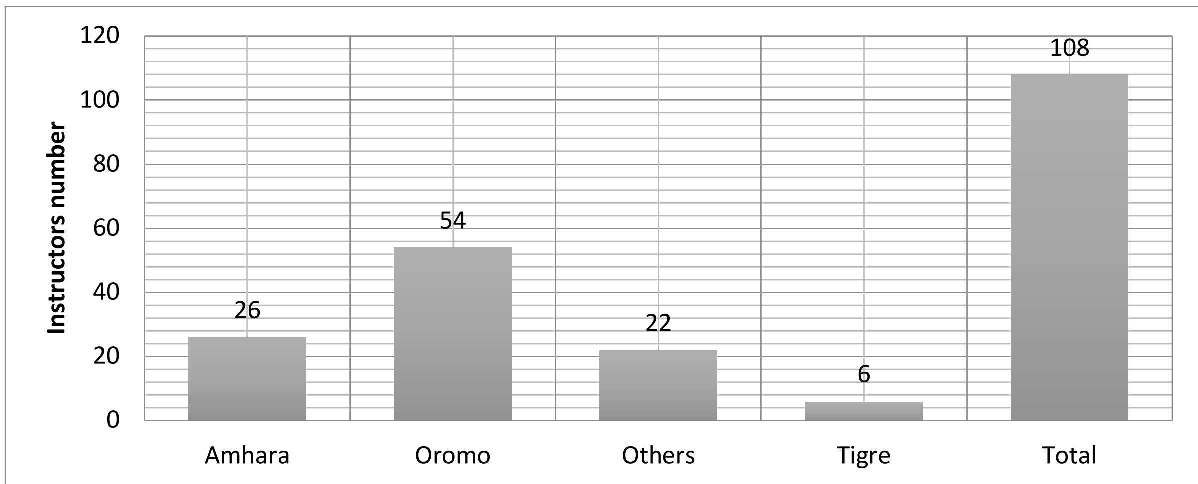

Figure 22 : Nation of instructor respondents (Appendix B Part I)

Figure 22 shows the responses to a question in which respondents were asked to state their nationality. According to the information provided, 54 respondents (50%) identified themselves as Oromo, 26 respondents (24.1%) as Amhara, 22 respondents (20.4%) as members of other nations and 6 respondents (5.6%) as Tigre.

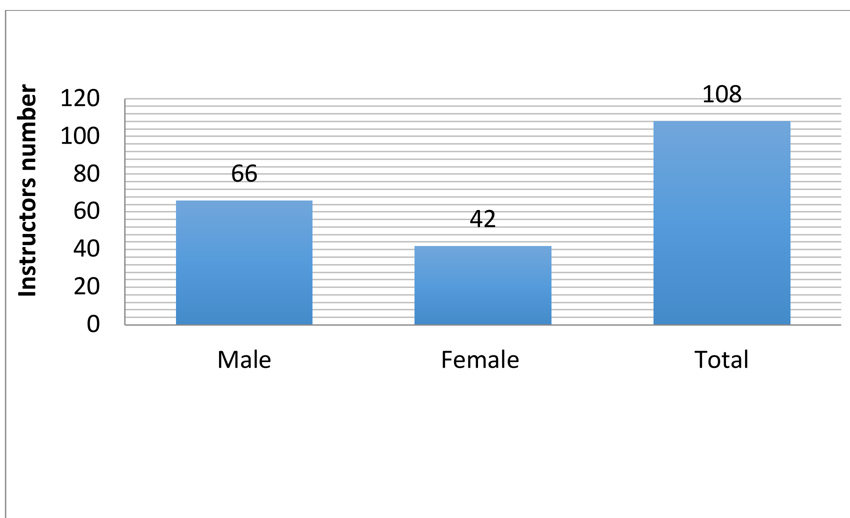

Figure 23: Gender of instructor respondents (Appendix B Part I)

Figure 23 illustrates that out of the respondents currently working at Mattu University, 66 (61.9%) were males, while 42 (38.9%) were females.

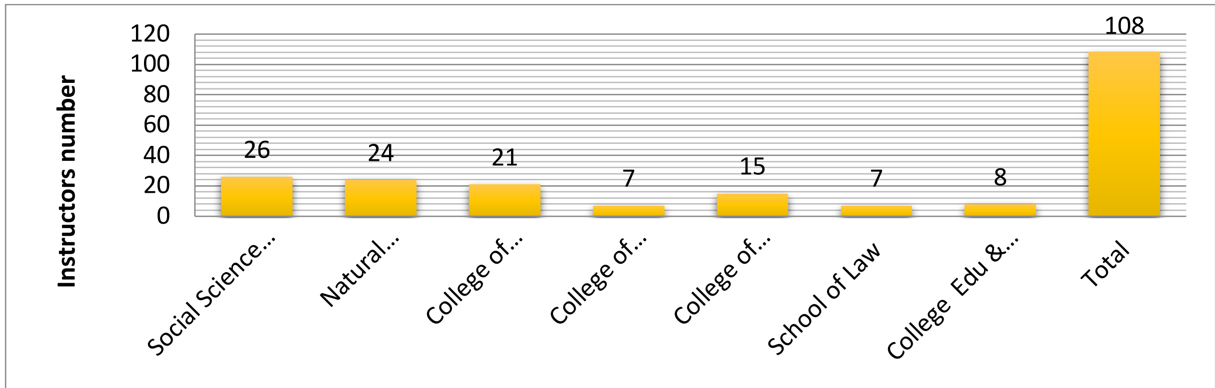

Figure 24: College/school of the participants (Appendix B Part I)

As shown in Figure 24 above, the data for this study was collected from seven different academic units within Mattu University, including six colleges and one school. The distribution of respondents from these units is as follows: 26 (24.1%) from the College of Social Science and Humanities, 24 (22.2%) from the College of Natural Science and Computational Sciences, 8 (7.4%) from the College of Education & Behavioural Studies, 7 (6.5%) from the School of Law, 21 (19.4%) from the College of Engineering and Technology, 15 (13.9%) from the College of Business and Economics, and 7 (6.5%) from the College of Health Science.

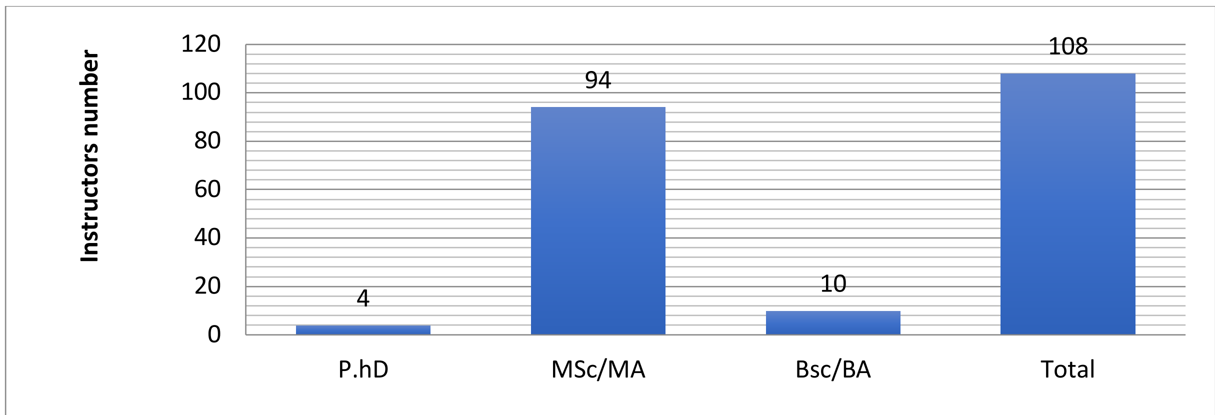

Figure 25: Qualification of instructor respondents (Appendix B Part I)

As can be seen from Figure 25, 4 people with a PhD, 94 people with an MSc/MA degree and 10 people with a BSc/BA degree took part in the survey. These participants are qualified to provide the information required for the study.

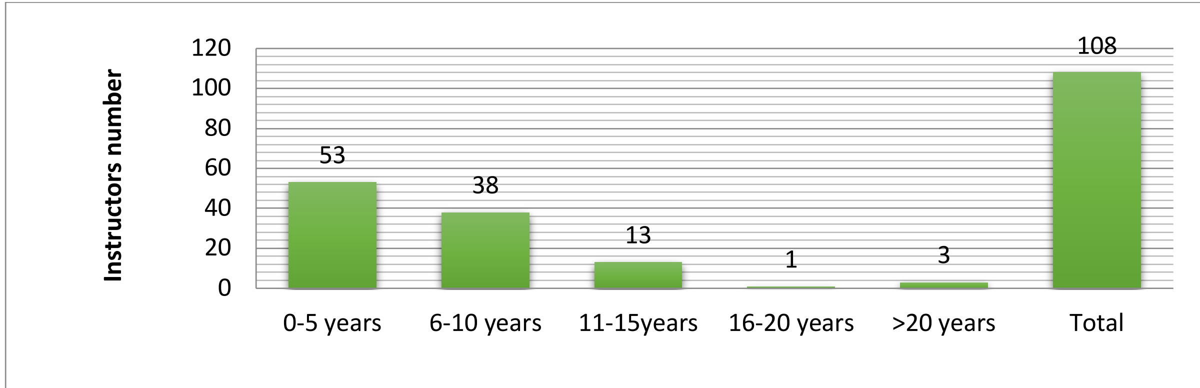

Figure 26: Teaching experience of the respondents (Appendix B Part I)

As can be seen in Figure 26, the teaching experience of respondents varies, specifically, 53 respondents (49.1%) have 0 to 5 years of teaching experience, 38 respondents (35.2%) have between 6 and 10 years of teaching experience, 13 respondents (12%) have between 11 and 15 years of teaching experience, 1 respondent (0.9%) has 16 to 20 years of teaching experience, and 3 respondents (2.8%) have more than 20 years of teaching experience. Considering their long teaching experience in higher educational institutions, these respondents are well suited to provide insights into the realities of the classroom, especially in relation to the topic under study.

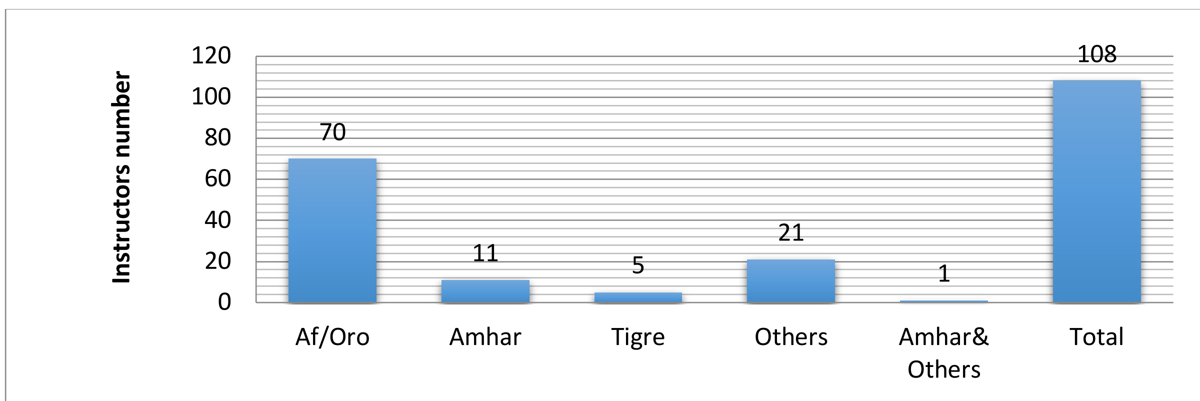

Figure 27: Instructor respondent's first language (Appendix B Part II)

As can be seen in Figure 27, respondents were asked to indicate their first language. The answers show a variety of linguistic backgrounds among the participants. Specifically, 70 respondents (64.8%) indicated Afan Oromo as their first language, 11 respondents (10.2%) indicated Amharic, 5 respondents (4.6%) indicated Tigregna, 21 respondents (19.4%) indicated other languages, and 1 respondent (0.9%) indicated that Amharic and other languages were their first languages. This diversity indicates that the participants come from different language areas and cultures.

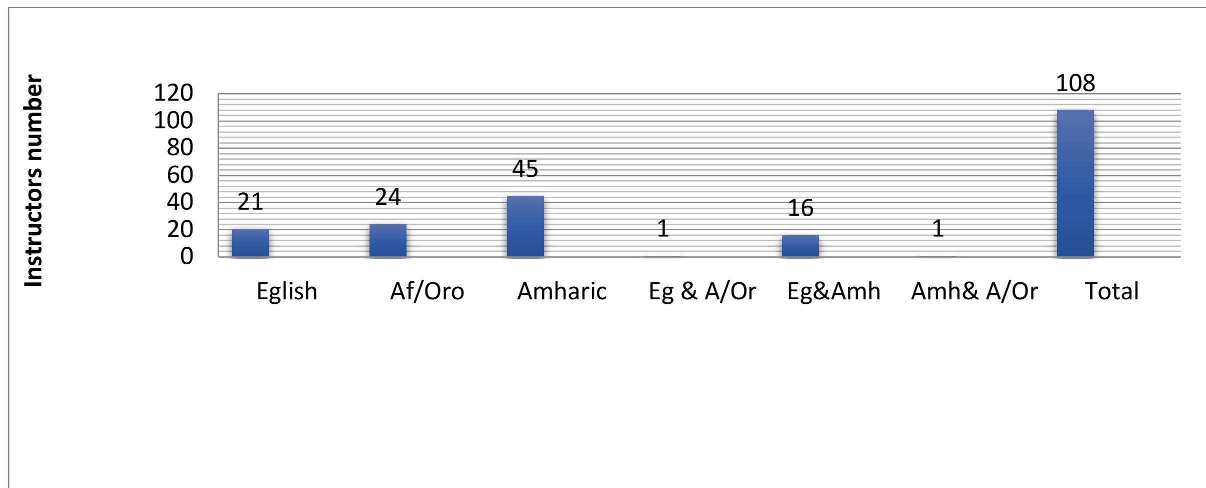

Figure 28: Instructor respondent's second language (Appendix B Part II)

As can be seen in Figure 28 above, the participants were asked to name their second language. The responses show that there is a range of language proficiency among the participants. According to their responses, 45 participants (41.7%) indicated that Amharic is their second language, 24 participants (22.2%) indicated Afan Oromo, 21 participants (19%) indicated English, 16 participants (14.8% of the respondents spoke both English and Amharic, while 1 respondent (0.9%) indicated both English and Afan Oromo or Amharic and Afan Oromo as their second language. It is worth noting that Aronnin (2019) defines multilingualism as the ability to use three or more languages, while bilingualism is the use of two languages, making it a special case of multilingualism.

Based on this definition, the majority of respondents can be classified as bilingual or multilingual.

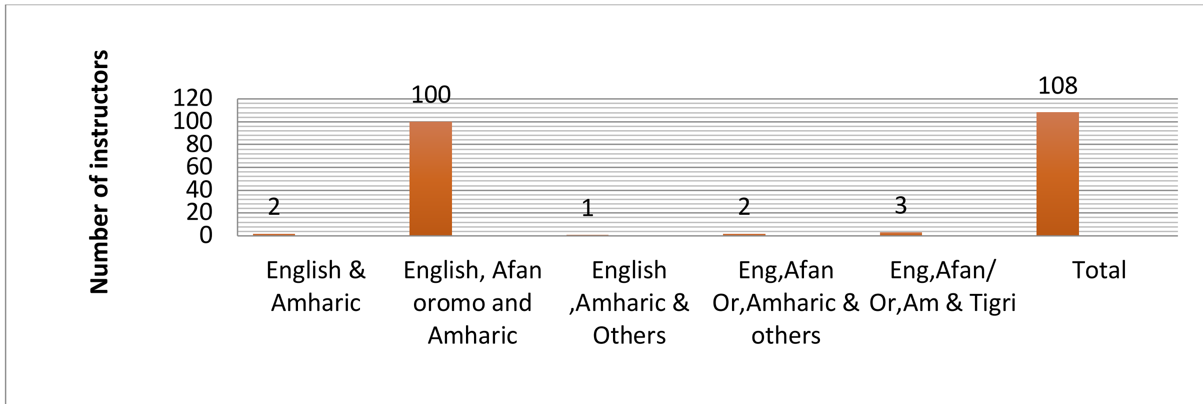

Figure 29: Language/s instructor respondents can hear (Appendix B Part II)

As shown in Figure 29 above, respondents were asked about the languages they can hear. According to their responses, 100 teachers (92.6%) indicated that they could hear English, Afan Oromo and Amharic, while 3 teachers (2.8%) indicated that they could hear Afan Oromo, Amharic and Tigrigna. In addition, 2 teachers (1.9%) reported hearing English, Amharic and Other. Two other teachers (1.9%) said they could hear English and Amharic, and 1 teacher (0.9%) said they could hear English, Amharic and other languages. Citing Grosjean (2008), Navracsics (2016) defines a bilingual as a fully competent speaker/listener, i.e., they have developed competencies to the extent required by their needs and environment. Based on this definition, it can be deduced that most of the teachers in this study are bilingual or multilingual.

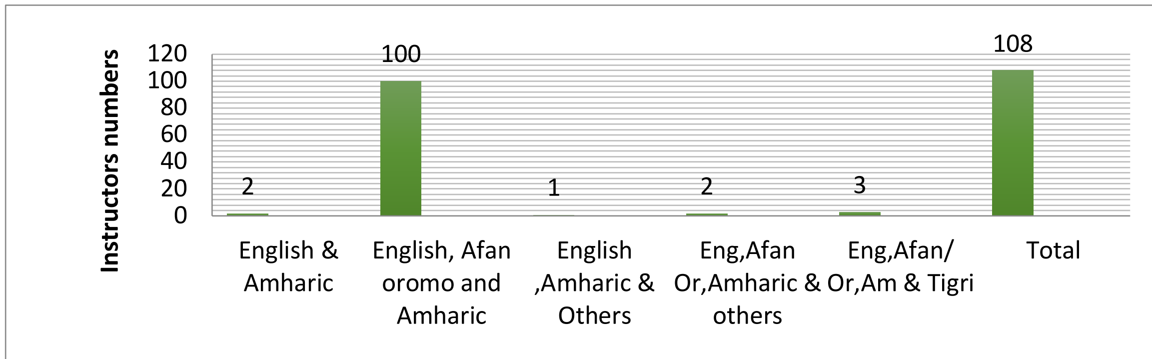

Figure 30: Language/ instructors respondents can speak (Appendix B Part II)

As shown in Figure 30, participants were asked to indicate which languages they could speak. According to their responses, 100 teachers (92.6%) indicated that they could speak English, Afan Oromo and Amharic. In addition, 3 teachers (2.8%) indicated that they can speak English, Amharic, Afan Oromo and Tigrinya, while 2 teachers (1.9%) indicated that they can speak English and Amharic, and another 2 (1.9%) indicated that they can speak English, Afan Oromo, Amharic and other languages. 1 teacher (0.9%) stated that they could speak English, Amharic and other languages. Navracsics (2016) states that a bilingual person needs at least two languages in daily communication: one for their own name and one for the other person's language. Considering that the majority of respondents speak three languages, it can be concluded that they are multilingual.

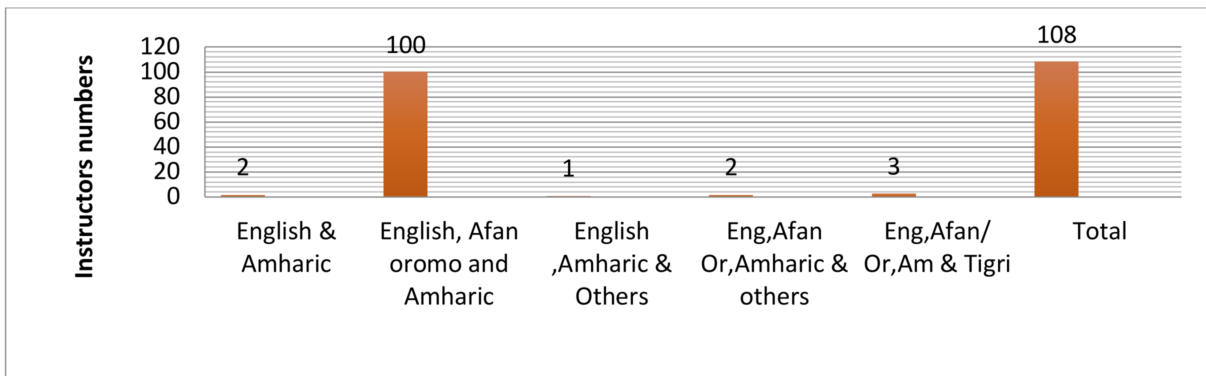

Figure 31: Language/s instructor respondents can read (Appendix B Part II)

As can be seen in Figure 31, the instructors were asked about the languages they can read. According to their responses, 100 instructors (92.6%) indicated that they can read English, Afan Oromo and Amharic, while 3 instructors (2.8%) indicated that they can read English, Amharic, Afan Oromo and Tigrinya. In addition, 2 teachers (1.9%) each stated that they can read English, Afan Oromo, Amharic and other languages. Two other teachers (1.9%) stated that they can read in English and Amharic, and 1 teacher (0.9%) stated that they can read in English, Amharic and other languages. Aronnin (2019) defines individual multilingualism as a person's ability to speak and use two or more languages appropriately. In line with this definition, it can be assumed that most respondents are multilingual.

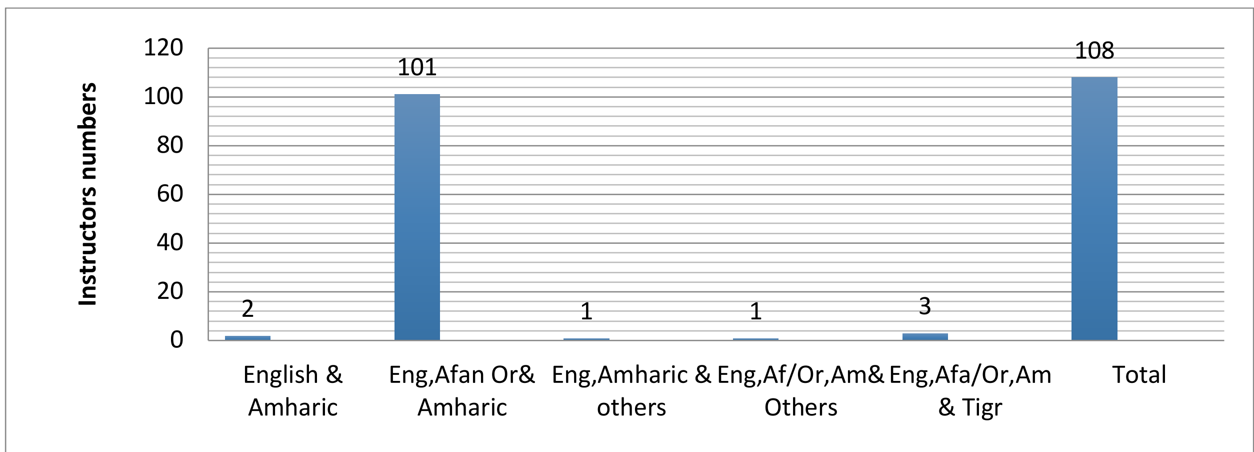

Figure 32: Language/s instructor respondents can write (Appendix B Part II)

As shown in Figure 32, respondents were asked about the languages in which they can write. 101 respondents (93.5%) indicated that they could write in English, Afan Oromo and Amharic, while 3 respondents (2.8%) indicated that they could write in English, Amharic, Afan Oromo and Tigrinya. In addition, 2 respondents (1.9%) stated that they can write in English and Amharic. One respondent (0.9%) stated that they could write in English, Afan Oromo, Amharic
and other languages, and another respondent (0.9%) could write in English, Amharic and other languages.

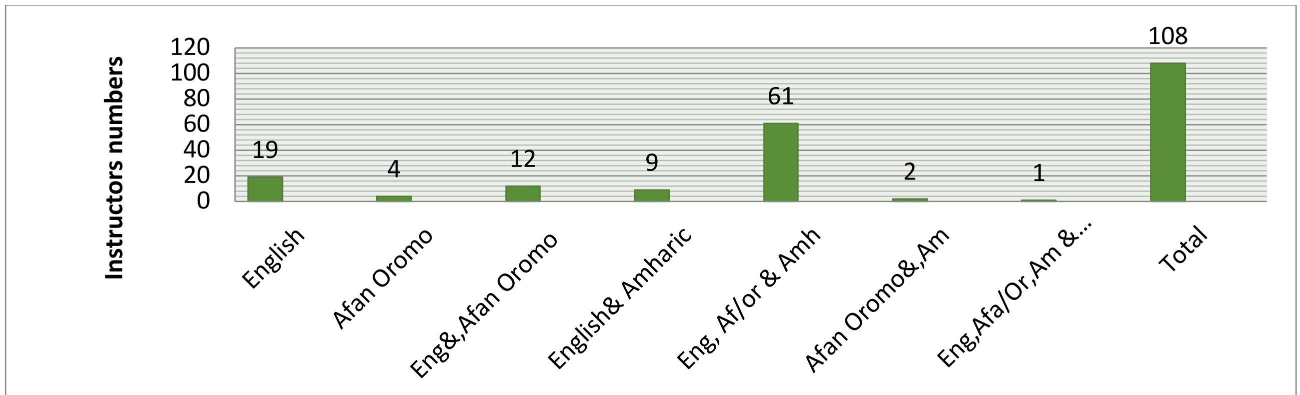

Figure 33: Language/s instructors use in the classroom (Appendix B Part II)

Figure 33 shows the instructors' responses to the question of which language(s) they use in the classroom. According to this data, 61 instructors (56.5%) use English, Afan Oromo and Amharic, 19 instructors (17.6%) use English, 12 instructors (11.1%) use a combination of Afan Oromo and English, 9 instructors (8.3%) use both English and Amharic, 4 instructor (3.7%) use Afan Oromo, 2 instructors (1.9%) use Afan Oromo and Amharic, and 1 instructor (0.9%) uses a combination of English, Afan Oromo, Amharic and Tigrigna. The predominant languages indicate that instructors in the classroom mainly use English, Afan Oromo and Amharic. These findings are confirmed by classroom observations with the instructors (see Appendix C).

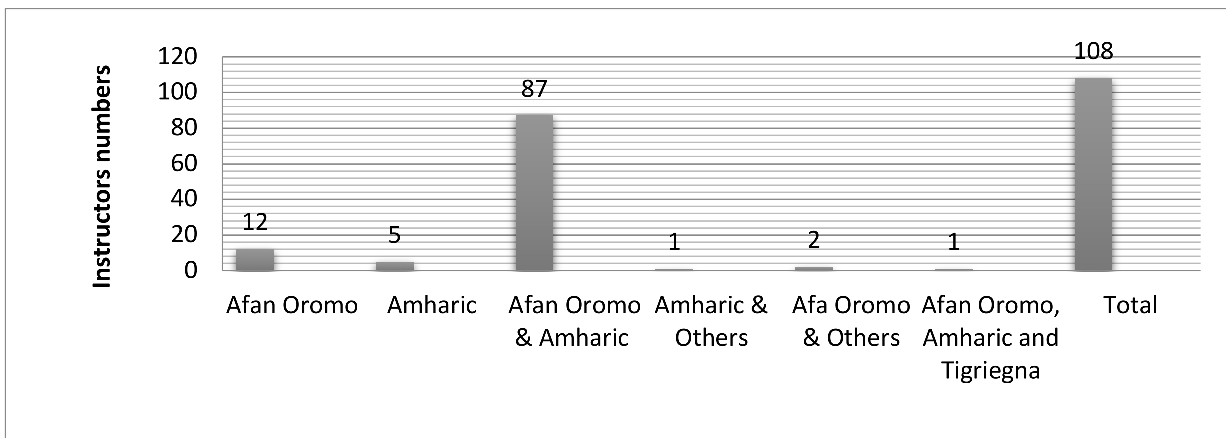

Figure 34: Language/s instructors allows students to use other than English (Appendix B Part II)

The data presented in Figure 34 provide valuable insights into the languages that instructors allow their students to use for asking and answering questions in the classroom other than English. According to the responses, 87 instructors (80.6%) allow their students to use Afan Oromo and Amharic while 12 instructors (11.1%) allow Afan Oromo. In addition, 5 instructors (4.6%) indicated that they allow their students to use Amharic. Furthermore, 2 (1.9%) stated that they allow Afan Oromo and other languages. In contrast, 1 (0.9%) allows students to use Afan Oromo, Amharic and Tigrigna as alternatives to English, while 1 instructor (0.9%) allows students to use Amharic and Others.

It is important to point out that Article 3.5.7 of the 1994 Education and Training Policy states that "English will be the medium of instruction for secondary and higher education" (TGE, 1994: 24). However, most teachers' responses indicate that actual classroom practice may not be in line with this education and training policy. Classroom observations and interviews with teachers support this observation (Appendix D).

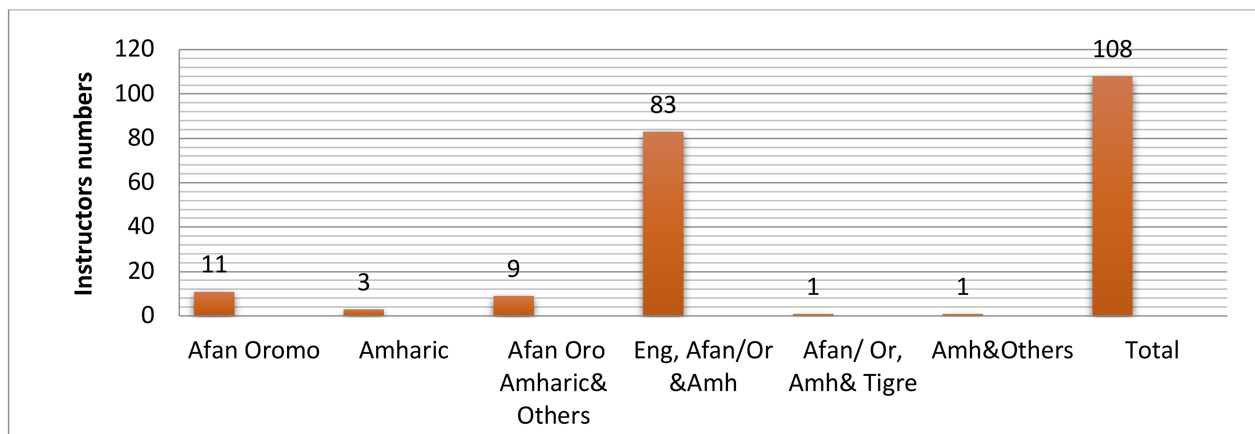

Figure 35: Other language/s instructors use to explain ideas (Appendix B Part II)

Figure 35 provides an insight into the languages that instructors use to explain ideas in class. According to the responses, 83 instructors (76.9%) use English, Afan Oromo and Amharic, while 11 instructors (10.2%) use Afan Oromo. Moreover, 9 instructors (8.3%) mentioned that they use Afan Oromo, Amharic and other languages to explain ideas. In addition, 3 instructors (2.8%) use Amharic, 1 instructor (0.9%) uses Afan Oromo, Amharic and Tigregna and 1 instructor (0.9%) uses Amharic and others. The classroom

observations and the interviews with the instructors confirm these results. In the interviews, teachers explained that they use Afan Oromo and Amharic to clarify ideas when students have difficulties in understanding. However, it is worth noting that this practice contradicts the 1994 Education and Training Policy, which
states that English should be the medium of instruction in higher education.

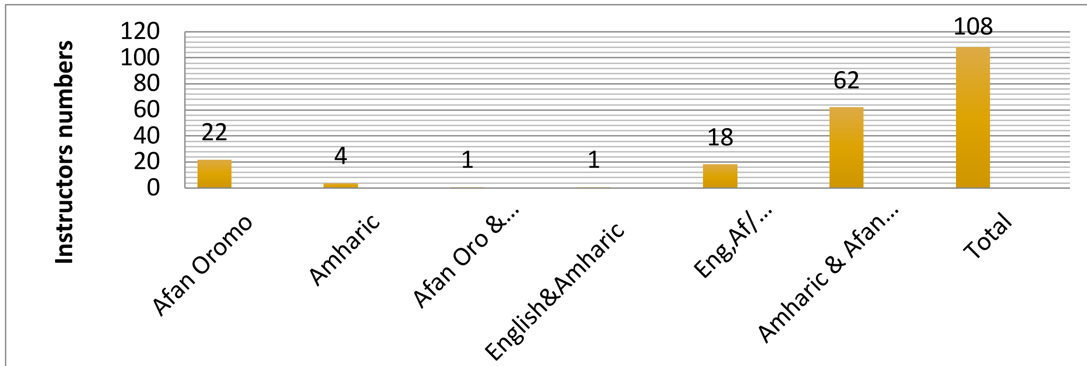

Figure 36: Language/s instructors uses outside the office with colleagues (Appendix B Part II)

Figure 36 contains data on the languages that instructors use to communicate with their colleagues outside their office. According to the responses, 62 instructors (57.4%) use Amharic and Afan Oromo, while 22 instructors (20.4%) use Afan Oromo to communicate. In addition, 18 instructors (16.7%) reported using English, Amharic and Afan Oromo, 4 instructors (9.7%) use Afan Oromo and 1 instructor (0.9%) mentioned Amharic, Afan Oromo and English and 1
(0.9%) English and Amharic to communicate with their colleagues.

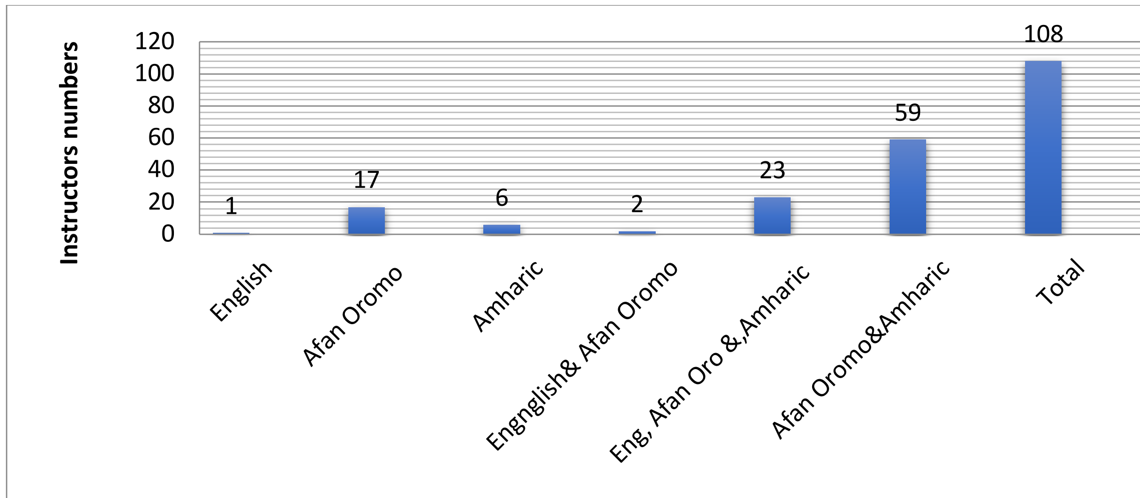

Figure 37: Language/s instructors uses in the office with co-workers (Appendix B Part II)

Figure 37 provides insights into the languages that instructors use when communicating with their co-workers in their office. According to the responses, 59 instructors (54.6%) use Afan Oromo and Amharic for communication, while 23 instructors (21.3%) use English, Afan Oromo and Amharic. Additionally, 17 instructors (15.7%) mentioned using Afan Oromo, 6 instructors (5.6%) use Amharic, 2 instructors (1.9%) use Afan Oromo and English, and 1 instractor (0.9%) uses English for office communication. This aligns with the definition of multilingualism provided by the European Commission (2007), which describes it as "the ability of societies, institutions, groups, and individuals to engage, regurarly, with more than one language in their day-to-day lives" (Cenoz, 2013: 5).

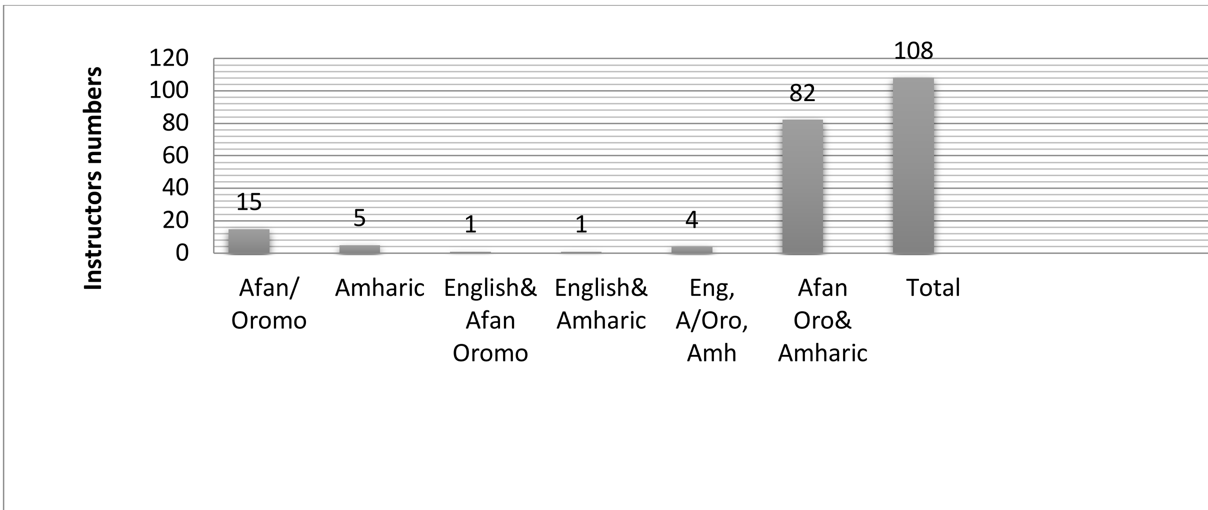

Figure 38: Language/s instructors uses while shopping (Appendix B Part II)

In Figure 38, the instructors were asked about the language(s) they use when shopping. The data shows that the majority of instructors, namely 82 (75.9%), use a combination of Amharic and Afan Oromo when shopping. In addition, 15 instructors (13.5%) reported using Afan Oromo, 5 (4.6%) use Amharic, 4 instructors (3.7%) use English, Amharic and Afan Oromo and 1 instructor (0.9%) reported using Afan Oromo and English and 1 (0.9%) English and Amharic for shopping. This indicates a preference for local languages when shopping.

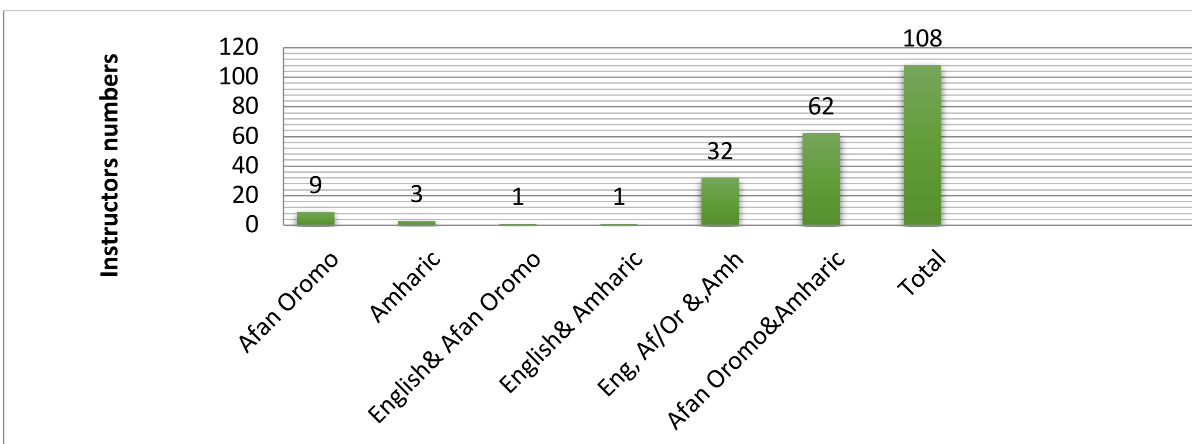

Figure 39: Language/s instructor uses outside the classroom with students (Appendix B Part II)

Figure 39 presents data on the language/s used by instructors when communicating with their students outside the classroom. The findings indicate that a majority of instructors, specifically 62 individuals (57.4%), use a combination of Afan Oromo and Amharic for communication. Additionally, 32 instructors (29.6%) primarily use English, Afan Oromo and Amharic 9 (8.3%) use Afan Oromo, and 3 (2.8%) instructors use Amharic. Furthermore, 1 (0.9%) employs Afan Oromo and English, while another 1 (0.9%) uses English and Amharic when communicating with students outside the classroom. These responses emphasize the widespread use of local languages for interactions with students, which align with the concept of multilingualism again.

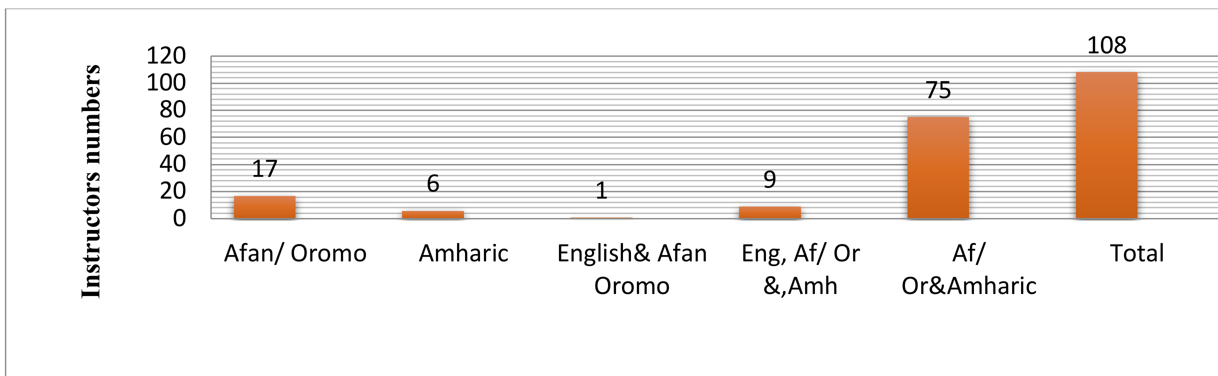

Figure 40: Language/s instructors use with administrative workers (Appendix B Part II)

As shown in Figure 40, instructors were asked about the language(s) they use when communicating with administrative staff. In this regard, 75 (69.4%) used Afan Oromo and Amharic, 17 (15.7%) used Afan Oromo, 9 (8.3%) used English, Afan Oromo and Amharic, 6 (5.6%) used Amharic and 1 (0.9%) used English and Afan Oromo to

communicate with the administrative workers.

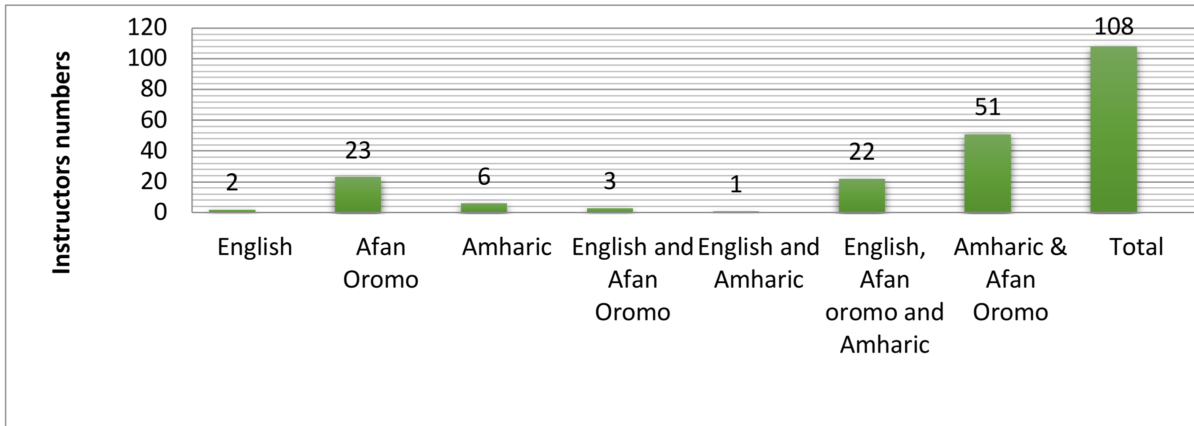

Figure 41: Language/s instructors use during cultural exchanges (Appendix B Part II)

As can be seen in Figure 41, respondents were asked about the language or languages they used during cultural change. In this group, 51 (47.2%) use Amharic and Afan Oromo, 23 (21.3%) use Afan Oromo, 22 (20.4%) use English, Afan Oromo and Amharic, 6 (5.6%) use Amharic, 3 (2.8%) use English and Afan Oromo, 2 (1.9%) use English and 1 (0.9%) use English and Amharic during cultural exchange. The majority of the respondents use the local language for cultural exchange, which indicates their multilingualism as they can speak Amharic and Afan Oromo as well as English.

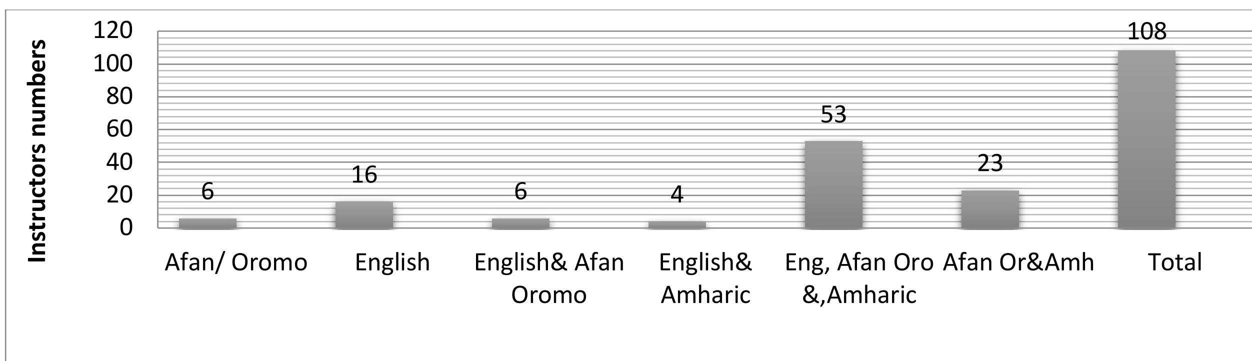

Figure 42: Language/s instructors use to greet students (Appendix B Part II)

As can be seen in Figure 42, teachers were asked which language(s) they use to support their students in class. Accordingly, 53 (49.1%) use English, Afaan oromo and amharic, 23 (21.3%) use Afan Oromo and Amharic, 16 (14.8%) use English, 6 (5.6%) use Afan Oromo, 6 (5.6%) use English and Afan Oromo, and 4 (3.7%) use English and Amharic to

support their students. The teachers' interview confirms this reality (see Appendix C). This highlights the discrepancy between language education policy at the institutional level in multilingual contexts and actual language practise in the classroom, as discussed by Gorter and Cenoz (2017).

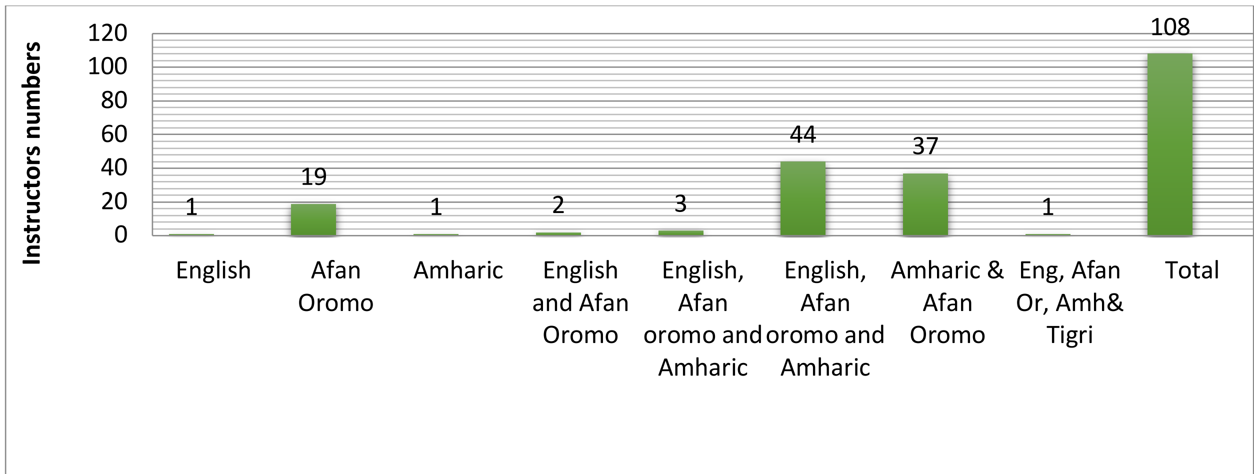

Figure 43: TV programs with which language/s the instructors watch in the university cafeteria (Appendix B Part II)

As shown in Figure 43, the teachers were asked about the television programs they watch in the teachers' canteen. In response, 44 (40.7%) indicated that they watch television programs in English, Afan Oromo and Amharic, 37 (34.3%) Amharic and Afan Oromo, 19 (17.6%) Afan Oromo, 3 (2.8%) English and Amharic, 2 (1.9%) English and Afan Oromo, 1 (0.9%) English, 1 (0.9%) Amharic and 1 (0.9%) English, Afan Oromo, Amharic and Tigregna.

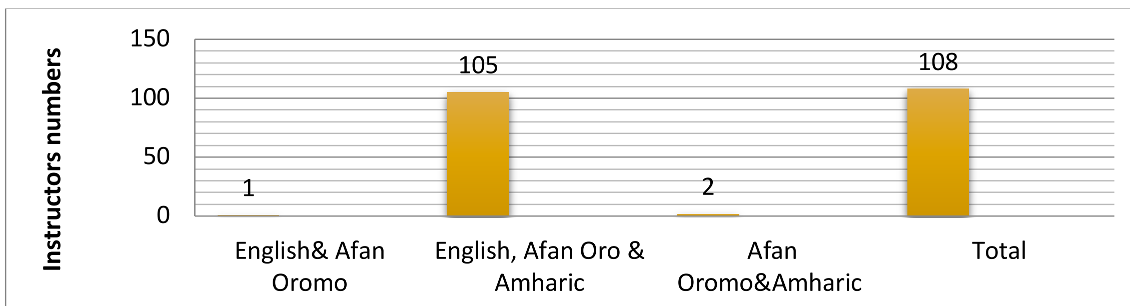

Figure 44: Language(s) books, magazines, and newspapers in the library are written with (Appendix B Part II)

Figure 44 provides an insight into the languages in which the books, journals and newspapers in the library are written, as indicated by the instructors. 105 (97.2%) indicated that these materials are in English, Afan Oromo and Amharic, while 2 (1.9%) mentioned Afan Oromo and Amharic and 1 (0.9%) mentioned English and Afan Oromo. The presence of these materials
in multiple languages underscores a multilingual environment.

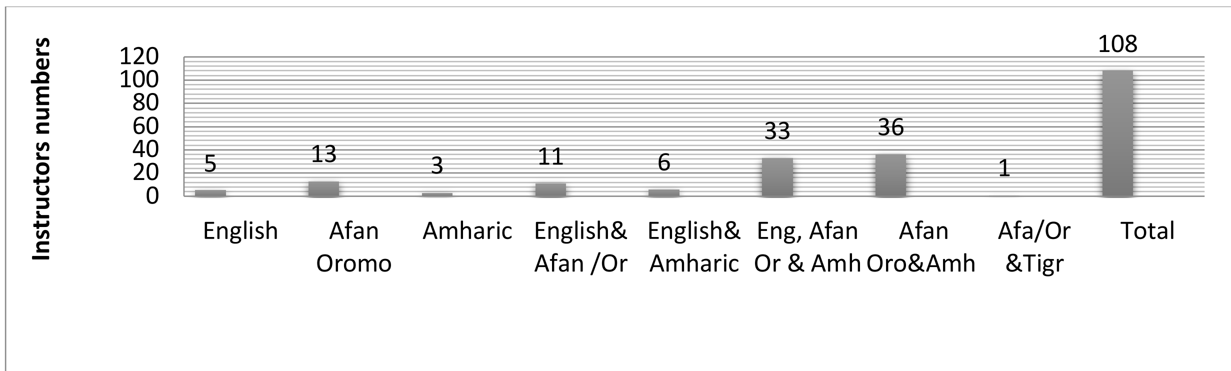

Figure 45: Language(s) movies, plays, and concerts instructors attend at the university are written with (Appendix B Part II)

Figure 45 provides information about the languages in which the instructors attended movies, plays, and concerts. According to their responses, 36 (33.3%) attended events in Afan Oromo and Amharic, 33 (30.6%) in English, Amharic, and Afan Oromo, 13 (12.0%) in Afan Oromo, 11 (10.2%) in English and Afan Oromo, 6 (5.6%) in English and Amharic, 5 (4.6%) in English, 3 (2.8%) Amharic, and 1 (0.9%) in Afan Oromo and Tigregna. This variety of languages in cultural events highlights the presence of multilingualism in the teachers' experiences.

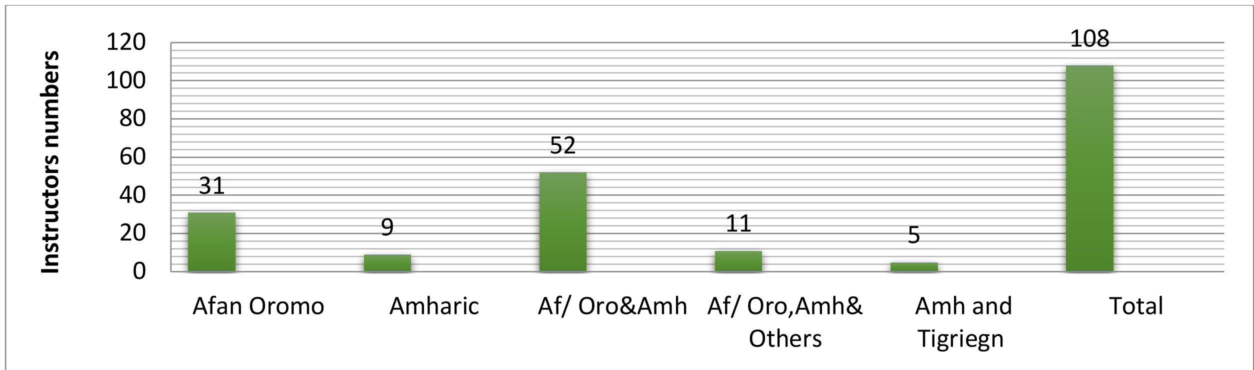

Figure 46: Besides the English language/s to be introduced as a medium of instruction in Ethiopian universities (Appendix B Part II)

Figure 46 illustrates the instructors ' opinions on which languages should be introduced as a medium of instruction in Ethiopian higher institutions alongside English. The responses indicate that 52 (48.1%) believe Afan Oromo and Amharic should be introduced, 31 (28.7%) support the introduction of Afan Oromo, 11 (10.2%) suggest Afan Oromo, Amharic, and other languages, 9 (8.3%) recommend Amharic, and 5 (4.6%) propose Amharic and Tigregna. This diverse set of opinions reflects the complex language dynamics in Ethiopian higher education institutions.

4.5. Analysis of instructors' interview

Seven instructor members from six colleges and one school at the University of Mattu were selected for the interview based on their experience and academic level. Nine semi-structured interview questions were prepared on language policy and practice in higher educational institutions in Ethiopia.

The first question asked to the respondents was whether they were aware of the FDRE Constitution of 1995, Article 3.5.5, and the Education and Training Policy of 1994, Article 3.5.7, which states that "English will be the medium of instruction for secondary and higher education". In this regard, some of the respondents explained their views as follows:

Interviewee (1): *Okey, firstly, I'd like to extend my congratulations to you on embarking on this research journey. Regarding your question, yes, I am well aware of Article 3.5.5*

in the Ethiopian Constitution, which stipulates English as the medium of instruction in secondary and higher education. This awareness stems from my experience in training secondary school teachers, where it is explicitly outlined in the Constitution that local languages can be used from grade one to eight, but English becomes mandatory as the medium of instruction in secondary schools and higher institutions, particularly universities. While there may be some flexibility in colleges, universities unequivocally adhere to this policy.

Interviewee (2): *Hmmm, Yes, I am aware of the language policy regarding the use of English as the medium of instruction in higher education. This policy has a historical background, starting with French as the medium of instruction for primary schools and eventually transitioning to English in 1965 for primary education. Higher education and secondary education have consistently used English as the medium of instruction since 1944/45. The key difference is that the policy now explicitly states that English will be the medium of instruction for secondary and higher education, with no history of other languages being used for instruction. In essence, English has been the primary language of instruction in our country's modern education system, and I am informed about this policy and adhere to it.*

Interviewee (4): *Iiii, thank you for reaching out. Yes, I'm well-aware of the Ethiopian Constitution, particularly Article 3.5.5, which mandates English as the medium of instruction in secondary schools and higher education institutions in Ethiopia. This policy has been in place for a considerable time, and we are familiar with it. However, there are some challenges in its implementation.*

Accordingly, they are all aware of these articles and what is stated in the documents.

The second question related to knowledge of the 19995 FDRE Constitution and the 1994 Education and Training Policy and asked respondents if they always use English as the medium of instruction in the classroom with regard to the policy. In this regard, all responded that they do not always use English as a medium of instruction for various reasons. Some responded that they only do not use it because of the language background of the students. They mentioned that there are many indigenous languages in Ethiopia, so students were mainly taught in local languages in elementary school. It was only in

secondary school that they were exposed to English lessons. They added that students may not reach the required language level in the four years of secondary school.

Others responded that students only use English in the classroom and do not find society using English as a means of communication outside school, which may hinder the use of the language outside the classroom. Therefore, they all responded that they use other local languages that they think students could understand to explain the main concepts, such as Afan Oromo and Amharic. The respondents explained why they mainly use these two languages. The first reason they gave is that they use Afan Oromo and Amharic because most of the students can understand and learn through these languages as a medium of instruction at the primary level. Since both languages are spoken in different parts of Ethiopia alongside other local languages, the teachers also use them in the classroom. Here are some of the reactions of the respondents:

Interviewee (3): *Yeah, regarding the language policy, while the policy recommends the use of English as the medium of instruction, I cannot say that I exclusively use English in the classroom. We do incorporate other languages like Afan Oromo and Amharic for additional explanations and sometimes for concept clarification. This practice arises from the fact that many students struggle with English comprehension, and using local languages helps bridge that gap.*

Interviewee (5): *Yes, we aim to instruct our students in English, but it's crucial to consider that many of our students come from rural areas with limited exposure to the English language. While the government's policy advocates for English as the medium of instruction, we sometimes find it necessary to translate concepts into local languages to ensure better comprehension. However, this translation is not a pervasive practice, but rather used selectively to aid in understanding complex course content.*

Interviewee (6): *To be honest, I cannot claim that I exclusively use English as the medium of instruction in my classroom. While the policy dictates the use of English, various factors compel us to occasionally use students' native languages. This is especially the case at the high school and university levels, where students may struggle with their English proficiency. Thus, I do use Amharic or Afan Oromo at times to ensure*

better comprehension. However, I should emphasize that the majority of my class is conducted in English, and I use local languages sparingly for clarification.

Interviewee (7): *No, it's not always possible to use English exclusively. When we use only English, our students often don't participate or engage voluntarily. They may request to use Amharic, especially those who are native Amharic speakers. Many of our students come from different language backgrounds, such as, Afaan Oromo, Amharic, Tigrigna, Sidama, and in order to accommodate their needs, we use a mix of English and other languages like Afan Oromo. Our experience in psychology supports diversity and multilingualism, and given Ethiopia's rich linguistic diversity, we employ a range of languages to meet our students' needs.*

The third question the instructors were asked was how their students react to using only English in class. To this question, almost all responded that the students are unhappy and do not understand the concepts when they explain in English. They are happy to repeat what they have explained in English in their national language(s) even though it is against the constitution. Regarding this, some of the respondents explained their views as follows:

Interviewee (1): *Students' reactions to the use of English in the classroom can vary. According to the Constitution, students should participate in the learning process, using English actively in problem-solving and communication. However, in my teaching experience, I've found that many students lack the confidence and experience to actively engage in English. They tend to be passive listeners and are hesitant to communicate in English. This hesitancy can be attributed to their limited English language background. So, in many cases, the reaction is not as positive as one would hope, as some students are yet comfortable expressing themselves in English.*

Interviewee (5): *Many of our students, particularly those with limited exposure to English, are hesitant and reluctant when we predominantly use English for instruction. They often express their difficulties in understanding the content and request that we switch to local languages. While English is emphasized by the curriculum, we do consider the students' needs and occasionally use local languages to facilitate learning.*

Interviewee (6): *When I predominantly use English, I can sense that some of my students become confused and may struggle to understand the content. There are times when they appear uncertain about what I'm teaching. In such cases, I switch to Amharic or Afan Oromo to make things clearer, and I notice that my students respond more positively during these moments. So, their reactions can be mixed, with some confusion when English, is the primary medium.*

In the fourth question, the teachers were asked whether their students only use English in class to ask and answer questions. In this regard, they all responded that they use English to ask and answer questions and Afan Oromo or the Amharic language. In this regard, let us consider the views of some respondents as follows:

Interviewee (2): *Eeee…as I mentioned earlier, many students prefer to use their mother tongue to ask questions or provide answers due to their language proficiency levels. The language barrier is a significant challenge, and it makes it difficult to consistently adhere to the policy's emphasis on using English.*

Interviewee (4): *We encourage students to use English for communication in the classroom, but because of the diverse linguistic backgrounds of our students, some of them resort to using their mother tongues or local languages to ask and respond to questions. We, as instructors, strive to motivate them to use English consistently, but the reality is that there's a lack of uniformity among students in this regard due to the linguistic diversity in Ethiopia.*

Interviewee (5): *No, in practice, very few students use English exclusively to ask and answer questions in the classroom. This is primarily because most students come from diverse linguistic backgrounds and may not be proficient in English. Instead, they tend to ask questions or provide responses in their mother tongues or local languages. The proportion of students using English exclusively for these interactions is relatively low.*

In the next question, respondents were asked whether their students use other local languages in addition to English in class and whether they mention them. Accordingly, all respondents answered that they use local languages such as Afan Oromo and Amharic. Here are some of the responses of the respondents:

Interviewee (4): *Yes, there is a noticeable trend where students from specific ethnic groups, such as the Amhara and Afan Oromo speakers, are more likely to use their mother tongues in the classroom. However, students from other ethnic groups often use either Amharic or English for communication. The linguistic diversity in Ethiopia plays a significant role in shaping these patterns.*

Interviewee (5): *Students often use a mix of Amharic, Afan Oromo, and other local languages to ask questions or provide answers in the classroom. The choice of language often depends on their linguistic background and comfort level.*

Interviewee (7): *It varies based on the students' backgrounds. International students, especially those from refugee camps, tend to use English and other languages they are familiar with. For Ethiopian students, we encourage them to use the language they are most comfortable with, whether it's Amharic, Afan Oromo or others. We want to ensure that all students can actively participate in the learning process.*

From this, we can understand that although the country's constitution allows the use of English language as a medium of instruction in higher education institutions of Ethiopia, what is practically taking place in the actual classroom does not match. This proves what Gorter & Cenoz (2017) state in multilingual contexts: "Language education policies at the institutional level do not always match the language practices inside the classroom (8)".

In connection with this question, instructors were asked how they react when students use local languages to ask or answer questions. Very few responded that they encouraged them to ask in English by translating their questions or answers into English. In contrast, most responded that they did not mind asking or answering questions in the local language.

Interviewee (1): *Hmm, no I do not discourage students from using their local languages. Instead, I guide and orient them. I emphasize that the classroom is an English language environment and stress the importance of English proficiency, especially in international contexts. However, I understand that students may require assistance, and I facilitate their understanding by translating or simplifying concepts in English. It's crucial to strike a balance between creating a supportive learning environment and maintaining the*

integrity of the language policy. I believe in offering guidance rather than imposing strict restrictions.

Interviewee (4): *I encourage students to use English in the classroom, as it is the dominant language in Ethiopia and the medium of instruction. However, my ability to respond effectively depends on my understanding of the language they use. So, in practice, I prefer students to use English or Amharic & Afan Oromo since those are the languages I can proficiently communicate in. Encouraging the use of English aligns with the broader language policy in Ethiopia.*

Interviewee (5): *From my perspective as an educator, I do not discourage students from using local languages to ask questions or engage in discussions. However, I do encourage them to use English as it aligns with the policy and is essential for their academic and professional development. It's essential to strike a balance between respecting their linguistic diversity and ensuring that they gain proficiency in English.*

In the next question, the instructors were asked which language(s) they use to communicate with their students outside the classroom. In this regard, some responded that they could use English, Afan Oromo and Amharic. In contrast, most responded that they often use Afan Oromo and Amharic to communicate with their students outside the classroom as almost all students are proficient in these two languages. Let us look at some of the responses of the respondents:

Interviewee (3): *That's correct. Ethiopia considers English a foreign language, and its usage outside the classroom is minimal. Communities predominantly use local languages like Afan Oromo and Amharic for everyday activities such as shopping and communication during travel. English is rarely used in these contexts.*

Interviewee (6): *In Ethiopia, it's challenging to rely on a single local language due to the country's linguistic diversity. Therefore, we often use Amharic, Afan Oromo, or other local languages, depending on the context. However, Amharic tends to be the most commonly used language, given its wider regional acceptance.*

The other question posed to the instructors was which local language(s) they recommend to be introduced as a medium of instruction in Ethiopian universities. Some of the

respondents replied that Afan Oromo and Amharic languages are spoken and used throughout the country and therefore recommended the introduction of these two languages as medium of instruction in Ethiopian HEIs while others recommended further research. Here are some of the responses of the respondents:

Interviewee (1): *The decision to use local languages more extensively in teaching and learning should be based on careful needs assessment and research. It is not a decision that should be made hastily. Ethiopia's linguistic diversity is a complex challenge, and any policy change should be well-informed and supported by the necessary infrastructure. While it is possible to endorse local languages for instruction in certain subject areas, especially at the secondary school level, implementing such changes at the university level would require significant preparation, including the development of appropriate textbooks and materials. Multilingualism in education can be beneficial, but it should be approached with careful planning and consideration of practical challenges.*

Interviewee (3): *I believe the official language and medium of instruction for education in Ethiopia should be reconsidered. For instance, Afan Oromo, spoken by the largest ethnic group in Ethiopia, could be considered as a medium of instruction. Additionally, Amharic, which has widespread influence, should also be given consideration. The goal should be to promote science and technology by providing opportunities for students to learn in their native languages, especially in higher education institutions.*

Interviewee (4): *I believe that Ethiopia should consider adopting a multilingual policy, similar to countries like Nigeria, Kenya, and India. Given the rich linguistic diversity in Ethiopia, it's essential to accommodate and promotes various languages. The government has already taken steps in this direction by introducing mother tongue education at the primary level for several ethnic groups. Expanding this approach to secondary and higher education levels could help address the linguistic diversity in the country.*

The last question posed to the respondents was whether the Ethiopian constitution and education and training policies take into account the problem of multilingualism in higher educational institutions in Ethiopia. In this regard, all respondents answered that the issue

of multilingualism is not addressed in Ethiopian higher education institutions. Some of the respondents explained their views on this as follows:

Interviewee (1): *The current language policy in Ethiopian higher education does not fully address the complexity of multilingualism in the country. While there may be efforts to introduce local languages into the educational system, the practical implementation remains a challenge. The diverse linguistic landscape of Ethiopia calls for a more comprehensive and nuanced approach to multilingual education. It is essential to consider the specific needs and realities of each region and ethnic group when formulating language policies for higher education. This policy should prioritize inclusive and effective multilingualism to ensure that all students can access quality education.*

Interviewee (2): *Hii, no, the current language policy in Ethiopian higher education does not adequately address the issue of multilingualism. The policy exclusively promotes English as the medium of instruction, disregarding the country's rich linguistic diversity. To address the isseus of multilingualism, this policy should consider introducing other local languages as mediums of instruction alongside English.*

Interviewee (3): *In my view, the current language policy in Ethiopia does not effectively address multilingualism. It tends to prioritize English as the medium of instruction while neglecting the rich linguistic diversity of the country. To truly embrace multilingualism, we should create room for using local languages in education, particularly in higher institutions, to ensure that all students have the opportunity to learn and excel in theirchosen fields.*

In summary, during the interview, the respondents reflected that what is written in the constitution and the practice in the classroom does not go together. Although the constitution allows the use of the English language as a medium of instruction in Ethiopian higher education institutions, instructors and students code-switch between English, Afan Oromo, and Amharic languages. The classroom observations and questionnaire results with teachers and students prove this fact. Seven instructors from each college of Mattu University were selected for semi-structured interviews focusing on language policy and practice in Ethiopian higher education institutions. Nine interview

questions were prepared, and the responses shed light on the complex language dynamics in the classroom:

(1) Awareness of the 1995 FDRE Constitution Article 3.5.5. and 1994 Education and Training Policy: All interviewees were aware of both documents stating that English will be the medium of instruction for secondary and higher education.
(2) Use of English as a medium of instruction: Eight instructors acknowledged that they do not always use English as a medium of instruction. Reasons included students' linguistic backgrounds and the limited exposure to English in primary school. Some instructors also noted that students might not achieve the required proficiency level in English within four years of secondary school.
(3) Use of local languages: Instructors stated that they used local languages such as Afan Oromo and Amharic alongside English to aid student comprehension. These languages were chosen due to their prevalence among students and their usage in different parts of Ethiopia.
(4) Student reactions to English-Only teaching: Students tended to struggle and feel unhappy when instructors used only English to teach. Students preferred explanations in their local languages.
(5) Student use of languages for questions and answers: Students primarily used English to ask and answer questions but occasionally used Afan Oromo or Amharic.
(6) Use of local languages by students: All instructors reported that students used local languages, particularly Afan Oromo and Amharic, in the classroom. This practice contradicts the constitutional mandate for English instruction.
(7) Instructor reactions to student use of local languages: While a few instructors encouraged students to ask questions in English by providing translations, most did not mind students using local languages.
(8) Languages used for communication outside the classroom: Instructors communicated with students outside the classroom using Afan Oromo and Amharic, as these languages were widely understood by students.

(9) Recommendations for medium of instruction: Instructors unanimously recommended introducing Afan Oromo and Amharic as mediums of instruction in Ethiopian higher education institutions due to their national prevalence.

(10) Addressing multilingualism in language education policy: Respondents indicated that Ethiopian higher education policies do not adequately address the issue of multilingualism.

In summary, the interviews revealed a gap between constitutional language policies and classroom practices. While the constitution promotes English as the medium of instruction, instructors and students frequently code-switch between English, Afan Oromo, and Amharic. This discrepancy highlights the need for alignment between policy and practice in Ethiopian higher education institutions.

4.6. Analysis of observation

4.6.1. Classroom observation

For the classroom observation, the researcher prepared six questions to observe what is written in the language policy and practiced in actual lessons. Accordingly, the first question was designed to find out whether the teacher uses English to greet the students before the lesson begins. In six classroom observations, it was found that teachers greet their students in Afan Oromo or Amharic before starting the lesson. This shows that what is practiced in the classroom and what is written in the constitution do not match (see Appendix D). In addition to this question, it was also observed whether students use local languages other than English to answer and ask questions. In this regard, most of the students use Afan Oromo and Amharic to ask and answer questions. The interview with instructors and students as well as the instructors' questionnaire also attest to this (see Appendices A, B & D). In addition, it was also observed whether students use other languages besides English when working in pairs/groups. In this regard, it was found that students use Afan Oromo and Amharic languages during pair/group work. The students' responses to their questionnaires also support this (see Appendix A).

Furthermore, the researcher also observed whether the teachers use other local languages in addition to English. In this context, it was found that the teachers use Afan Oromo and Amharic languages in addition to English in the classroom. The interview with the

teachers proves that they use Afan Oromo and Amharic when the students do not understand the explanations given in English (see Appendix C).

In addition, the researcher observed whether the teacher encourages students to use local languages other than English to answer questions and prepare their papers. On this question, it was found that teachers ask students to answer or prepare their work in Afan Oromo or Amharic if they do not feel free to answer or prepare their work in English.

Finally, the researcher observed whether the teacher uses only English language as a medium of instruction in terms of policy. In this regard, it was found that the teacher does not use English as the medium of instruction. Instead, the teachers use Afan Oromo and Amharic in addition to English. This indicates that what is written in the language education policy in Ethiopian higher education is not consistent with what is practiced in the classroom (Appendix D).

Instructors and students usually switch back and forth between English and Afan Oromo, English and Amharic, and Afan Oromo and Amharic. In some cases, switching between languages is also practiced, although the constitution does not allow this.

4.6.2. Outside the classroom

In addition to the classroom observations, the researcher prepared four questions to see the reality outside the classroom (see Appendix D). The researcher visited the library of the University of Mattu to look at reference books, magazines and newspapers in different languages. It was found that the books, journals and newspapers at Mattu University are available in Afan Oromo, Amharic and English languages. This indicates that there are bilingual and multilingual users in this institution. This is evidenced by the responses of the students and instructors (see Appendix A & B). In addition, the researcher observed whether the instructors use different languages in their offices when communicating with their students. In this regard, it was found that the instructors mainly use Afan Oromo and Amharic to communicate with their students. The responses from the instructors' questionnaires also support this (see Appendix B). In addition, the researcher observed whether the instructor members use different local languages to communicate with each other. In this regard, it was found that the instructors members use local languages to communicate with each other: Afan Oromo and Amharic. The responses from the instructors' questionnaires also prove this (see Appendix B). Finally,

the researcher observed in which language(s) the films, plays and concerts are offered at Mattu University. This revealed that films, plays and concerts are mainly offered in Afan Oromo, Amharic and English. The answers from the questionnaires of the instructors and students prove this fact (see Appendix A & B). Generally speaking, although the issue of institutional bilingualism/multilingualism at universities is not enshrined in the constitution, bilingualism/multilingualism at the University of Mattu exists both inside and outside the classroom.

4.7. Document analysis

The researcher conducted a document analysis to examine three critical questions related to the Ethiopian constitution and education and training policy and their implications on language policy and multilingualism in the education system:

Question 1: Existence of multilingualism policy in Ethiopia

The first question aimed to determine whether Ethiopia has a language policy that specifically addresses multilingualism in its general education system. The analysis revealed that there is no explicit language policy in Ethiopia that specifically addresses multilingualism in the state education system, which was also confirmed in the interviews with teachers (see Appendix E).

Question 2: Consideration of multilingualism in Ethiopian higher education institutions

The second question examined the extent to which the Ethiopian constitution and education and training policies address the issue of multilingualism in the country's higher education institutions (see Appendix E). In reviewing the constitution and education and training policy documents, it was found that these documents do not explicitly address or consider the issue of multilingualism in higher education institutions.

Question 3: Medium of teaching in Ethiopian educational institutions

The third question was about whether the Ethiopian constitution and education and training policies provide guidelines for regarding the medium of instruction to be used in higher educational institutions (see Appendix E). The FDRE Constitution of 1995, Article 3.5.5, and the Education and Training Policy of 1994, Article 3.5.7, explicitly

state that “the English language is specified as the language of instruction for Ethiopian educational institutions”.

However, it is worth noting that despite the documents stipulating that English should be the medium of instruction in higher education institutions, the results of interviews with teachers, student surveys, classroom observations and teacher surveys indicate that in practice this policy is being deviated from (see Appendices A, B & D). Teachers and students often switch between English, Afan Oromo and Amharic in class, indicating a discrepancy between constitutional provisions and actual language practice in higher educational institutions in Ethiopia.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the analysis of data collected through questionnaires, classroom observations, document analysis, and interviews is discussed within the framework of four major themes corresponding to the primary research questions. These central themes of discussion are as follows.

5.1.Consideration of multilingualism in the Ethiopian Constitution for Higher Education Institution

Since universities are responsible for the federal government, there are no local or regional laws. For this reason, the researchers examined the Ethiopian Constitution and the 1994 Education and Training Policy to see how they address multilingualism in Ethiopia's higher educational institutions.

The study asked three specific research questions to assess how well the Ethiopian Constitution addresses the issue of multilingualism in higher education institutions. The first question aimed to determine whether Ethiopia has a language policy that specifically addresses multilingualism within its general education system. The analysis revealed that there is no explicit language policy that specifically addresses multilingualism in the general education system, which was also confirmed in the interviews with instructors. The second question examined the extent to which the Ethiopian Constitution and the 1994 Education and Training Policy address the issue of multilingualism in the country's higher educational institutions. The examination of the 1994 constitutional document and education and training policy revealed that these documents do not explicitly address or consider the issue of multilingualism in higher educational institutions. The third question related to whether the Ethiopian Constitution and the 1994 Education and Training Policy specify the medium of instruction to be used in higher educational institutions. The 1995 Constitution of the FDRE, Article 3.5.5, and the 1994 Education and Training Policy, Article 3.5.7, explicitly state that English is the language of instruction for Ethiopian higher education institutions. It is worth noting, however, that despite documents mandating that English be the medium of instruction in higher education, the results of instructors' interviews, student questionnaires, classroom observations, and instructors' questionnaires indicate that in practice this policy is being deviated from. Instructors and

students often switch between English, Afaan Oromoo and Amharic in class, indicating a discrepancy between the constitutional provisions and actual language practice at higher educational institutions in Ethiopia. In analyzing the research findings, it became clear that the Ethiopian Constitution and the 1994 Education and Training Policy do not contain explicit provisions that address the concept of multilingualism in the context of higher education institutions, although actual practice requires a multilingual language policy for higher education institutions in such a diversified environment. The study also found that there is no specific language policy in Ethiopia that explicitly addresses multilingualism in higher education. These findings underscore the lack of a clear legal or policy framework for multilingualism in the Ethiopian higher education landscape, which is regulated by the constitution. This underscores the need for further study and possible development in this area.

5.2. Language practices between instructors and students in the classroom

Multilingualism is a much-discussed topic in modern societies due to historical, social, political and economic factors. In many schools today, multilingualism is seen as an important educational goal. According to Cenoz (2013: 5), many schools around the world include multiple languages in their curriculum, either as subjects or as languages of instruction. As May (2008) and Baker (2011) suggest, these measures can reduce the prevalence of monolingual education and promote the inclusion of minority languages in the curriculum. This emerging area of research challenges the advocacy of English-only instruction (Kassaye et al., 2021). In the present study, three questions were posed to students and instructors to investigate language use in the classroom context.

The examination of the languages that students typically use to ask and answer questions in class revealed that most students use a combination of English and Afaan Oromoo for this purpose, indicating a widespread bilingual approach. In this context, teachers were asked which language they allow their students to use for questions and answers in class besides English. The teachers' responses reveal a complex scenario. Majority of teachers admit that students are allowed to use both Afaan Oromoo and Amharic for communication.

As interviewees shared, this complicated landscape of language permissions in the classroom raises interesting questions about the consistency of actual classroom practices with the established language policy set out in the 1995 EFDR Constitution and the 1994 Education and Training Policy. The observations from the classroom assessments and the interviews with teachers about which language(s) they allow their students to ask and answer questions in a language other than English reinforce the notion that practical language dynamics may deviate from the prescribed educational guidelines. Classroom observations confirm that students predominantly use English, Afaan Oromoo and Amharic when asking and answering questions. The interviews with the teachers also confirm that the teachers do not mind if the students use these languages when asking and answering questions, indicating a harmonious alignment between the students' practices and the teachers' tolerance. Although the 1995 EFDR Constitution and the 1994 Education and Training Policy advocate the exclusive use of English, this is a good sign. This result confirms that learning is most successful when a student is “taught and assessed in a language they understand and speak well” (Benson, 2016: 3).

The question asked to investigate students’ use of language to communicate in the classroom when they do not understand English shows convincing patterns. In this regard most of the students reported using Afaan Oromoo and Amharic for communication, indicating a widespread bilingual approach to communication. In relation to this question, majority of instructors allow their students to use Afan Oromo and Amharic The interviews with instructors and classroom observations demonstrate that these indigenous language practices are widespread when students do not understand the content of English. This highlights the discrepancy between the institutional language policy at the macro level of the multilingual context and the observed language practices at the micro level in the classroom, as noted by Durk Gorter and Jasonne Cenoz (2017).

In addition, the languages frequently used by students for group or pair work in the classroom show clear differences. A significant proportion, of the students reported that they frequently use English, Afaan Oromoo and Amharic for collaborative activities. Classroom observations revealed that students frequently use Amharic and Afaan Oromoo for group/pair work. Thus, the data obtained through classroom observations are consistent with these findings. It is noteworthy that despite Article 3.5.7 of the 1994

Education and Training Policy, which states that "English will be the medium of instruction for secondary and higher education", students frequently switch back and forth between English and Afaan Oromoo as well as between English and Amharic. This discrepancy underscores that language practice in the classroom is not in line with the language policy for higher education.

Furthermore, based on the data collected, the languages used by instructors in the classroom show a diverse linguistic landscape. Among the instructors most instructors chose English, Afaan Oromoo and Amharic as their primary language of instruction. This finding is further supported by the classroom observations and the interviews with the instructors regarding the language(s) they use in the classroom. In the interviews, the instructors stated that they use English, Afaan Oromoo and Amharic for teaching.

In addition, instructors were asked which language(s) they use to explain ideas during lessons, revealing a diverse linguistic landscape in the classroom. The majority of the instructors opted for a combination of Afaan Oromoo and Amharic to communicate concepts effectively. This finding is corroborated by classroom observations and interviews with the instructors. In the interviews, instructors explained why they use Afaan Oromoo and Amharic to clarify concepts when students have difficulties in understanding. However, this teaching practice contradicts the provisions of the 1994 Education and Training Policy, which explicitly stipulates English as the primary medium of instruction for higher education institutions. The contradiction between actual classroom practice and established educational policy underscores the complex dynamics of language use in the academic environment. Analysis of the students' responses revealed a predominant pattern of use of Amharic and Afaan Oromoo, indicating a classroom environment characterized by multilingualism. Conversely, instructors reported using a combination of English, Afaan Oromoo and Amharic as languages of instruction in the classroom. This approach allows students to use Afaan Oromoo and Amharic in addition to English, thus promoting a multilingual teaching and learning atmosphere.

These observed practices were corroborated by data from classroom observations and teacher interviews. However, it is noteworthy that these practices deviate from the monolingual language teaching policy enshrined in the Ethiopian constitution. This

discrepancy between classroom realities and policy expectations underscores the need for a more in-depth examination of language use dynamics in Ethiopian higher education institutions and the potential implications for policy adjustments or reforms, which demonstrate Benson's abovementioned idea (2016: 3).

The observed contradiction between the multilingual teaching and learning atmosphere at the University of Mattu and the monolingual language education policy prescribed by the Ethiopian constitution and Education and training policy is consistent with international studies that highlight tensions between policy prescriptions and actual classroom practice. For example, a study in the Republic of Kenya revealed a discrepancy between policy and teaching practice. There, the mother tongue should be taught as a subject and used as the medium of instruction, but instructors resorted to code-switching between Kiswahili and English when teaching non-language subjects. This reflects the tension identified in the current study between policy requirements and actual classroom practice (Nyaga & Anthonissen, 2012). Similarly, a study in the Republic of South Africa between 1996 and 1998 showed that instructors predominantly used English, particularly in mathematics and science lessons, and switched to learners' primary languages when rephrasing and interacting (Setati et al., 2002). The findings in Malawi show that although the policy allows Chichewa as a medium of instruction, instructors tend to teach in a local language other than Chichewa, emphasizing the need for a differentiated understanding of language use (Chilora, 2000). The studies in the UK and Quebec also showed instances where the language policy was not adhered to, with code-switching and variations in L1 use observed in bilingual and multilingual settings (Wei & Wu, 2009; Bouchard 2015).

5.3. Language practices between instructors and students outside the classroom

As Cenoz (2013: 5) explains, citing the European Commission (2007), the concept of multilingualism refers to the ability of societies, organizations, groups and individuals to regularly use more than one language in their daily activities. This means that people and communities can communicate, work and interact in more than one language as part of their daily routine. Multilingualism is about embracing linguistic diversity and recognizing the importance of different languages in different areas of life, from personal interactions to professional environments and cultural exchanges. Therefore, the

researcher formulated some questions to investigate the interactions between students and instructors outside the classroom and to obtain more information about the area under study. In this regard, a series of targeted questions were asked to understand the language practices of instrucrctors and students in contexts outside the classroom. Students were then asked what language(s) they use to communicate with other students outside the classroom. The results showed a wide range of language choice among students. The majority of students preferred Afaan Oromoo and Amharic. Similarly, instructors were also asked which language(s) they use when communicating with their colleagues in their offices. According to the respondents, most instructors use Afan Oromo and Amharic to communicate. This is in line with the definition of the European Commission (2007), which describes multilingualism as "the ability of societies, institutions, groups and individuals to speak more than one language regularly in everyday life" (Cenoz, 2013: 5). The observed data indicate that the majority of students and instructors predominantly use Afaan Oromoo and Amharic in their interactions with peers and colleagues, indicating bilingualism and thus a particular case of multilingualism according to the language(s) used in the classroom. In addition, students were asked which language(s) they use outside the classroom when interacting with their instructors in their office. The majority of the respondents indicated that they use Afaan Oromoo and Amharic when communicating with their instructors in their office. Similarly, the instructors were asked which language(s) they use when communicating with their students outside the classroom. The results show that the majority of instructors use a combination of Afan Oromo and Amharic to communicate. These responses highlight the widespread use of local languages for interaction between students and teachers outside the classroom, which is in line with the concept of multilingualism defined as "the ability to speak several languages" (Aronnin, 2019: 1). Given this definition of multilingualism, it can be assumed that a large majority of students and instructors can be categorized as multilingual. In terms of cultural exchange with friends, students were asked the languages they used. The majority of students reported using Afaan Oromoo and Amharic. During the cultural exchange, the instructors were asked about the languages they use. In this context, most of the instructors used Amharic and Afaan Oromoo during the cultural exchange, which demonstrates their multilingual competence as they are

proficient in Amharic and Afaan Oromoo in addition to English. This finding is consistent with the results of the language exercises in the classroom. In the shopping activities, students were asked about the languages they use when shopping. Accordingly, most of the students indicated that they use both Afaan Oromoo and Amharic. In the same way, instructors were asked about the languages they use when shopping. The data shows that the majority of the instructors use a combination of Amharic and Afaan Oromoo when shopping. This indicates that the local languages are preferred when shopping. The observed results indicate that the majority of students and instructors predominantly use Afaan Oromoo and Amharic in their interactions with people around the university. To summarize, both students and instructors use the indigenous languages for their social interactions outside the classroom, while they frequently switch between the two languages (Afaan Oromoo and Amharic) outside the classroom.

5.4. Existence of multilingualism in Mattu University

The recognition of multilingualism in the context of the University of Mattu was underpinned by the examination of various data sources. The presence of multilingualism manifested itself through several significant indicators. One salient sign was the availability of reference books in the university library in Afaan Oromoo, Amharic and English, demonstrating the diverse linguistic resources available to students and instructors. This shows that the students and instructors can access these reading materials as references and additional materials for teaching and learning. In addition, they can get information from different newspapers written in different languages, especially in Afaan Oromoo, Amharic and English. The widespread use of multiple languages for communication and teaching among instructors and students within the university was another clear indication of the institution's multilingualism. This practise underscores the dynamic linguistic environment at Mattu University where different languages are actively used for both learning and interaction. This underscores the importance of recognising and examining multilingualism within the institution.

To summarize, the analysis reveals a significant discrepancy between what is written in the Ethiopian Constitution and Education and Training Policy regarding language policy and the actual language practice at the University of Mattu. While the documents

emphasize English as the medium of instruction in higher education, the practical use of the language in the classroom and outside indicates a multilingual approach. This situation is in line with the concept of institutional multilingualism, where institutions accommodate linguistic diversity by recognizing multiple languages as official, even if the policy officially favors monolingualism.

In the context of a diverse society like Ethiopia, bilingualism/multilingualism is widespread. With over 84 ethnic groups in the country, linguistic diversity is a prominent feature on the Mattu University. From the perspective of societal and individual multilingualism, it is evident that the Mattu University community, including instructors and students, use multiple languages (English, Afan Oromo and Amharic) in different contexts within the university campus. This is in line with the concept of societal multilingualism, which is characterized by the organized and unorganized use of three or more languages by members of a society. In addition, individual multilingualism is observed as participants are shown to be able to hear, speak, read and write multiple languages, which supports the acquisition and use of multiple languages by individuals (Aronin, 2019).

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSIONS AND OUTLOOK

6.1. Major findings and conclusions

The aim of this study was to investigate language policies and practices in Ethiopian higher education institutions, with a focus on multilingualism. Three research questions were formulated to guide the investigation. Data were collected through questionnaires, classroom observations, interviews and an analysis of the 1995 Ethiopian Constitution and the 1994 Education and Training Policy. The findings revealed several important points.

- Consideration of multilingualism: The analysis of the Ethiopian Constitution of 1995 and the Education and Training Policy document of 1994 showed that multilingualism was not taken into account in higher education institutions. Nevertheless, the actual language practice in the institution showed multilingualism.
- Language practices inside the classroom: Within the confines of the classroom, both teachers and students were observed engaging in a practice known as code-switching. This phenomenon involved the alternate use of languages, mainly between English and Afan Oromo or English and Amharic. This practice occurred despite the explicit stipulation in the 1995 Ethiopian Constitution and the 1994 Education and Training Policy that English is the prescribed medium of instruction in Ethiopian higher education institutions. This illustrates the discrepancy between language policy and teaching practice.
- Language practices outside the classroom: Language practice outside the classroom reflects the multilingualism of the university community. Students and instructors used more than two languages (English, Afan Oromo and Amharic) for communication in different contexts, emphasising multilingualism in the university environment.

The conclusions drawn from the study underline the need to tailor language policy to the diverse linguistic composition of a nation. In the case of Ethiopia, the existing language policy has primarily favored a monolingual approach to education. However, this

approach overlooks the complicated and rich linguistic diversity that is deeply embedded in the country's historical context. The findings of the study draw attention to this discrepancy and highlight the existence of cross-linguistic practices in the higher education environment.

An adaptive language policy is crucial to effectively manage the complexity arising from multilingualism. Ethiopia's historical and current linguistic diversity is diverse and multifaceted. By favoring a monolingual approach to education, the current policy fails to recognize and accommodate the richness of the different languages spoken in the country. As a result, this approach does not fully address the needs and strengths of a diverse student and teacher population.

The exposure of code-switching practices in the university environment clearly demonstrates the need for a flexible language policy. This policy should be able to take into account and integrate the complexity of multilingualism. The adaptability of language policies in educational institutions is crucial for creating an environment that respects, supports and effectively utilizes people's different linguistic abilities.

In summary, this study highlights the need to rethink and restructure language policies to better reflect the diverse language landscape in Ethiopian higher education institutions. However, it is imperative to note that the findings of this study represent only a snapshot of language policy and practice in relation to multilingualism in a specific university context. In order to gain a comprehensive understanding of language policy and practice in Ethiopian higher education in relation to multilingualism and to generalize the findings, it is recommended that future research include multiple universities, different academic levels and longitudinal perspectives. Such an approach would provide a better insight into the complexity of language policy implementation and its impact in different educational institutions in Ethiopia.

6.2. Recommendations

The recommendations proposed in the study aim to improve language policy and practice in Ethiopian higher education institutions by promoting multilingualism and recognizing the country's diverse linguistic landscape:

- Integrate multilingualism into the curriculum: This proposes to integrate multilingualism into the academic curriculum of higher education institutions so that students can master several languages during their academic training. In this way, students will have the opportunity to acquire knowledge in more than one language during their studies. This integration of multilingualism not only improves students' language skills, but also promotes cultural understanding and appreciation in an academic context.
- Training and professional development: This means that training programs and professional development opportunities should be offered to instructors and staff of higher education institutions. These programs aim to improve their ability to effectively teach and support students from diverse linguistic backgrounds. By improving their skills in this area, teachers can better meet the needs of multilingual students and ensure that they receive appropriate support and guidance throughout their academic careers.
- Create multilingual learning environments: This refers to the design of learning environments that accommodate linguistic diversity and facilitate interaction between students in different languages. By creating such multilingual learning environments, students have the opportunity to interact meaningfully with each other across language barriers. This fosters an inclusive atmosphere where different languages and cultures are valued and enriches the learning experience for all involved.
- Evaluation and assessment: This includes setting up systems to assess how well language policies and practices promote multilingualism at universities. By introducing evaluation mechanisms, universities can gather feedback and data to determine the effectiveness of their approaches. This feedback can then be used to make the necessary adjustments and improvements to ensure that language policies and practices are in line with the goal of effectively promoting multilingualism.
- Involve stakeholders: This emphasizes the importance of involving diverse groups of people such as students, instructors, administrators, and community members in the process of developing and implementing University language

policies. By involving these stakeholders, universities can ensure that policies are inclusive, relevant and well supported. This involvement helps to ensure that all stakeholders participate and support the policy, ultimately leading to a more effective and sustainable language policy.

– Research and exchange of best practice: The proposal here is to promote research on multilingualism in higher education and facilitate the exchange of best practice between institutions. By promoting research, institutions can gain insights into effective approaches to promoting multilingualism. In addition, the exchange of best practice enables institutions to learn from each other's experiences and implement strategies that have proven successful elsewhere. This continuous exchange promotes the improvement of language policy and practice over time.

These recommendations aim to create a more inclusive, effective and adaptive language policy in Ethiopian higher education institutions. The aim is to recognize, respect and use the country's diverse linguistic landscape to improve education and social development.

6.3. Limitations and outlook

It is crucial to acknowledge and address the limitations of this study in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the research context and possible implications. Key limitations include the exclusive focus on a single university, Mattu University, which may limit the transferability of the findings to other higher education institutions in Ethiopia. Even though Mattu University provides valuable insights, one should be cautious in transferring the findings to a broader national or international context.

Another limitation is the study's focus on first-year students. This focus on a specific group of students may limit the transferability of results to students in other cohorts. First-year students may have unique experiences and activities that differ from those of other cohorts, and therefore the scope of the study should be considered within this specific population. Furthermore, the research direction of this study provides a snapshot of language policy and practice at a particular point in time. Accordingly, the dynamics of education systems and changing language policies should be considered when

interpreting the results. Changes in policy or practice after the study period could affect the validity and applicability of the findings to current educational contexts.

To mitigate these limitations and contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of language policy in Ethiopian higher education, future research should consider extending the study to multiple universities, different academic institutions, longitudinal studies, and linguistic ideologies that influence the state's language choices in education. This broader approach would improve the generality and robustness of the findings and provide a more nuanced understanding of the complexity of language policy and practice in Ethiopian higher education institutions.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Questionnaire for students

Dear Students,

This questionnaire has been created to collect information regarding the topic of "Exploring Language Policies and Practices in Ethiopian Universities concerning Multilingualism: A Case Study of Mattu University". It serves as one of the research tools employed by the researcher to gather the essential data for his PhD thesis. Therefore, I kindly request you to share the required information. Your participation is crucial for the success of this study. Please be assured that any information you provide will be treated with confidentiality and security, in compliance with the consent information you will receive on a separate sheet with your signature.

Your name is not necessary for this information.

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Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Part I: Personal Information

Instructions: Please provide information about yourself for each of the categories listed below. Check the appropriate box as needed.

1. Gender: Male □ Female □

2. Nation: ________________________________

3. The year of study: ________________________

4. Semester: I II III

Part II: Questionnaire for students

The following are questions about students' communicative practices inside and outside the classroom with their instructors, classmates, and society in and around Mattu University. Please answer by ticking under the alternatives in front of each question in the tale below. N.B. **"Other/s"** mean Sidamu Affo, Wolayita, Afar, Guraghe, Hadiya, Anuak, and Gumuz languages.

	Questions	English	Afaan Oromoo	Amharic	Tigrigna	Somali	Other/s
1.	What is your first language?						
2.	Which is your second language?						
3.	Which language can you hear?						
4.	Which language can you speak?						
5.	In which language can you read?						
6.	In which language can you write?						
7.	What language(s) do you use in the classroom to answer and ask questions?						
8.	Which language(s) does your teacher allow you to speak in the classroom other than English?						
9.	Which language(s) do you use in the classroom with your classmates during group/pair work?						
10.	Which language(s) do you use outside of your office to communicate with other students?						
11.	Which language(s) do you use in your dorm with your roommates to communicate?						
12.	Which language(s) do you use when you go shopping at the university and talk to vendors?						
13.	When you communicate with your teacher outside of the classroom in their office, which language(s) do you use?						
14.	When you visit administrators to enforce a case, which language(s) do you use to communicate?						
15.	Which language(s) do you use when you exchange your culture with students at university?						
16.	In which language(s) do university administrators give a speech during the						

	commencement programme?						
17.	Which language are the TV programs you watch in the students' cafeteria?						
18.	The books, magazines, and newspapers you read in the library are in which language/s?						
19.	The movies, plays, and concerts you attend at the university are in which language?						
20.	Besides English, which language(s) should be introduced as a medium of instruction in Ethiopian universities?						

Appendix B: Questionnaire for instructors

Dear Instructors,

This questionnaire has been designed to acquire insights regarding the topic "Exploring Language Policies and Practices in Ethiopian Universities, specifically concerning Multilingualism: A Case Study of Mattu University". It serves as one of the instruments employed by the researcher to gather essential data for his PhD thesis. Hence, I kindly request your participation in furnishing the requisite information. Your input holds significant value for the successful completion of this study.

I want to assure you that all the data you provide will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and security, in accordance with the consent information presented on a separate sheet, which you will be asked to sign. It is worth noting that your name is not required in this context.

I extend our sincere appreciation in advance for your valuable cooperation.

Keresa Kumera Chali

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Part I: Personal Information

Please give information about yourself for each of the categories below. Fill in the lines and circle the options that fit your situation.

1. Nation: ________________________________
2. Gender: Male / Female / Other
3. Department and field of specialization: ____
4. Degree: Ph.D. / MA, MSc. / BA, BSc.

5. Teaching experience: 0–5 years / 6–10 years / 11–15 years / 16–20 years / +20 years

Part II: Questionnaires for instructors

II/1. The questions refer to instructors' communicative practices inside and outside the classroom with their students. Please indicate your responses by checking the boxes next to the items. N.B. **"Other/s"** means Sidamu Affo, Wolayita, Afar, Gurage, Hadya Anuak, Gumuz languages, etc.

	Questions	English	Afaan Oromoo	Amharic	Tigrigna	Somali	Other/s
1.	What is your first language?						
2.	Which is your second language?						
3.	Which language can you hear?						
4.	Which language can you speak?						
5.	In which language can you read?						
6.	In which language can you write?						
7.	Which language(s) do you use in the classroom to teach?						
8.	Which language(s) do you allow your students to speak in the classroom, apart from English?						
9.	Which language(s) do you use in the classroom to explain when your students do not understand English?						
10.	Which language(s) do you use outside of your office to communicate with your colleagues?						
11.	Which language(s) do you use in your office when you speak to your colleagues?						
12.	Which language(s) do you use when you go shopping at the university and talk to vendors?						
13.	Which language(s) do you use when you communicate with your students outside of the classroom in your office?						
14.	When you visit administrators, which language(s) do you use to communicate?						
15.	When exchanging culture with your colleagues at the university, which language(s) do you use to communicate your culture?						
16.	Which language(s) do you use when						

	greeting your students?						
17.	Which language are the TV programs you watch in the faculty cafeteria?						
18.	The books, magazines, and newspapers you read in the library are in which language/s?						
19.	The movies, plays, and concerts you attend at the university are in which language?						
20.	Which language(s) besides English should be introduced as a medium of instruction at Ethiopian universities?						

Appendix C: Interview guidelines for the instructors of Mattu University

Thank you for granting me the opportunity to engage in this discussion with you. I am currently engaged in research, titled "Exploring Language Policies and Practices in Ethiopian Universities concerning Multilingualism: A Case Study of Mattu University". I want to emphasize that this interview is solely intended for the purposes of this research project. I kindly request your valuable input, and I greatly appreciate your willingness to provide detailed and candid responses.

1. According to Article 3.5.5 of the 1995 FDRE Constitution and Article 3.5.7 of the 1994 Education and Training Policy, it is stated that "English will be the designated medium of instruction for secondary and higher education". Are you familiar with this provision? Yes/No.

2. In accordance with this policy, do you use English as the primary medium of instruction in your classroom? Yes/No. If No, why?

3. Would you describe the behavior and reactions of your students if you only used English as the language of instruction? Yes/No.

4. Do your students mainly use English to ask questions or give answers in class? Yes/No.

5. Have you observed that your students use other local languages? Yes/No. If yes, please indicate which local language(s) they use.

6. How do you usually react when students ask or answer questions in the local language?

7. What language or languages do you typically use to communicate with your students outside the classroom?

8. What recommendations do you have for the use of other local languages in the teaching and learning processes at higher education institutions in Ethiopia?

9. Do you think the Ethiopian constitution and education and training policy adequately address the issue of multilingualism in higher educational institutions? If yes, could you explain how? If not, what do you think are the reasons for this?

Appendix D: Checklist for classroom observation

Some selected checklist items for observations inside and outside the classroom. It is helpful to have some data on the practices of instructors and students at Mattu University regarding multilingualism inside and outside the classroom.

Course name:___________________________________ Date:____________

Time:__________

I. Activities (Classroom situations)		**Availability**		
		YES	**NO**	**Remarks**
1.	Does the teacher use English to greet the students?			
2.	Do students use other local languages besides English to answer and ask questions?			
3.	Do students use other local languages besides English when working in pairs/groups?			
4.	Does the teacher use other local languages besides English?			
5.	Does the teacher encourage students to use other local languages in addition to English to answer questions and prepare their work?			
6.	With regard to the guideline, does the teacher only use English as the medium of instruction in the classroom?			
II. Outside the classroom				
7.	Are the books, magazines and newspapers in the university library written in different languages?			
8.	Do lecturers use different languages in their office when their students come to their office?			
9.	Do faculty members use different languages with their colleagues in their office?			
10.	Are the films, plays, and concerts at the university available in different languages?			

Appendix E: Guidelines for document analysis

	Language Policy	Availability	
		YES	NO
1.	Does Ethiopia have a language policy regarding multilingualism?		
2.	Do the constitution and education and training policies take into account the issue of multilingualism in Ethiopia's higher educational institutions?		
3.	Do the constitution and education and training policy clearly define the language of instruction at universities?		

Appendix F: Sample interview conducted with instructors

Interviewer: Thank you for volunteering to participate in this interview. I am researching language policy and its implementation in Ethiopian educational institutions. The 1995 Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, in Sub-Article 3.5.5, designates English as the medium of instruction for secondary and higher education. Given that my research focuses on higher education, are you aware of this language policy in higher institutions?

Interviewee 1: *Firstly, I'd like to extend my congratulations to you on embarking on this research journey. Regarding your question, yes, I am well aware of Article 3.5.5 in the Ethiopian Constitution, which stipulates English as the medium of instruction in secondary and higher education. This awareness stems from my experience in training secondary school teachers, where it is explicitly outlined in the Constitution that local languages can be used from grade one to eight, but English becomes mandatory as the medium of instruction in secondary schools and higher institutions, particularly universities. While there may be some flexibility in colleges, universities unequivocally adhere to this policy.*

Interviewer: Thank you for your explanation. Now, when you teach your students, do you consistently use English as the medium of instruction in the classroom, in accordance with the policy?

Interviewee 1: *In Ethiopia, there often exists a gap between policy and its actual implementation, and this is particularly evident in the case of using English as the medium of instruction. Personally, I make a concerted effort to use English predominantly as the medium of instruction. However, when I observe that students are struggling to understand the concepts being taught, I may switch to Afan Oromo or Amharic to clarify those concepts. The challenge lies in bridging the gap between policy and the practical realities of students' language proficiency and comprehension. While I strive to maintain English as the primary medium, there are instances where the use of local languages becomes necessary.*

Interviewer: Could you elaborate on how your students typically react when you use English as the medium of instruction?

Interviewee 1: *Students' reactions to the use of English in the classroom can vary. According to the Constitution, students should participate in the learning process, using English actively in problem-solving and communication. However, in my teaching experience, I've found that many students lack the confidence and experience to actively engage in English. They tend to be passive listeners and are hesitant to communicate in English. This hesitancy can be attributed to their limited English language background. So, in many cases, the reaction is not as positive as one would hope, as some students are not yet comfortable expressing themselves in English.*

Interviewer: Thank you for sharing your insights. Do your students primarily use English to ask questions or provide answers in the classroom?

Interviewee 1: *Students often use English to ask questions or provide answers, but there are instances where they revert to their local languages when they encounter difficulties. I allow them to use local languages, such as Afan Oromo or Amharic, when they struggle to grasp the content or when they lack the vocabulary or linguistic structures to express themselves in English. I believe it's essential to strike a balance and provide students with the opportunity to ask questions in a language they are comfortable with, while also encouraging them to improve their English communication skills.*

Interviewer: When students use local languages, what is your approach? Do you encourage or discourage them from doing so?

Interviewee 1: *I do not discourage students from using their local languages. Instead, I guide and orient them. I emphasize that the classroom is an English language environment and stress the importance of English proficiency, especially in international contexts. However, I understand that students may require assistance, and I facilitate their understanding by translating or simplifying concepts in English. It's crucial to strike a balance between creating a supportive learning environment and maintaining the integrity of the language policy. I believe in offering guidance rather than imposing strict restrictions.*

Interviewer: Some may argue that allowing students to use local languages contradicts the language education policy in Ethiopian higher education. What are your thoughts on this matter?

Interviewee 1: *It's a valid concern, and it highlights the challenge of aligning policy with practice in Ethiopia's diverse linguistic landscape. While it's essential to promote English proficiency, particularly in English language classes, we must acknowledge that each student's language journey is unique. Encouraging students to use their local languages should not necessarily be seen as contradicting the policy. Instead, it should be viewed as a way to support their learning process and bridge the gap between their current language abilities and the desired English proficiency level. Striking a balance is essential to ensure effective education.*

Interviewer: Thank you for your perspective. In your opinion, should local languages be used more extensively in teaching and learning in Ethiopian higher education?

Interviewee 1: *The decision to use local languages more extensively in teaching and learning should be based on careful needs assessment and research. It is not a decision that should be made hastily. Ethiopia's linguistic diversity is a complex challenge, and any policy change should be well-informed and supported by the necessary infrastructure. While it is possible to endorse local languages for instruction in certain subject areas, especially at the secondary school level, implementing such changes at the university level would require significant preparation, including the development of appropriate textbooks and materials. Multilingualism in education can be beneficial, but it should be approached with careful planning and consideration of practical challenges.*

Interviewer: Thank you for your thoughtful response. Lastly, do you believe the current language policy in Ethiopian higher education adequately addresses the issue of multilingualism?

Interviewee 1: *The current language policy in Ethiopian higher education does not fully address the complexity of multilingualism in the country. While there may be efforts to introduce local languages into the educational system, the practical implementation remains a challenge. The diverse linguistic landscape of Ethiopia calls for a more*

comprehensive and nuanced approach to multilingual education. It is essential to consider the specific needs and realities of each region and ethnic group when formulating language policies for higher education. This policy should prioritize inclusive and effective multilingualism to ensure that all students can access quality education.

Interviewer: Thank you, for your valuable insights and your time during this interview.

Interviewee 1: *You welcome, and I appreciate the opportunity to contribute to your research.*

Interviewer: Thank you for volunteering to answer my questions. I am conducting research for my Ph.D. titled "Exploring Language Policy and Practice in Ethiopian Higher Institutions: A Case Study of Mattu University." I would like to begin with some questions regarding language policy. As stipulated in Article 3.5.5 of the 1995 Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia constitution, English is designated as the medium of instruction in Ethiopian higher education institutions. Do you have awareness of this language policy?

Interviewee 2: *Yes, I am aware of the language policy regarding the use of English as the medium of instruction in higher education. This policy has a historical background, starting with French as the medium of instruction for primary schools and eventually transitioning to English in 1965 for primary education. Higher education and secondary education have consistently used English as the medium of instruction since 1944/45. The key difference is that the policy now explicitly states that English will be the medium of instruction for secondary and higher education, with no history of other languages being used for instruction. In essence, English has been the primary language of instruction in our country's modern education system, and I am informed about this policy and adhere to it.*

Interviewer: Thank you. Given this policy, do you consistently use English as the medium of instruction in your classroom?

Interviewee 2: *The policy and actual practice can differ significantly in our current context. It is challenging to solely use English as the medium of instruction, even for undergraduate and postgraduate students, due to language barriers. Many of our students struggle to express themselves in English, so I have occasionally resorted to using Amharic or other languages when necessary. Some students prefer using their mother tongue, especially when they find it challenging to communicate effectively in English. Thus, in practice, it is not always feasible to adhere strictly to the policy.*

Interviewer: How do you manage the linguistic diversity in your classroom?

Interviewee 2: *While it is not legally permissible for me to use languages other than English, I sometimes find it necessary to use Amharic, especially when a majority of students come from Oromo backgrounds. This helps ensure effective communication. In some cases, I mix languages to accommodate the linguistic diversity of the students. Students tend to be more engaged and motivated when I use their mother tongue, and this is particularly important in a multilingual environment like our university.*

Interviewer: What is the reaction of your students when you use languages other than English in the classroom?

Interviewee 2: *Students tend to participate more and are more comfortable when I use their mother tongue instead of English. However, it's essential to note that this practice does not align with the official language policy. While I encourage them to use English, I also acknowledge the language barrier and sometimes translate their questions and answers into English. My primary goal is to ensure effective communication and understanding among students, even if it means temporarily deviating from the language policy.*

Interviewer: How do you assist students from different regions who may not understand the languages you use?

Interviewee 2: *When there is a lack of understanding due to language differences, I resort to translation. I first spoke in English, then in Amharic, and sometimes in other languages like Oromo. However, this approach is not in line with the policy, which*

emphasizes English as the medium of instruction. Ultimately, the language policy should be reevaluated to better address the challenges posed by linguistic diversity in higher education.

Interviewer: Do students predominantly use English to ask questions or provide answers in your classroom?

Interviewee 2: *As I mentioned earlier, many students prefer to use their mother tongue to ask questions or provide answers due to their language proficiency levels. The language barrier is a significant challenge, and it makes it difficult to consistently adhere to the policy's emphasis on using English.*

Interviewer: Why do you think students tend to use languages other than English in the classroom?

Interviewee 2: *The primary reason for this is the students' limited proficiency in English for communication purposes. They feel more confident and capable when using their mother tongue. The policy and practice of using English do not align due to this language proficiency gap.*

Interviewer: What do you believe is the cause of this language barrier?

Interviewee 2: *The root causes of this barrier require further study. It could be related to how English is taught, students' interests, or their previous exposure to the language. Fundamentally, many students lack the necessary experience and skills to communicate in English effectively.*

Interviewer: How do you react when students use their local language to ask questions or provide answers in the classroom?

Interviewee 2: *When students use their local language, I try to accommodate them. I accept their questions and answers and often translate them into English. While it is not ideal from a policy perspective, I encourage students to practice using English and advise them to communicate in English despite any difficulties they may face. I aim to create an environment where students gradually become more comfortable with English.*

Interviewer: Do you have any negative reactions to students using their local languages?

Interviewee 2: *I do not have a negative reaction to students using their local languages, but I provide guidance and encouragement for them to use English, as per the policy's directive. Discouraging the use of local languages has its political implications, and I prefer to advise students to practice using English consistently.*

Interviewer: What is your recommendation regarding the use of local languages in higher education in Ethiopia?

Interviewee 2: *In my opinion, English should continue to be the medium of instruction unless there is a significant policy change that introduces other local languages. However, it is crucial to focus on enhancing students' competence in English from an early stage, starting in primary education. This policy should prioritize building students' English proficiency so that they can effectively communicate in higher education.*

Interviewer: In light of multilingual countries like Switzerland and Belgium, where multiple languages are used in various sectors, what is your perspective on Ethiopia's language policy?

Interviewee 2: *I cannot speak for these countries as I lack experience with their systems. However, Ethiopia's linguistic diversity presents unique challenges. Using multiple languages within one class or department, as seen in these countries, may not be practical in our context. Instead, I recommend a strong focus on developing students' competence in English, given its status as the designated medium of instruction.*

Interviewer: Finally, do you believe the current language policy in Ethiopian higher education addresses the issue of multilingualism?

Interviewee 2: *No, the current language policy in Ethiopian higher education does not adequately address the issue of multilingualism. The policy exclusively promotes English as the medium of instruction, disregarding the country's rich linguistic diversity. To address the isseus of multilingualism, this policy should consider introducing other local languages as mediums of instruction alongside English.*

Interviewer: Thank you for your valuable insights and responses.

Interviewer: Thank you for accepting my invitation to be interviewed. I am conducting research on language policy and practice in higher education institutions in Ethiopia, mainly focusing on multilingualism. So, I have some questions for you regarding this topic. I would like to express my gratitude for your willingness to respond to my questions. The first question pertains to the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia's Constitution of 1995, Article 3.5.5, which states that English is the medium of instruction from secondary to higher education. Do you have information or insights on this matter?

Interviewee 3: *Thank you for your insightful question. Yes, I am informed about this. According to our Ethiopian education system, the medium of instruction in teaching and learning has been mandated by the federal government. Starting from grade nine, which includes secondary schools up to higher education institutions, English is the language of instruction. I have a good understanding of this constitutional provision.*

Interviewer: Thank you so much. Do you always use English when teaching in the classroom? Interviewee: Regarding the language policy, while the policy recommends the use of English as the medium of instruction, I cannot say that I exclusively use English in the classroom. We do incorporate other languages like Afan Oromo and Amharic for additional explanations and sometimes for concept clarification. This practice arises from the fact that many students struggle with English comprehension, and using local languages helps bridge that gap. Interviewer: Given that universities in Ethiopia have students from diverse language backgrounds, if you predominantly use Amharic and Afan Oromo, it might exclude students from southern nationalities, Tigrai, Beni Shangul Gumuz, and Gambella. How do you address this challenge?

Interviewee 3: *That's a valid concern. I acknowledge that students from various ethnic groups in Ethiopia, including those from southern nationalities, Tigrai, Beni Shangul Gumuz, and Gambella, are part of our classrooms. My expectation is that students from regions like Oromia, who have had some exposure to Amaharic from grade 5, may understand Amaharic better than English. However, I agree that the gap in English*

proficiency can pose significant challenges in effective communication and learning throughout Ethiopia.

Interviewer: Thank you. When you teach using English, how do your students in the classroom react?

Interviewee 3: *The reactions of students in the classroom vary. Some students actively engage, asking questions and responding when prompted. However, the majority tend to be more reserved, not actively participating in discussions. This situation is partly due to the government's decision to use English as the medium of instruction without sufficient attention to improving students' language skills. English is taught as a subject from grade 9 to 12, with very few courses in higher education focusing on language development. This lack of support has led to a certain apprehension among students when it comes to using English, especially outside of specific subject areas.*

Interviewer: So, it seems that students do not use English outside the classroom, primarily within the society?

Interviewee 3: *That's correct. Ethiopia considers English a foreign language, and its usage outside the classroom is minimal. Communities predominantly use local languages like Afan Oromo and Amharic for everyday activities such as shopping and communication during travel. English is rarely used in these contexts.*

Interviewer: Do your students only use English to ask or answer questions in class?

Interviewee 3: *No, many of our students prefer to use their mother tongue or other local languages when seeking clarification or discussing specific lesson points. They feel more confident using their mother tongue in these situations.*

Interviewer: In response to the previous question, if they use local languages, do you encourage or discourage this practice, and what is your reaction?

Interviewee 3: *My reaction depends on the context. When I want to enhance their communication skills during group discussions or activities, I encourage them to use English. However, I don't discourage the use of their mother tongue, especially when*

discussing complex concepts. If a concept is better understood in their mother tongue, I encourage them to use it as a bridge to understanding and communicating in English.

Interviewer: Thank you. What are your recommendations for incorporating other local languages into the education system in Ethiopia, considering that some countries like Switzerland and Spain have multiple official languages?

Interviewee 3: *I believe the official language and medium of instruction for education in Ethiopia should be reconsidered. For instance, Afan Oromo, spoken by the largest ethnic group in Ethiopia, could be considered as a medium of instruction. Additionally, Amharic, which has widespread influence, should also be given consideration. The goal should be to promote science and technology by providing opportunities for students to learn in their native languages, especially in higher education institutions.*

Interviewer: Thank you. Do you think the current language policy in Ethiopia adequately addresses the issue of multilingualism? If so, how? If not, why?

Interviewee 3: *In my view, the current language policy in Ethiopia does not effectively address multilingualism. It tends to prioritize English as the medium of instruction while neglecting the rich linguistic diversity of the country. To truly embrace multilingualism, we should create room for using local languages in education, particularly in higher institutions, to ensure that all students have the opportunity to learn and excel in their chosen fields.*

Interviewer: Thank you so much for your time and insights.

Interviewer: Thank you for taking the time to respond to my questions. I'm researching language policies and practices in Ethiopian institutions, specifically toward multilingualism. Interviews are one of the methods I'm using to collect data, and I chose you from your department to provide insights on language policies and actual classroom practices. So, my first question is related to the 1995 Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Constitution, which states that English is the medium of instruction in Ethiopian institutions. Are you aware of this policy?

Interviewee 4: *Thank you for reaching out. Yes, I'm well-aware of the Ethiopian Constitution, particularly Article 3.5.5, which mandates English as the medium of instruction in secondary schools and higher education institutions in Ethiopia. This policy has been in place for a considerable time, and we are familiar with it. However, there are some challenges in its implementation.*

Interviewer: Thank you for that insight. Given the policy, do you consistently use English as the medium of instruction in your classroom?

Interviewee 4: *While the policy dictates English as the medium of instruction, it's crucial to consider the varying levels of English proficiency among our students. I do use English as the instructional medium, but I also incorporate local languages, such as Afan Oromo and Amharic, especially when providing additional explanations. This practice aims to bridge the gap in English comprehension among students. So, in essence, while English is the primary medium, there is some flexibility in the classroom.*

Interviewer: Thank you for clarifying that. How do your students react when you use English in the classroom? Are they generally receptive to it?

Interviewee 4: *Student reactions vary depending on their English proficiency levels. High-achieving students tend to be more comfortable with English as the medium of instruction and are generally receptive to it. However, some lower-achieving students, who may struggle with English, are not as pleased with this practice. So, there isn't a uniform response to the use of English in the classroom.*

Interviewer: Understood. Do your students primarily use English to ask and answer questions in the classroom?

Interviewee 4: *We encourage students to use English for communication in the classroom, but because of the diverse linguistic backgrounds of our students, some of them resort to using their mother tongues or local languages to ask and respond to questions. We, as instructors, strive to motivate them to use English consistently, but the reality is that there's a lack of uniformity among students in this regard due to the linguistic diversity in Ethiopia.*

Interviewer: I see. How about students from different ethnic groups? Do they tend to use their local languages?

Interviewee 4: *Yes, there is a noticeable trend where students from specific ethnic groups, such as the Amhara and Afan Oromo speakers, are more likely to use their mother tongues in the classroom. However, students from other ethnic groups often use either Amharic or English for communication. The linguistic diversity in Ethiopia plays a significant role in shaping these patterns.*

Interviewer: Thank you for providing that content. How do you respond when students use their local languages in the classroom? Do you encourage or discourage this practice?

Interviewee 4: *I encourage students to use English in the classroom, as it is the dominant language in Ethiopia and the medium of instruction. However, my ability to respond effectively depends on my understanding of the language they use. So, in practice, I prefer students to use English or Amharic & Afan Oromo since those are the languages I can proficiently communicate in. Encouraging the use of English aligns with the broader language policy in Ethiopia.*

Interviewer: Thank you for sharing your perspective. What are your recommendations regarding the use of other local languages for teaching and learning in higher education in Ethiopia?

Interviewee 4: *I believe that Ethiopia should consider adopting a multilingual policy, similar to countries like Nigeria, Kenya, and India. Given the rich linguistic diversity in Ethiopia, it's essential to accommodate and promote various languages. The government has already taken steps in this direction by introducing mother tongue education at the primary level for several ethnic groups. Expanding this approach to secondary and higher education levels could help address the linguistic diversity in the country.*

Interviewer: Thank you for your insights. Finally, do you believe that the current language policy in Ethiopian education adequately addresses the issue of multilingualism? If so, how?

Interviewee 4: *The current education policy in Ethiopia is making some strides towards addressing multilingualism, particularly at the primary level where mother tongue education is being promoted for several ethnic groups. However, there is still work to be done to fully embrace and implement a multilingual policy, especially in higher education. It's a step in the right direction, but there is room for further improvement to truly accommodate and celebrate the linguistic diversity of Ethiopia.*

Interviewer: Thank you for your valuable time and insights in answering my questions.

Interviewer: Thank you very much for your valuable time. I am currently conducting research on language policies and practices in higher education institutions in Ethiopia, and interviews are one of the methods I am using to gather data. I selected you from your department to provide insights on this topic. So, I appreciate your time. The first question relates to the 1995 Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Constitution, specifically Article 3.5.5, which states that English will be the medium of instruction for secondary and higher education institutions. Are you aware of this policy?

Interviewee 5: *Thank you for this opportunity, as it is valuable for my future endeavors, possibly as a PhD candidate. Regarding your question, yes, I am well-informed about the 1995 Ethiopian Constitution, which stipulates that English will serve as the medium of instruction for secondary and tertiary education. Furthermore, it's important to note that English is also introduced as a subject from grade one to grade eight in the educational system.*

Interviewer: Thank you for that clarification. If so, do you consistently use English as the medium of instruction in the classroom, in line with this policy?

Interviewee 5: *Yes we aim to instruct our students in English, but it's crucial to consider that many of our students come from rural areas with limited exposure to the English language. While the government's policy advocates for English as the medium of instruction, we sometimes find it necessary to translate concepts into local languages to*

ensure better comprehension. However, this translation is not a pervasive practice, but rather used selectively to aid in understanding complex course content.

Interviewer: Which language do you predominantly use for such translations?

Interviewee 5: *In Ethiopia, it's challenging to rely on a single local language due to the country's linguistic diversity. Therefore, we often use Amharic, Afan Oromo, or other local languages, depending on the context. However, Amharic tends to be the most commonly used language, given its wider regional acceptance.*

Interviewer: Thank you for providing that insight. How do your students react when you primarily use English?

Interviewee 5: *Many of our students, particularly those with limited exposure to English, are hesitant and reluctant when we predominantly use English for instruction. They often express their difficulties in understanding the content and request that we switch to local languages. While English is emphasized by the curriculum, we do consider the students' needs and occasionally use local languages to facilitate learning.*

Interviewer: Understood. Do your students typically use only English to ask and answer questions in the classroom, based on your experience?

Interviewee 5: *No, in practice, very few students use English exclusively to ask and answer questions in the classroom. This is primarily because most students come from diverse linguistic backgrounds and may not be proficient in English. Instead, they tend to ask questions or provide responses in their mother tongues or local languages. The proportion of students using English exclusively for these interactions is relatively low.*

Interviewer: So, if not English, which languages do they use?

Interviewee 5: *Students often use a mix of Amharic, Afan Oromo, and other local languages to ask questions or provide answers in the classroom. The choice of language often depends on their linguistic background and comfort level.*

Interviewer: Thank you for sharing that information. How do you respond when students use local languages to ask or answer questions? Do you encourage or discourage this practice?

Interviewee 5: *From my perspective as an educator, I do not discourage students from using local languages to ask questions or engage in discussions. However, I do encourage them to use English as it aligns with the policy and is essential for their academic and professional development. It's essential to strike a balance between respecting their linguistic diversity and ensuring that they gain proficiency in English.*

Interviewer: Thank you for your perspective. What are your recommendations regarding the use of other local languages for teaching and learning in higher education in Ethiopia?

Interviewee 5: *Recommending the use of additional local languages alongside English in higher education is a complex matter. Ethiopia's linguistic diversity is a valuable asset, but it also presents challenges. While the idea of incorporating more languages is intriguing; it's essential to remember that English itself is a challenge for many students. Expanding the number of languages of instruction may introduce complications. Therefore, my recommendation would be to continue prioritizing English proficiency while respecting linguistic diversity through policies that allow for the use of local languages when needed.*

Interviewer: Thank you for sharing your insights. Finally, do you believe that the current Ethiopian language use policy in higher education adequately addresses the issue of multilingualism, especially considering the new roadmap?

Interviewee 5: *Yes, the current language policy in Ethiopian higher education does take steps toward addressing multilingualism. Ethiopia is a nation with a multitude of languages and ethnic groups, and it's crucial to recognize and respect this diversity. The new roadmap, which grants the right to education in one's mother tongue, is a positive step in this direction. It acknowledges the importance of linguistic diversity and inclusion. However, there is still much work to be done in terms of practical implementation, and we should continue to monitor and improve upon these efforts.*

Interviewer: Thank you for your valuable insights and time in answering my questions.

Interviewer: I appreciate your valuable time. I am currently conducting research on language policies and practices in educational institutions in Ethiopia, and interviews are one of the methods I am using. I chose to interview you from among your colleagues to gather insights on this topic. Thank you for your time. Let's begin with the first question. Article 3.5.5 of the 1995 Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Constitution states that English will be the medium of instruction for secondary and higher education institutions. Are you familiar with this provision?

Interviewee 6: *Thank you for involving me in your research, which I find quite interesting. Regarding your question, yes, I am well aware of Article 3.5.5 in the Ethiopian Constitution, which designates English as the medium of instruction for both higher education institutions and secondary schools, starting from kindergarten.*

Interviewer: Thank you. The next question is, do you consistently use English as the medium of instruction in your classroom, in alignment with this policy?

Interviewee 6: *To be honest, I cannot claim that I exclusively use English as the medium of instruction in my classroom. While the policy dictates the use of English, various factors compel us to occasionally use students' native languages. This is especially the case at the high school and university levels, where students may struggle with their English proficiency. Thus, I do use Amharic or Afan Oromo at times to ensure better comprehension. However, I should emphasize that the majority of my class is conducted in English, and I use local languages sparingly for clarification.*

Interviewer: Which languages do you typically use for these clarifications?

Interviewee 6: *In Ethiopia, it is challenging to rely solely on one local language due to our nation's linguistic diversity. Therefore, I often use Amharic and Afan Oromo for these clarifications, depending on the context. However, Amharic is frequently used due to its wider regional acceptance.*

Interviewer: Thank you for providing that content. How do your students interact when you primarily use English?

Interviewee 6: *When I predominantly use English, I can sense that some of my students become confused and may struggle to understand the content. There are times when they appear uncertain about what I'm teaching. In such cases, I switch to Amharic or Afan Oromo to make things clearer, and I notice that my students respond more positively during these moments. So, their reactions can be mixed, with some confusion when English, is the primary medium.*

Interviewer: I see. Do your students use only English to ask and answer questions in the classroom, based on your experience?

Interviewee 6: *In reality, very few students use English exclusively to ask or answer questions in the classroom. This is primarily because many of our students come from diverse linguistic backgrounds and may not be fully proficient in English. Instead, they tend to ask questions or provide answers in their mother tongues or local languages. The proportion of students using English exclusively for these interactions is relatively low. Interviewer: In that case, which languages do they typically use? Interviewee: Students often use a mix of languages, including Amharic, Afan Oromo, and other local languages, to ask questions or provide answers in the classroom. The choice of language often depends on their linguistic background and comfort level.*

Interviewer: Thank you for sharing that information. How do you respond when students use local languages to ask or answer questions? Do you encourage or discourage this practice?

Interviewee 6: *I do not discourage students from using local languages to ask questions or engage in discussions. However, I do encourage them to use English, as it aligns with the policy and is essential for their academic and professional development. It's essential to find a balance between respecting their linguistic diversity and ensuring that they gain proficiency in English.*

Interviewer: Thank you for clarifying your approach. What are your recommendations regarding the use of other local languages for teaching and learning in higher education in Ethiopia?

Interviewee 6: *The use of other local languages alongside English in higher education is a complex matter. Ethiopia's linguistic diversity is a valuable asset but also presents challenges. While incorporating more languages is an intriguing idea, it's essential to remember that English itself is challenging for many students. Expanding the number of languages of instruction may introduce complications. Therefore, my recommendation would be to continue prioritizing English proficiency while respecting linguistic diversity through policies that allow for the use of local languages when needed.*

Interviewer: Thank you for sharing your insights. Finally, do you believe that the current Ethiopian language use policy in higher education adequately addresses the issue of multilingualism, especially considering the new roadmap?

Interviewee 6: *I must admit that I don't possess clear knowledge about the current education roadmap and language policy of our country. Therefore, I cannot provide a comprehensive response to this question.*

Interviewer: Thank you for your willingness to participate in this interview and share your thoughts on these matters.

Interviewee 6: *You welcome, and thank you for including me in your research.*

Interviewer: Thank you very much for volunteering to answer the questions I'm about to ask. I'm currently conducting my PhD research, which is titled "Exploring Language Policy and Practices in higher Educatio institutions in Ethiopia: The Case of Mattu University." The questions I have for you are as follows. As we are aware, the 1995 Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia constitution states in Article 3.5.5 that English is the medium of instruction in higher education institutions in Ethiopia. Are you aware of this policy?

Interviewee 7: *I must admit that this is the first time I'm shared about this policy, which emphasizes the use of English as the medium of instruction. However, in practice, we have been using English as the medium of instruction starting from grade nine and continuing through university. English is the predominant language we use, but we also occasionally use other languages like Amharic, Afan Oromo, and others to facilitate understanding, especially as our student body is quite diverse.*

Interviewer: Thank you for your response. My next question pertains to the use of English as the medium of instruction in the classroom. Do you consistently use English, as per the policy?

Interviewee 7: *No, it's not always possible to use English exclusively. When we use only English, our students often don't participate or engage voluntarily. They may request to use Amharic, especially those who are native Amharic speakers. Many of our students come from different language backgrounds, such as Gambella, and in order to accommodate their needs, we use a mix of English and other languages like Afan Oromo. Our experience in psychology supports diversity and multilingualism, and given Ethiopia's rich linguistic diversity, we employ a range of languages to meet our students' needs.*

Interviewer: That's insightful. How do your students react when you use languages other than English in the classroom?

Interviewee 7: *When we incorporate local languages in addition to English, our students respond positively. They appreciate it and find it beneficial. It fosters a sense of inclusivity and often sparks questions or discussions in those local languages, such as Afan Oromo and Amharic. We aim to create a harmonious learning environment that caters to the diverse linguistic backgrounds of our students.*

Interviewer: Do your students solely use English to ask and answer questions in the classroom?

Interviewee 7: *It varies based on the students' backgrounds. International students, especially those from refugee camps, tend to use English and other languages they are*

familiar with. For Ethiopian students, we encourage them to use the language they are most comfortable with, whether it's Amharic, Afan Oromo or others. We want to ensure that all students can actively participate in the learning process.

Interviewer: How do you handle situations when students ask questions in local languages that you may not be familiar with?

Interviewee 7: *There are rarely issues with language diversity in our classroom. Students from different regions usually use English, and when necessary, we accommodate their needs by using Amharic or other local languages. We aim to make learning accessible to all, irrespective of their language background.*

Interviewer: Thank you for your explanation. Lastly, what are your thoughts on using local languages as a medium of instruction in higher education alongside English?

Interviewee 7: *Implementing a curriculum that combines English and local languages for teaching and learning is challenging and can become monotonous. It's crucial to enhance students' English proficiency, considering the diverse linguistic backgrounds. However, if a comprehensive curriculum were to be developed that incorporates local languages, starting from kindergarten to university level, it could be intriguing and beneficial for all. The real issue is not only language but also the quality of education, teaching methods, and curriculum design.*

Interviewer: What do you believe is the primary problem affecting language proficiency in education?

Interviewee 7: *The problem may lie in the way teachers handle the material, the methodology used, and the curriculum itself. Language proficiency issues are part of a broader challenge in the education system.*

Interviewer: Finally, do you think the current language policy in Ethiopian higher education adequately addresses the issue of multilingualism?

Interviewee 7: *The policy primarily emphasizes English as the medium of instruction and the language on certificates. I don't have enough information to communicate on how well it addresses multilingualism in practice.*

Interviewer: Thank you for taking the time to participate in this interview and share your insights.