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Profiles of multilingual agencies in educational contexts in Oromia, Ethiopia

Historically, multilingualism as a form of living and socialization has existed and has been documented since biblical times. This study explores the profiles of multilingual agencies within educational contexts, focusing on students, teachers, and parents. Utilizing a comprehensive, multi-section questionnaire, the research examines participants' self-reported language abilities (based on Clark's CANDO test), patterns of language use across various contexts and interlocutors (Stavans et al., 2009), attitudes toward each language and MPQ. Descriptive statistical analyses reveal widespread multilingualism among all participant groups, emphasizing the dominant role of primary and secondary languages in shaping educational and social experiences. The findings align with existing research on multilingualism, language hierarchy, and education's sociocultural impact. They highlight the cognitive, social, and economic advantages of multilingualism, emphasizing the need for inclusive language policies that recognize and support linguistic diversity. The study also identifies challenges faced by minority languages, underscoring the importance of equitable language education. Finally, it highlighted that educational settings significantly influence language use, shaping linguistic flexibility and multicultural personality traits.

Keywords: multilingual agencies, educational contexts, Oromia, Ethiopia

1. Introduction

Historically, multilingualism as a form of living and socialization has existed and has been documented since biblical times (Stavans & Hoffmann, 2015) with the mobility of speakers of different languages across geographic regions in pursuit of food, territory or trade, bringing peoples from different geographical and ethnic backgrounds together. This movement of groups, or "relocation" in modern terms, created numerous opportunities for cross-linguistic interaction. Indeed, human mobility has long been a driving force behind multilingualism, encompassing people from all walks of life—both educated and uneducated, wealthy and impoverished, in rural and urban settings, and across various regions. Kimber (2014: 150) stated, "The times we live in are characterized by the movement of people, ideas, goods, and services across the globe; language skills are thus necessary to confront the challenge of maintaining order and positive

relationships between people of all backgrounds and cultures." Similarly, Stavans & Jessner (2022: 1) have argued that this human mobility required that people needed to function in more than one language to sustain a community and hence "[l]anguages [had to] become "currencies" that have different and changing '"exchange rates" in different spheres of human interaction in the "communication market" at different times, in different places, and for different purposes." As language(s) become the greatest invention of mankind and a precious property that connects people of the world together (Deutscher, 2005), it also became a catalyst agent in propagating multilingualism and multilingual societies (Blackledge & Creese, 2010), making "[t]heir multilingualism eventually … a marker of their identity" (Stavans & Hoffmann, 2015: 11).

1.1. Factors affecting multilingualism in multilingual agents

Multilingualism could be affected either positively or negatively by many factors. Language use and purpose, language proficiency/ ability/ CANDO, language attitude, emotion, and personality (Tokuhama, 2003) are some of the major factors for both the development and stagnation of multilingualism. Apart from the distinction referring to different types of forces leading to multilingualism whether these are instrumentally or integratively driven by external (social) or internal (individual) linguistic needs and language use. While learners might have instrumental (external) or integrative (internal) reasons for learning a language, or maintaining their multilingualism, they can also have different reasons for using the language. House (2002) differentiates between "language for communication" and "language for identification" (terms taken from Hüllen, 1992). Multilingual people can choose the language and adjust the language to their needs by using their mother tongue to express their cultural identity and using another language only as an instrument to communicate and to understand each other (Dégi, 2012).

1.1.1. Language use with individuals and for different purposes

Many scholars believe that there are a number of factors which influence language choice and language use. The three dominant factors are: domain, interlocutors, and topic. The term "domain" refers to the idea that each language or dialect is associated with a specific role, setting, and/or group of people within society in which it includes work, family, and religious contexts (Spolsky, 2012; Weinreich, 1953). Fishman (1972) argues that domain is a good concept to look into how people use language both individually and in groups. With this regard, a language people use at home could be vary from the one they use at public spheres. As the same time, a language that minorities children use at home and neighbour could be different from that of the schools. These notions are apparent in the language domain theory of Fishman (2000) that language speakers in ethnic minority groups frequently link particular languages to particular domains.

The second dominant factor of language use and language choice is interlocutors. Studies depict that interlocutors also clearly have an impact on language use. With this regard, there are three patterns that Harris (2006) discovered while examining the language use of ethnic minority groups in the London village: with parents, with siblings and with grandparents. The one with parent was a hybrid language of majority and minority languages. The second used the majority language whereas the third used the minority language. However, Harris understood that the participants utilized their majority languages with grandparents and elder relatives to show respect and to proud their parents since the parents were successful in helping their children maintain their mother tongue.

A topic of discussion can also influence a language choice and use (Ritchie and Bhatia, 2012). Fishman (2000: 92) suggests that "Certain topics are somehow handled better in one language than in another in particular multilingual contexts." This implies that a language used to talk about love may be different from the one to talk about sport or politics or business or anything else in a multilingual scenario. This could be dependent on different reasons. Namei (2008: 420) explained one of the reasons, "The use of the ethnic minority language is due to the speakers' limited competence in the subject matters, or the lack of required vocabulary in the other language." In addition to the above three determinant factors, age and gender differences (Harris, 2006; Wei, 1994) have also their own influence on a language choice and use.

1.1.2. Language proficiency/ ability/ CANDO

Language assessment has been a long-debated aspect in multilingualism and more specifically in the context of language education. The contested issues not only concern what is to be assessed or how but also the methodological perspective to be taken in terms of form versus function of language (Spolsky 1985). Moreover, whether assessment should focus on skill, ability, or competence and whether there is a valid and reliable measure (Shohamy, 2001; Canale, 1983), or whether there is one way to measure different types of knowledge in different contexts, at different ages, and in different stages of language development or learning (Kern, 2000; Echevarria et al., 2004). Inevitably, the context and purpose of assessment dictates the practices, ideologies and methodology employed as this is called for in measures of achievement, placement, progress that are required in different contexts such as school, business, healthcare, etc. Cloud et al. (2000) proposes a more comprehensive form-function view of language proficiency as the capacity to use language correctly and appropriately in both written and oral forms in a range of contexts; whereas Echevarria et al., (2004) has a more formalistic perspective:

> Language proficiency is a measurement of how well an individual has mastered a language; proficiency is measured in terms of receptive and

expressive language skills, syntax, vocabulary, semantics, and other areas that demonstrate language abilities. (p. 224)

Since the 1980s, the language community has realized that tests must assess performance of authentic language functions, but those terms have yet to be satisfactorily defined and placed in an accepted theoretical model. Models have been proposed, but they turned out to be programmatic and heuristic rather than rigorous and testable. Canale (1983) was among the initial proponents stating a comprehensive conceptual framework that encompasses three aspects of language proficiency: linguistic, cognitive, and sociocultural. A language requires knowledge and proficiency with its linguistic components in order to be considered fluent. It also calls for prior knowledge, the ability to think critically and metacognitively, as well as the capacity to comprehend and apply cultural nuances, practices, and beliefs in a given setting. Proficiency in a language also entails the ability in the four language domains—speaking, writing, listening, and reading—appropriately for a range of contexts, audiences, and goals. Such abilities can be examined in terms of levels - basic, conversant, and advanced (Kern, 2000) or in terms of stages as proposed by Echevarria et al. (2004): pre-production, early production, speech emergence, intermediate fluency, and advanced fluency stages.

1.1.3. Language attitude

Language learners' attitudes towards the language and its speakers greatly influence the language learning process and the learning outcomes. Previous research and studies on attitudes and motivation in language learning (Csizér 2007) show that attitudes and motivation are strongly intertwined. Positive attitude towards the language and its speakers can lead to increased motivation, which in turn results in better learning experience and achievement. The relationship between attitude towards language and multilingualism is complex and paramount. Attitudes towards languages can influence individual language learning behavior, language maintenance, and ultimately the development of multilingualism in societies. Krashen (1982) argued that positive attitudes foster language learning when individuals with positive attitudes towards languages are generally more motivated to learn and use multiple languages. He emphasizes the importance of a low-anxiety environment and a positive affective filter for language learning to foster the conditions for a successful language learning experience. Also, understanding educators' attitude is essential to comprehending their decision-making in the classroom so that in the educational context, the language instructor plays a crucial role in promoting students' positive attitude towards the language and its learning which in turn promotes multilingualism (Haukås, 2016).

A positive attitude can be influenced by factors such as cultural appreciation, perceived usefulness of languages, and personal interest in diverse linguistic

experiences. Fishman (1966) highlights the link between language attitudes, cultural identity, and language maintenance. He emphasizes the role of ethnolinguistic vitality in sustaining minority languages making a tightly knit relation between cultural identity and the attitude towards the language. People often associate their language(s) with their cultural heritage and identity and consequently a positive attitudes towards one's own language(s) can promote language maintenance and preservation of cultural identity within multilingual communities.

In multilingual societies, attitudes towards different languages can affect language use patterns, language shift, and language revitalization efforts. Negative attitudes towards minority languages, for example, can contribute to language endangerment and decline. Hornberger's (2008) research in language policy and planning addressed issues related to linguistic diversity, bilingual education, and the role of language attitudes in shaping societal multilingualism. Within the specific educational institutional framework, attitudes towards languages play a role in language education and bilingual programs. Positive attitudes towards bilingualism and multilingualism in education can promote successful language learning outcomes and support the maintenance of multiple languages among students (Todor & Degi, 2016). Baker & Write (2017) advocate for inclusive language policies that value linguistic diversity and promote positive attitudes towards multilingualism in educational contexts and more recently translanguaging has sprung from the recognition of not only linguistic diversity but from the rich coexistence of this linguistic diversity housed in a single linguistic repertoire within the multilingual individual (Garcia & Wei, 2014).

1.1.4. Personality

It has been argued that personality dimensions "summarize a person's typical behavior" (Pervin & Cervone, 2010, p. 229) these have been categorized into five top indicators of the hierarchy (Pervin & Cervone, 2010). Although psychologists agree that personality is determined both by physiological and social factors (Furnham & Heaven, 1999), relatively less research has been carried out on the effect of external (social factors) and internal (individual factors) within the context of multilingual. Studies exploring the relation between the main personality indicators and multilingualism have argued that it hones the potential of one shaping the other and the direction as to whether personality shapes multilingualism or vice versa has been contested (Grosjean, 2014; Dewaele & van Oudenhoven, 2009; Dewaele & Wei, 2013; Wei & Hu, 2018). In fact, the causal pathway between multilingualism and personality traits could be multi-directional, where multilingualism is both the cause and the effect (i.e., being multilingual can push a person to develop a more multicultural personality or it is more likely to become multilingual if you are born with a certain personality profile (Dewaele & Wei, 2013; Dewaele & Botes, 2020).

Personality can play a significant role in various aspects of multilingualism, including language learning, language use, emotional experiences and overall proficiency. More specifically, personality traits impact language learning and use have been studied by Dewaele (2009) who argues that various personality traits, such as extraversion, neuroticism, openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness, can significantly influence how individuals approach language learning, interact in multilingual environments, and express emotions across languages. The role of emotional and psychological factors can shape the multilingual individuals' language experiences if different personality traits can influence how individuals manage language-related anxieties, cope with language challenges, and navigate linguistic and cultural diversity. Inevitably, the variability in individual differences in language acquisition and use by multilingual is borne out of personality traits that contribute to variability in language learning outcomes and proficiency levels. It has been argued that there is a dynamic interplay between personality and language (learning) because the relationship between personality and multilingualism is dynamic, bidirectional and multifaceted. Deweale (2019) argues that personality traits not only influence language behaviors but can also be shaped by language experiences and cultural interactions. Jessner (2008) discusses the cognitive and affective aspects of multilingualism, including how personality traits influence language learning strategies and language use in diverse cultural settings. Others (MacIntyre, 1996; Dörnyei, 2014) investigate the role of motivation, personality, and social context in second language acquisition and multilingualism; and multicultural identity development.

In general, the multilingual profiles are very determinant in the development of multilingualism. As the world becomes increasingly interconnected, the importance of multilingual profiles has grown, shaping individuals' identities, social interactions, and professional opportunities. Understanding how people perceive and engage with multilingualism provides valuable insights into their cultural attitudes, linguistic preferences, and the broader societal factors influencing language use. The present study aims to profile each agent group as a whole in terms of their demographic background, their patterns of language use in different interlocutor contexts and for different purposes, their subjective holistic and specific evaluation of their language abilities and skills in each language, their attitude towards monolingualism and multilingualism, and their personality traits that may be related to their multilingualism since there is no prior study about it as far as the researchers knowledge was concerned. Accordingly, the study was designed to answer the following basic question: which features characterize the profile of each the multilingualism agents' group in terms of demographic (age, languages, education), proficiency in the language/s (cand-do and general), language/s use with interlocutors (intimate and formal) for different purposes (entertainment, sustainability and business),

attitude towards mono/multilingualism and personality traits? We hypothesized that: Agents with demographic features (such as age, education, and exposure to languages) who use more languages with interlocutors of the intimate and formal circles and use different languages for different life-purposes, will have a positive attitude towards multilingualism, will evaluate their language abilities in more than one language higher, and will have enhanced personality features.

2. The study
2.1. Participants
The subjects of the study were students, teachers and parents of the students. 80 students, 40 teachers and 80 parents of the students from both public and private schools of Oromia region, Ethiopia took part in the study. The researchers focused on 12th grade students who were soon to complete their basic schooling, assumed that they would soon be at the brink of moving into society either directly to the workforce or to a professional/vocational capacity building training period. The focus on the teachers, both language teachers as well as other subjects matter teachers, was to map out the perceptions and practices of these educational agents who had a pivotal role in motivating and enabling the best outcome of a multilingual individual that would be productive and constructive within the nation and outwards. Focusing on the parents provided the completion of all the active agents in the process of fostering, enabling and encouraging multilingual practices grounded in ideologies, emotions, aspirations and needs for the family, the community and the individual.

2.2. Materials
2.2.1. Questionnaire
The study employed a multiple sections questionnaire. This includes: (i) general language skills and CANDO test for self-report on language ability (a subjective evaluation of skills in each language– i.e. speaking, understanding, reading and writing) (Clark 1981), (ii) a questionnaire of language use with different interlocutors and a questionnaire of language use for different purposes (Stavans et al., 2009), (iii) a questionnaire of the attitude toward each language (Stavans et al., 2009), and (iv) a questionnaire of multilingual personality traits (MPQ) (Oudenhoven & der Zee, 2000). The researchers used these questionnaires in the study to comprehensively assess various aspects of language ability, use, attitudes, and personality traits related to multilingualism. General language skills and CANDO test were used to gauge participants' self-perceived proficiency in different languages; a questionnaire of language use with different interlocutors and a questionnaire of language use for different purposes were used to analyze patterns of language choice depending on social context and to examine how participants use different languages in various functional domains; a questionnaire of the attitude toward each language were used to measure participants' emotional,

cultural, or practical attitudes toward the languages they use; MPQ were used to explore personality traits that may be influenced by or influence multilingualism. The collected data were digitized using Google Forms for efficient organization and processing. The data were then exported to Excel and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The analysis included descriptive statistics such as frequencies to summarize the data.

3. The results
3.1. Demographic information

The participants of this study included 80 students who were completing or just completed 12th grade in the private or public school system in Oromia, 40 in-service teachers of different subject matter working in either a private or a public school, and 80 parents of pupils schooled in the same schools in Oromia. Table 1 summarizes the participants' information in the study.

Table 1. Participants agency groups by age, gender, school type and years of education

Group	School Type		Males (N)	Females (N)	Age (years)				Years of Education		
	Private (N)	Public (N)			Average	SD	min	max	Average	min	max
Student	41	39	17	63	19.18	0.94	17	21	12	12	15
Teacher	20	20	34	6	38.53	4.87	28	51	15	15	21
Parent	40	40	61	17	47.88	5.71	36	61	10	7	17

Table 1 shows the general demographic information of the targeted agents group irrespective of school type. The agent group consisted of the same number of participants from the private and public school type in Oromia. The distribution of female and male participant was uneven as in the student agent group females were more engaging than males while in the teacher and parent agent groups male participants predominated. Unsurprisingly, students were younger than teachers and parents but unlike the expected age of graduation (typically around 18-19) the participants in this group consisted of students who were at the time of study collection starting 12th grade and those who just graduated or graduated a year before. The range of age in this group was conceptually motivated so as to have a broad perspective of the effect of schooling during and after completion of studies and on the brink of entering the workforce of the region. Parents unlike teachers were roughly 10 years older than the teachers and as the groups consisted of a male majority, this does not come as a surprise. In the present generation, the number of females has surpassed the number of males across all regions, and that is why the number of female students is greater than the males. However, when it comes to parents and teachers, due to societal traditions, males continue to receive more opportunities than females to engage in social matters. In all the years of education of teachers are higher than parents as teachers not only complete 12 years of schooling but also go to university to get an undergraduate degree and

then continue to acquire a teaching diploma/certificate. The variability in parents educational background is rather broad as some parents are highly educated (17 years of education) while others are basically educated with 10 years of schooling.

Table 2. Language repertoire by agent participant groups' Bilingualism, Trilingualism and the role of languages

Group	Reported number of languages % (N)			Afan Oromo % (N)			Amharic % (N)			Tigrinia % (N)			Guaragigna % (N)			English % (N)		
	1-2 languages	3+ languages	no answer	L1	L2	L3	L1	L2	L3	L1	L2	L3	L1	L2	L3	L1	L2	L3
Student	1.25 (80)	98.75 (80)	0 (80)	82.28 (79)	17.24 (87)	0.00 (80)	11.39 (79)	82.76 (87)	0.00 (80)	3.80 (79)	0.00 (87)	0.00 (80)	2.53 (79)	0.00 (87)	0.00 (80)	0.00 (79)	0.00 (87)	100.00 (80)
Teacher	27.5 (40)	72.5 (40)	0 (40)	63.16 (38)	6.25 (32)	0.00 (40)	23.68 (38)	93.75 (38)	0.00 (40)	10.53 (38)	0.00 (32)	0.00 (40)	2.63 (38)	0.00 (32)	0.00 (40)	0.00 (38)	0.00 (32)	100.00 (40)
Parent	25 (80)	71.25 (80)	3.75 (80)	78.75 (80)	13.16 (76)	1.25 (80)	10.00 (80)	85.53 (76)	0.00 (80)	3.75 (80)	1.32 (76)	1.25 (80)	7.50 (80)	0.00 (76)	0.00 (80)	0.00 (80)	0.00 (76)	76.25 (80)

Table 2 illustrates each agent group by whether they speak 1-2 languages (mono/bilinguals) or 3+ languages (Trilinguals). Furthermore, the report of each agent group regarding the role (L1, L2 or L3) of most frequently reported language (Afan Oromo, Amharic, Tigrigna, Guragigna and English languages). Most (98.75%) of the student agent group are multilingual speaking three or more languages, and most of them (82.28%) report Afan Oromo as their L1while Amharic language is the L2 for 82.76% of them. Among the teacher agent group, 72.5% report they have three or more languages, where Afan Oromo is the L1 for 63.16% of them and Amharic is their L2 93.75%. The parents agency group report vastly (71.25%) to speak at least three languages, with Afan Oromo as the L1 for 78.75% of them while Amharic is a close companion in their linguistic toolkit as L2 (85.53%). A significant proportion of participants across all groups are multilingual, particularly trilingual. Afan Oromo predominantly is reported to be the L1 across all groups, with Amharic being the predominantly common L2.

Table 3a. Average holistic proficiency assessment (spoken and written skills) in each language as reported by agent participants of as a whole and by school-type

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

Table 3a presents the average score of the participants' holistic assessment of language ability across both agent groups and within each group by the school type for each languages. The students agent group show very high and consistent proficiency in Afan Oromo (97.81% in both types of schools, 98.17% in private and 97.44% in public schools), where Amharic and English exhibit similar scores; this is not the case for Tigrigna (6.65% in both types of schools, 7.93% in private and 5.13% in public schools) and Guragigna (1.58% in both types of schools, 4.27% in private and 0.0% in public schools). Similarly, the teachers agent group report perfect proficiency in Amharic and English languages with both scoring 100, but their proficiency in Afan Oromo is noticeably lower (65.00% in both types of schools, 60.0% in private and 70.0% in public schools). Moreover, the teachers agent group like the students indicate a low proficiency in both Tigrigna and Guragigna languages particularly for Guragigna language (2.50). The parents agent group's scores are moderate across most languages with Afan Oromo and Amharic language scoring around 80% and 81%, respectively indicating diverse proficiency levels irrespective of school type and similar scores in private school of around 78% in both languages and in public schools around 81% in Afan Oromo and 83% in Amharic. Their scores for Tigrigna and Guragigna languages are similar to those of students and teachers with Tigrigna language scoring 6.25 and Guragigna language at 5.63. Yet, their English language proficiency is lower than for teachers and students, with an average of 67.50 irrespective of their children's school type and 61.25% in the private schools as opposed to 73.75% in the public schools showing a slight variability among parents according to the school type their child is enrolled.

Table 3b. Average language-related subjective proficiency assessment (CAN-DO in speaking, understanding, reading and writing) in each language as reported by agent participants as a whole and by school-type

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

Table 3b provides the language related ability in specific activities (Can-Do) across groups agents, languages and school type in terms of averages and standard deviations. The findings that emerge regarding the student agents irrespective of school type is that Afan Oromo and English are reported to have the highest

performance rating, indicating these languages are dominant or preferred; whereas Tigrinya and Guragina have significantly lower performance, suggesting limited usage or proficiency among students. Moreover, the differences between private, public, and both educational settings are minimal for Afan Oromo and English, but there are variations in Tigrinya and Guragina, likely reflecting accessibility or linguistic diversity in certain school types. As for the teachers agent profile, a perfect performance rating (100%) is reported in Amharic across either or both school types suggesting it may be universally essential or mandated in the teaching environment; likewise in English suggesting its importance as a medium of instruction or prestigious language. This was not the case for the official regional language of Afan Oromo where teachers exhibit moderate performance with slight variation across all school types; and to a more extreme case, the performance rating on both Tigrinya and Guragina was very low, indicating limited need for these languages within the scholastic contexts. The parents agent groups of children attending the different school type indicated that Afan Oromo and Amharic are predominantly used, with slightly higher means in parents whose children attend public schools compared to those of private schools; however, irrespective of school type, their performance use in English is lower than that of their students and teachers cohorts suggesting a less frequent need to deploy the language as well as a lower ability in it. Moreover, Tigrinya and Guragina have very low scores overall, consistent with findings for other groups.

Table 4a. Average percent of agent participants who use each language for communication purposes with (intimate and formal) interlocutors by each school and by both combined

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

Table 4a the average percent and standard deviation of participants in each agent group (Students, Teachers, and Parents) who reported using one of the languages (Afan Oromo, Amharic, Tigrinya, Guragina, and English) as dominant for communicating with different (intimate and formal) interlocutors in different school types (Private, Public, and Both). Three aspects are reflected by these findings: the interlocutor context, the agent group and the school type impact. The intimate interlocutor context overall determines the use of Afan Oromo and Amharic as dominant across all roles, with a higher reported use among agents of private schools; whereas English is reported to be used less frequently with the intimate interlocutors and varies highly among the groups. Surprisingly, Tigrinya and Guragina have minimal usage. In the formal context, Amharic predominates across all agent groups, particularly among teachers and parents; English is relatively more dominant in formal contexts compared to intimate ones, especially among private school students and parents. Unsurprisingly, Tigrinya and Guragina remain marginally used, reflecting limited need in either context.

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

intimate context. In the public schools Afan Oromo is consistently reported as used by all agent group reflecting it important local presence, however, English is used less frequently compared to the private schools with a high variability of usage by the agent groups especially in the intimate context.

Table 4b. Average percent of participants who use each language for communication purposes in different contexts (in the Entertainment, Sustainability, and Business contexts) by groups

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

Table 4b provided the average and SD of participant score in the use of five languages (Afan Oromo, Amharic, Tigrigna, Guragigna, and English) for three purposes (entertainment, sustainability and business) by each agent groups (Students, Teachers, and Parents), distinguishing between private, public, and both school types. The findings show that the languages used for entertainment purpose, Afan Oromo dominates among private school students and parents with high averages (85.85% and 93.00%, respectively) whereas public school

participants show slightly lower values. Amharic is consistently used by more than 40% of the cases across all agent groups and school types, and English is more significant in the private school participants (students 38.05%, parents 33.00%) but low in public schools cohorts. For sustainability purposes, the findings indicate that Afan Oromo remains prominent, especially among private school students (82.44%) and parents (84.00%); and Amharic shows a steady presence, particularly in private school settings but English usage declines significantly in public schools, especially among teachers and students (below 5%). Lastly, for business purposes the patterns are similar to entertainment, with Afan Oromo and Amharic consistently leading across all groups, moreover, English is moderately used among private school agent groups but scarcely used in public school contexts. If we profile the language use purpose by agent group, the findings show that among the student agents in the private school framework Afan Oromo and Amharic more extensively used for all purposes compared to the public school students. The teacher agent groups showed a more balanced use of language for the different purposes but the languages were less diverse with lower percentages for Tigrigna and Guragigna. The parents agent group in the private school exhibit the highest usage percentages for most languages, indicating more diverse communication habits. In all measures, the high SD values, especially in languages like Amharic and Tigrigna, reveal diverse usage patterns, likely due to regional or cultural differences.

Table 5. Average percent of participants with a favorable (Pro) and unfavorable (Con) attitude towards monolingualism and multilingualism by agent group and school type

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

Table 5 shows the language attitude profiles (favorable and unfavorable) toward monolingualism and multilingualism by agents (students, teachers, parents) and school types (public and private). The findings show insights in two intertwined axes: attitude (positive and negative) towards -lingualism (mono – and multi-) and attitude by agent group. In terms of attitude towards monolongualism, there is a low percent of participants with a positive (pro) attitude to monolingualism across

all groups, for example, private school students agent report only 7.32% agreeing with monolingualism, while their public school cohorts reach 12.82%. Teachers agents are more likely to hold a positive attitude toward monolingualism compared to students or parents, especially the private school teachers at 20%. Parents agents in public schools are the most favorable towards monolingualism with 20% agreeing like the teachers in the private school and unlike all other agents. Unlike a low positive attitude towards monolingualism, the negative attitude is overwhelming as the rejection of monolingualism is nearly universal, especially among students (e.g., 92.68% in private schools). Teachers and parents also exhibit high disagreement, though slightly less emphatically. By contrast, multilingualism is overwhelmingly favored, especially among students (in private schools 90.24% and 100% in public schools), among teachers agents there is a consistent 85% favoring multilingualism across all school types. Parents agent generally show strong support for multilingualism, especially private school parents (97.44%). The mirror image that transpires shows a very low negative attitude towards multilingualism, typically below 10% and even reaching no disagreement with multilingualism as in the case of public school students report (0%).

In terms of the attitude towards mono-multi-lingualism as profiling the agent groups, we observe that the student agent group strongly reject monolingualism and overwhelmingly support multilingualism, particularly in the public schools where disagreement with multilingualism is absent altogether. By contrast, the teachers agent group displays slightly higher acceptance of monolingualism than other groups but still strongly favors multilingualism. The parents agent group shows a balanced view, with the public school parents embracing slightly more favorably monolingualism compared to the private school parents. Moreover, if we compare the agent groups by school type, we observe variability among the groups such as the private school participants generally show more nuanced attitudes (e.g., private school parents exhibit 10.26% favor monolingualism compared to 20% among public school parents); and the public school agent groups are more polarized, with strong rejection of monolingualism and near-universal acceptance of multilingualism.

Table 6. Average agent group score of multilingual and multicultural personality characteristics (MPQ) by school type

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

The findings shown in table 6 deploy the profile of each agent group in terms of the 5 multilingual and multicultural personality indicators. The student agent group in the public schools score highest across all dimensions suggesting and enriched sociocultural learning environment, with cultural empathy (91.60%) and open-mindedness (91.54) leading, whereas the private school students score slightly lower (roughly 89%), but their scores also vary greatly (SD ~10). These findings suggest that there is exposure to diverse environments in schools, fostering empathy, openness, and proactivity and possibly a broader sociocultural engagement in the public schools'. The teachers agent group exhibit significant differences compared to students with cultural empathy (81.69%) and open-mindedness (85.13%) are their strongest traits; but emotional stability is particularly low - especially in the public schools teachers (56.88%), and flexibility in the private compared to the public school teachers is lower (79.75% and 87.00% respectively). Teachers in the public schools show a lower emotional stability which may indicate stress or challenges in managing emotional demands yet they display a high open-mindedness that might be linked to their professional roles. In the public school parents agent group scores are consistently higher across all dimensions, with cultural empathy (88.63%) and open-mindedness (88.13%) being most prominent suggesting that these may be an outcome of their children's enhanced traits that result from their engagement with diverse communities. However, the private school parents agent group exhibit moderate scores (around 81%) for most traits, and there is greater variability as compared to their cohorts in the public schools. In all, the results show that the public school agent groups generally score higher across all indicators, suggesting richer exposure to multicultural settings or community involvement.

4. Discussions

This study aimed at exploring the profiles of multilingual agencies in educational contexts in Oromia, Ethiopia. The findings exhibit the following entire points: i. There is significant multilingualism across different participant groups (students, teachers, and parents) of the school environments in which many languages (i.e. Afan Oromo, Amharic, English, Tigrigna and Guragigna) played great role; ii. The profiles of the participants highlight that they are proficient (multilingual proficiency) in more than two languages where Afan Oromo and Amharic dominate; iii) It is also found that the profile of the multilingual participants could be characterized by various approaches of language choice and use; iv) Participants hold positive attitudes towards multilingualism and negative attitudes towards monolingualism; v) There is also marginalization of minority languages; and vi) Participants' group based variation in MPQ was also portrayed throughout the study. To begin with the first, the high prevalence of multilingualism among participants, particularly students and teachers, emphasizes key aspects of modern linguistic studies and educational practices. One notable aspect is the emergence of multilingualism as a standard. The findings reveal that most participants, especially within the student and teacher groups, speak three or more languages, which provides numerous cognitive and social advantages. Bialystok (2011) suggests that multilingual individuals often demonstrate enhanced cognitive flexibility, improved executive functioning, and heightened cultural awareness, all of which are beneficial in both educational and social settings. The second one is the multilingual proficiency in which the Can-Do results shed light on participants' self-perceived ability to perform specific language-related tasks. High Can-Do scores for Afan Oromo and Amharic among students, teachers, and parents indicate that these languages are not only well understood but also actively used in various practical and social contexts. Vygotsky (1978) emphasizes the importance of social interaction and practical application in language development. In contrast, lower Can-Do scores for other languages suggest that these languages are less frequently used in everyday activities, which may contribute to reduced proficiency. This limited functional use highlights a gap between language knowledge and practical application—a distinction that Cummins (2000) identifies as crucial for understanding bilingual proficiency. Cummins explains that cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) tends to be more developed in dominant languages due to their use in formal education, while basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS) vary depending on the role a language plays within community and family settings.

The third was the language choice and use which depicted valuable insights into how language choices are influenced by the context of communication, ranging from intimate to formal settings. The findings reveal a consistent pattern where Afan Oromo dominates across all groups—students, teachers, and parents—in both personal and formal interactions. This prevalence suggests that

Afan Oromo functions as a primary language within these communities, supporting communication in diverse contexts. The increased use of Amharic in formal settings, particularly among parents and teachers, reflects a sociolinguistic trend where a more standardized or socially prestigious language is preferred in professional and formal scenarios. Additionally, the findings highlight significant variations in language use based on purpose. Afan Oromo remains the dominant language across all contexts, especially in entertainment and business, underscoring its versatility as a widely accepted medium for both leisure and professional interactions. However, the notable use of Amharic in formal business contexts emphasizes its role as a complementary language, serving specialized or formal purposes alongside Afan Oromo. This dual-language dynamic aligns with the concept of diglossia, where two languages or dialects are used in distinct contexts within a community. Fourthly, the study's results on attitudes reveal a strong and consistent preference for multilingualism across all groups, aligning with contemporary research highlighting the cognitive, social, and cultural advantages of being multilingual. Bialystok (2011) has shown that multilingual individuals often demonstrate enhanced executive function, greater cognitive flexibility, and superior problem-solving abilities compared to monolinguals. The widespread support for multilingualism among students, teachers, and parents reflects an awareness of these benefits, which are especially relevant in an increasingly globalized world where effective cross-cultural communication and collaboration are essential. Conversely, the study also highlights a notable rejection of monolingualism, with the majority of participants expressing unfavorable attitudes toward it. This sentiment underscores a growing recognition of the limitations of monolingualism, particularly in diverse and interconnected societies. Monolingualism is often associated with reduced access to broader cultural experiences and limited cognitive adaptability (Adesope et al., 2010). The strong opposition to monolingualism across all groups suggests a societal shift in values, where reliance on a single language is increasingly viewed as a disadvantage rather than the norm.

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

is unevenly distributed. This inconsistency is likely driven by disparities in exposure, support, and opportunities for consistent language use. Finally, the MPQ results reveal significant differences between public and private school participants, shedding light on the impact of social interaction and cultural context on cognitive and emotional development. Public school students scored higher in cultural empathy and open-mindedness, reflecting the influence of diverse environments that promote interaction with peers from varied cultural and linguistic backgrounds. This aligns with Vygotsky's (1978) theory that social interaction is central to cognitive development and Banks' (2013) assertion that exposure to diversity fosters inclusivity and prepares students for a globalized world. In contrast, the variability in private school scores correspond with Nieto's (2000) observation that private schools often prioritize academic excellence over cultural pluralism, potentially limiting students' engagement with diverse perspectives. Among public school teachers, the observed low emotional stability can be understood through Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory, which highlights the influence of systemic factors such as institutional support and classroom demands. Challenges like larger class sizes, resource limitations, and diverse student needs often contribute to stress and reduced emotional stability in public school settings (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). However, the high open-mindedness among public school teachers aligns with Gay's (2010) research, which suggests that multicultural teaching environments encourage cultural responsiveness. Ladson-Billings (1995) further supports this by emphasizing that educators in diverse contexts develop culturally relevant pedagogies, cultivating openness as a professional trait. Public school parents also scored highly in cultural empathy and open-mindedness, reflecting the intergenerational transmission of multicultural values (Grusec & Goodnow, 1994). Engaging with diverse school communities likely encourages parents to adopt and reinforce these values, creating a positive feedback loop. On the other hand, the moderate scores and variability among private school parents align with Coleman and Hoffer's (1987) findings that private schools often draw from more homogeneous cultural and socioeconomic groups, which may limit exposure to diversity. The variability within this group could be attributed to differing levels of engagement with multicultural initiatives or community interactions. Overall, the higher scores observed across all publicschool agent groups support Bennett's (1993) Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS), which posits that exposure to diverse cultural contexts fosters a progression from ethnocentric to ethnorelative perspectives. Public schools, with their inclusive policies and culturally diverse populations, provide ideal conditions for cultivating such traits. Hofstede's (2001) research on cultural dimensions also supports this, suggesting that environments with greater cultural variability naturally encourage open-mindedness and empathy as individuals navigate and adapt to differences.

In general, the study depicted the profiles of the multilinguals with significant multilingualism across the participants, multilingual proficiency, multilingual language use both in formal and informal contets and for different purposes, the positive attitude of the participants towards multilingualism and negative attitude towards monolingualism, dominance language one and language two, and different attributes of MPQ. It also portrayed needs to improvements where special consideration should be given on the MPQ of the teachers and language policy that treats every language of the country in inclusive way.

5. Conclusion

The study presented a clear picture of widespread multilingualism among students, teachers, and parents, with significant roles for both the dominant language (Afan Oromo) and a secondary language (Amharic). These findings are in line with existing theories and research on multilingualism, language hierarchy, and the role of language in education. It underscores the importance of multilingualism in educational settings, highlighting its cognitive, social, and economic benefits. The study portrayed that the participants are proficient in more than two languages. They proficiently can perform in many languages in different environments for different purposes. The study also points to the need for more inclusive language policies that recognize and support the full range of languages spoken by participants. It provides a snapshot of the current state of language proficiency among different groups and educational contexts, highlighting the dominance of certain languages and the challenges faced by minorities. It also magnified the understanding of the community towards the benefits of multilingualism in which they were characterized by highly multilingual attributes and rejection of monolingualism.

Lastly, the study also underscores the impact of educational settings on multilingual and multicultural personality traits. Public schools appear to offer a more conducive environment for fostering these traits across all agent groups, likely due to greater diversity and inclusivity in their ecosystems. Addressing variability and emotional challenges within private schools and among teachers could further enhance the sociocultural learning landscape. These insights can guide policymakers, educators, and community stakeholders in designing interventions that promote multicultural competence and emotional resilience across diverse educational contexts.

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